

Classic Poetry Series

**Mathilde Blind**  
**- poems -**

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## Mathilde Blind(1841 - 1896)

Mathilde Blind British author, was born at Mannheim on the 21st of March 1841. Her father was a banker named Cohen, but she took the name of Blind after her step-father, the political writer, Karl Blind (1826—1907), one of the exiled leaders of the Baden insurrection in 1848—1849, and an ardent supporter of the various 19th-century movements for the freedom and autonomy of struggling nationalities.

The family was compelled to take refuge in England, where Mathilde devoted herself to literature and to the higher education of women. She produced also three long poems, "The Prophecy of St Oran" (1881), "The Heather on Fire" , (1886), an `indignant protest against the evictions in the Highlands , and "The Ascent of Man" (1888), which was to be the epic of the theory of evolution. She wrote biographies of George Eliot (1883) and Madame Roland (1886), and translated D.F. Strauss's *The Old Faith and the New'* (1873—1874) and the *Memoirs of Marie Bashkirtse* , (1890). She died on the 26th of November 1896, bequeathing her property to Newnham College, Cambridge.

# A Bridal In The Bois De Boulogne.

HOW the lilacs, the lilacs are glowing and blowing!  
And white through the delicate verdure of May  
The blossoming boughs of the hawthorn are showing,  
Like beautiful brides in their bridal array;  
With cobwebs for laces, and dewdrops for pearls,  
Fine as a queen's dowry for workaday girls.

In an aisle of Acacias enlaced and enlacing,  
Where the silvery sunlight tunnels the shade,  
Where snowflakes of butterflies airily chasing  
Each other in trios flash down the arcade:

Arrayed in white muslin the wedded bride  
Looks fresh as a daisy, the groom by her side.

The guests flitted round her with light-hearted laughter;  
They hunted the slipper, they kissed the ring;  
Of days gone before and of days coming after  
They thought of no more than the bird on the wing.  
Were the loves and the laughter and lilacs of May,  
With the sunshine above, not enough for the day?

And the lilacs, the lilacs are blowing and glowing!  
They pluck them by handfuls and pile them in a mass;  
And the sap of the Springtide is rising and flowing  
Through the veins of the greenwood, the blades of the grass;  
Up, up to the last leaf a dance on the tree,  
It leaps like a fountain abundant and free.

The blackbirds are building their nests in the bushes,  
And whistle at work, as the workpeople do;  
The trees swing their censers, the wind comes in gushes  
Of delicate scent mixed of honey and dew.  
Now loud and now loud through the garrulous trees  
A burst of gay music is blown with the breeze.

And the girls and the boys from the faubourgs of Paris,  
The premature gamins as wise as fourscore;  
The vain little Margots and the wide-awake Harrys,

Surprised into childhood, grew simple once more,  
And vied with the cuckoo as, shouting at play,  
They dashed through the thickets and darted away.

Ah, fair is the forest's green glimmering splendour,  
The leaves of the lime tree a network of light;  
And fringing long aisles of acacia, a tender  
And delicate veiling of virginal white,  
Where, framed in the gladdening flowers of May,  
The bride and her bridesmaids beam gladder than they.

They have crowned her brown tresses with hawthorn in blossom,  
They have made her a necklace of daisies for pearls;  
They have set the white lily against her white bosom,  
Enthroned on the grass mid a garland of girls;  
With the earth for a footstool, the sky-roof above,  
She is queen of the Springtide and Lady of Love.

Oh, the lilacs, the lilacs are glowing and blowing!  
They pluck them by bushels as blithely they go  
Through the green, scented dusk where the hawthorn is showing  
A luminous whiteness of blossoming snow.  
And the Sun ere he goes gives the Moon half his light,  
As a lamp to lead Love on the bridal night.

Mathilde Blind

# A Child's Fancy

"Hush, hush! Speak softly, Mother dear,  
So that the daisies may not hear;  
For when the stars begin to peep,  
The pretty daisies go to sleep.

"See, Mother, round us on the lawn,  
With soft white lashes closely drawn,  
They've shut their eyes so golden-gay,  
That looked up through the long, long day.

"But now they're tired of all the fun--  
Of bees and birds, of wind and sun  
Playing their game at hide-and-peek;--  
Then very softly let us speak."

A myriad stars above the child  
Looked down from heaven and sweetly smiled;  
But not a star in all the skies  
Beamed on him with his Mother's eyes.

She stroked his curly chestnut head,  
And whispering very softly, said,  
"I'd quite forgotten they might hear;  
Thank you for that reminder, dear.

Mathilde Blind

# A Dream

Only a dream, a beautiful baseless dream;  
Only a bright  
Flash from your eyes, a brief electrical gleam,  
Charged with delight.

Only a waking, alone, in the moon's last gleam  
Fading from sight;  
Only a flooding of tears that shudder and stream  
Fast through the night.

Mathilde Blind

# A Fantasy

I was an Arab,  
I loved my horse;  
Swift as an arrow  
He swept the course.

Sweet as a lamb  
He came to hand;  
He was the flower  
Of all the land.

Through lonely nights  
I rode afar;  
God lit His lights--  
Star upon star.

God's in the desert;  
His breath the air:  
Beautiful desert,  
Boundless and bare!

Free as the wild wind,  
Light as a foal;  
Ah, there is room there  
To stretch one's soul.

Far reached my thought,  
Scant were my needs:  
A few bananas  
And lotus seeds.

Sparkling as water  
Cool in the shade,  
Ibrahim's daughter,  
Beautiful maid.

Out of thy Kulleh,  
Fairest and first,  
Give me to drink  
Quencher of thirst.

I am athirst, girl;  
Parched with desire,  
Love in my bosom  
Burns as a fire.

Green thy oasis,  
Waving with Palms;  
Oh, be no niggard,  
Maid, with thy alms.

Kiss me with kisses,  
Buds of thy mouth,  
Sweeter than Cassia  
Fresh from the South.

Bind me with tresses,  
Clasp with a curl;  
And in caresses  
Stifle me, girl.

I was an Arab  
Ages ago!  
Hence this home-sickness  
And all my woe.

Mathilde Blind

# A Parable

BETWEEN the sandhills and the sea  
A narrow strip of silver sand,  
Whereon a little maid doth stand,  
Who picks up shells continually  
Between the sandhills and the sea.

Far as her wondering eyes can reach  
A Vastness, heaving grey in grey  
To the frayed edges where the day  
Furls his red standard on the breach,  
Between the skyline and the beach.

The waters of the flowing tide  
Cast up the seapink shells and weed;  
She toys with shells, and doth not heed  
The ocean, which on every side  
Is closing round her vast and wide.

It creeps her way as if in play,  
Pink shells at her pink feet to cast;  
But now the wild waves hold her fast,  
And bear her off and melt away  
A Vastness heaving gray in gray.

Mathilde Blind

# A Parting

The year is on the wing, my love,  
With tearful days and nights;  
The clouds are on the wing above  
With gathering swallow-flights.

The year is on the wing, my sweet,  
And in the ghostly race,  
With patter of unnumbered feet,  
The dead leaves fly apace.

The year is on the wing, and shakes  
The last rose from its tree;  
And I, whose heart in parting breaks,  
Must bid adieu to thee.

Mathilde Blind

# A Spring Song

Dark sod pierced by flames of flowers,  
Dead wood freshly quickening,  
Bright skies dusked with sudden showers,  
Lit by rainbows on the wing.

Cuckoo calls and young lambs' bleating,  
Nimble airs which coyly bring  
Little gusts of tender greeting  
From shy nooks where violets cling.

Half-fledged buds and birds and vernal  
Fields of grass dew-glistening;  
Evanescent life's eternal  
Resurrection, bridal Spring!

Mathilde Blind

# A Symbol

Hurrying for ever in their restless flight  
The generations of earth's teeming womb  
Rise into being and lapse into the tomb  
Like transient bubbles sparkling in the light;  
They sink in quick succession out of sight  
Into the thick insuperable gloom  
Our futile lives in flashing by illum--  
Lightning which mocks the darkness of the night.

Nay--but consider, though we change and die,  
If men must pass shall Man not still remain?  
As the unnumbered drops of summer rain  
Whose changing particles unchanged on high,  
Fixed, in perpetual motion, yet maintain  
The mystic bow emblazoned on the sky.

Mathilde Blind

# A White Night

THE land lay deluged by the Moon;  
The molten silver of the lake  
Shimmered in many a broad lagoon  
Between grey isles, whose copse and brake  
Lay folded on the water's breast  
Like halcyons in a floating nest.

And like a child who trusts in God  
When in the dark it lies alone,  
Stretched on the aromatic sod  
My heart was laid against your own,  
Against your heart, which seemed to be  
Mine own to all Eternity.

Lapped in illimitable light,  
The woods and waters seemed to swoon,  
And clouds like angels-winged the night  
And slipped away into the Moon,  
Lost in that radiant flame above  
As we were lapped and lost in love.

Mathilde Blind

# A Winter Landscape

All night, all day, in dizzy, downward flight,  
Fell the wild-whirling, vague, chaotic snow,  
Till every landmark of the earth below,  
Trees, moorlands, roads, and each familiar sight  
Were blotted out by the bewildering white.  
And winds, now shrieking loud, now whimpering low,  
Seemed lamentations for the world-old woe  
That death must swallow life, and darkness light.

But all at once the rack was blown away,  
The snowstorm hushing ended in a sigh;  
Then like a flame the crescent moon on high  
Leaped forth among the planets; pure as they,  
Earth vied in whiteness with the Milky Way:  
Herself a star beneath the starry sky.

Mathilde Blind

# Affinities

I.

I will take your thoughts to my heart;  
I will keep and garner them there  
Locked in a casket apart.  
Far above rubies or rare  
Pearls from the prodigal deep,  
Which men stake their lives on to find,  
And women their beauty to keep,  
I will treasure the pearls of your mind.

How long has it taken the earth  
To crystallize gems in a mine?  
How long was the sea giving birth  
To her pearls, washed in bitterest brine?  
What sorrows, what struggles, what fierce  
Endeavour of lives in the past,  
Hearts tempered by fire and tears,  
To fashion your manhood at last!

II.

TAKE me to thy heart, and let me  
Rest my head a little while;  
Rest my heart from griefs that fret me  
In the mercy of thy smile.

In a twilight pause of feeling,  
Time to say a moment's grace,  
Put thy hands, whose touch is healing,  
Put them gently on my face.

Found too late in Life's wild welter,  
All I ask, for weal and woe,  
Friend, a moment's friendly shelter,  
And thy blessing ere I go.

### III.

FULL many loves and friendships dear  
Have blossomed brightly in my path;  
And some were like the primrose rathe,  
And withered with the vernal year.

And some were like the joyous rose,  
Most prodigal with scent and hue,  
That glows while yet the sky is blue,  
And falls with every wind that blows--

Mere guests and annuals of the heart;  
But you are that perennial bay,  
Greenest when greener leaves decay,  
Whom only death shall bid depart.

Mathilde Blind

## Ah, If You Knew

Ah, if you knew how soon and late  
My eyes long for a sight of you  
Sometimes in passing by my gate  
You'd linger until fall of dew,  
If you but knew!

Ah, if you knew how sick and sore  
My life flags for the want of you,  
Straightway you'd enter at the door  
And clasp my hand between your two,  
If you but knew!

Ah, if you knew how lost and lone  
I watch and weep and wait for you,  
You'd press my heart close to your own  
Till love had healed me through and through,  
If you but knew!

Mathilde Blind

# Ah, Yesterday Was Dark And Drear

Ah, yesterday was dark and drear,  
My heart was deadly sore;  
Without thy love it seemed, my Dear,  
That I could live no more.

And yet I laugh and sing to-day;  
Care or care not for me,  
Thou canst not take the love away  
With which I worship thee.

And if to-morrow, Dear, I live,  
My heart I shall not break:  
For still I hold it that to give  
Is sweeter than to take.

Mathilde Blind

# All My Heart Is Stirring Lightly

All my heart is stirring lightly  
Like dim violets winter-bound,  
Quickening as they feel the brightly  
Glowing sunlight underground.

Yea, this drear and silent bosom,  
Hushed as snow-hid grove but now,  
Breaketh into leaf and blossom  
Like a gleaming vernal bough.

Oh the singing, singing, singing!  
Callow hopes that thrill my breast!  
Can the lark of love be winging  
Back to its abandoned nest?

Mathilde Blind

# Analkh

Like a great rock which looming o'er the deep  
Casts his eternal shadow on the strands,  
And veiled in cloud inexorably stands,  
While vaulting round his adamantine steep  
Embattled breakers clamorously leap,  
Sun-garlanded and hope-uplifted bands,  
But soon with waters shattered in the sands  
Slowly recoiling back to ocean creep:

So sternly dost thou tower above us, Fate!  
For still our eager hearts exultant beat,  
Borne in the hurrying tide of life elate,  
And dashing break against thy marble feet.  
But would Hope's rainbow-aureole round us fleet,  
Without these hurtling shocks of man's estate?

Mathilde Blind

# Anne Hathaway

HIS Eve of Women! She, whose mortal lot  
Was linked to an Immortal's unaware,  
With Love's lost Eden in her blissful air,  
Perchance would greet him in this blessed spot.  
No shadow of the coming days durst blot,  
The flower-like face, so innocently fair,  
As lip met lip, and lily arms, all bare,  
Clung round him in a perfect lover's knot.

Was not this Anne the flame-like daffodil  
Of Shakespeare's March, whose maiden beauty took  
His senses captive? Thus the stripling brook  
Mirrors a wild flower nodding by the mill,  
Then grows a river in which proud cities look,  
And with a land's load widens seaward still

Mathilde Blind

# Anne Hathaway's Cottage

IS this the Cottage, ivy-girt and crowned,  
And this the path down which our Shakespeare ran,  
When, in the April of his love, sweet Anne  
Made all his mighty pulses throb and bound;  
Where, mid coy buds and winking flowers around,  
She blushed a rarer rose than roses can,  
To greet her Will--even Him, fair Avon's Swan--  
Whose name has turned this plot to holy ground!

To these dear walls, once dear to Shakespeare's eyes,  
Time's Vandal hand itself has done no wrong;  
This nestling lattice opened to his song,  
When, with the lark, he bade his love arise  
In words whose strong enchantment never dies--  
Old as these flowers, and, like them, ever young.

Mathilde Blind

# Apple-Blossom

Blossom of the apple trees!  
Mossy trunks all gnarled and hoary,  
Grey boughs tipped with rose-veined glory,  
Clustered petals soft as fleece  
Garlanding old apple trees!

How you gleam at break of day!  
When the coy sun, glancing rarely,  
Pouts and sparkles in the pearly  
Pendulous dewdrops, twinkling gay  
On each dancing leaf and spray.

Through your latticed boughs on high,  
Framed in rosy wreaths, one catches  
Brief kaleidoscopic snatches  
Of deep lapis-lazuli  
In the April-coloured sky.

When the sundown's dying brand  
Leaves your beauty to the tender  
Magic spells of moonlight splendour,  
Glimmering clouds of bloom you stand,  
Turning earth to fairyland.

Cease, wild winds, O, cease to blow!  
Apple-blossom, fluttering, flying,  
Palely on the green turf lying,  
Vanishing like winter snow;  
Swift as joy to come and go.

Mathilde Blind

# April Rain

The April rain, the April rain,  
Comes slanting down in fitful showers,  
Then from the furrow shoots the grain,  
And banks are fledged with nestling flowers;  
And in grey shaw and woodland bowers  
The cuckoo through the April rain  
Calls once again.

The April sun, the April sun,  
Glints through the rain in fitful splendour,  
And in grey shaw and woodland dun  
The little leaves spring forth and tender  
Their infant hands, yet weak and slender,  
For warmth towards the April sun,  
One after one.

And between shower and shine hath birth  
The rainbow's evanescent glory;  
Heaven's light that breaks on mists of earth!  
Frail symbol of our human story,  
It flowers through showers where, looming hoary,  
The rain-clouds flash with April mirth,  
Like Life on earth.

Mathilde Blind

# As Many Stars

AS many stars as are aglow  
Deep in the hollows of the night  
As many as the flowers that blow  
Beneath the kindling light;

As many as the birds that fly  
Unpiloted across the deep;  
As many as the clouds on high,  
And all the drops they weep;

As many as the leaves that fall  
In autumn, on the withering lea,  
When wind to thundering wind doth call,  
And sea calls unto sea;

As many as the multitude  
Of quiet graves, where mutely bide  
The wicked people and the good,  
Laid softly side by side;--

So many thoughts, so many tears,  
Such hosts of prayers, are sent on high,  
Seeking, through all Man's perished years,  
A love that will not die.

Mathilde Blind

# Autumn Tints

red yew-berries  
Strew the garden ways,  
Hollyhocks and sunflowers  
Make a dazzling blaze  
In these latter days.

Marigolds by cottage doors  
Flaunt their golden pride,  
Crimson-punctured bramble leaves  
Dapple far and wide  
The green mountain-side.

Far away, on hilly slopes  
Where fleet rivulets run,  
Miles on miles of tangled fern,  
Burnished by the sun,  
Glow a copper dun.

For the year that's on the wane,  
Gathering all its fire,  
Flares up through the kindling world  
As, ere they expire,  
Flames leap high and higher.

Mathilde Blind

# Ave Maria In Rome

FAR away dim violet mountains  
Fade away from sight;  
Flashing from fantastic fountains,  
Jets the liquid light,  
Where from Nymph's or Triton's lip  
Bubbling waters drip and drip,  
Bubbling day and night.

Pealed from tower to answering tower,  
O'er the city swells,  
Ringing in the hallowed hour,  
Rhythm of bells on bells;  
And on wings of Choral Song,  
Confluent hearts to Mary throng,  
From low, cloistered cells.

On the golden ground of even,  
Like a half-way home,  
On the pilgrim to heaven  
Floats St. Peter's Dome;  
High, high, in the air alone,  
Man's dread Thought transformed to stone,  
Pinnacled o'er Rome.

Mathilde Blind

# Beauty

Even as on some black background full of night  
And hollow storm in cloudy disarray,  
The forceful brush of some great master may  
More brilliantly evoke a higher light;  
So beautiful, so delicately white,  
So like a very metaphor of May,  
Your loveliness on my life's sombre grey  
In its perfection stands out doubly bright.

And yet your beauty breeds a strange despair,  
And pang of yearning in the helpless heart;  
To shield you from time's fraying wear and tear,  
That from yourself yourself would wrench apart,  
How save you, fairest, but to set you where  
Mortality kills death in deathless art?

Mathilde Blind

# Between Sleep And Waking

SOFTLY in a dream I heard,  
Ere the day was breaking,  
Softly call a cuckoo bird  
Between sleep and waking.

Calling through the rippling rain  
And red orchard blossom;  
Calling up old love again,  
Buried in my bosom;

Calling till he brought you too  
From some magic region;  
And the whole spring followed you,  
Birds on birds in legion.

Youth was in your beaming glance,  
Love a rainbow round you;  
Blushing trees began to dance,  
Wreaths of roses crowned you.

And I called your name, and woke  
To the cuckoo's calling;  
And you waned in waning smoke,  
As the rain was falling.

Had the cuckoo called 'Adieu,'  
Ere the day was breaking?  
All the old wounds bled anew  
Between sleep and waking.

Mathilde Blind

# Brown Eyes

Oh, brown Eyes with long black lashes,  
Young brown Eyes,  
Depths of night from which there flashes  
Lightning as of summer skies,  
Beautiful brown Eyes!

In your veiled mysterious splendour  
Passion lies  
Sleeping, but with sudden tender  
Dreams that fill with vague surmise  
Beautiful brown Eyes.

All my soul, with yearning shaken,  
Asks in sighs--  
Who will see your heart awaken,  
Love's divine sunrise  
In those young brown Eyes?

Mathilde Blind

# Cagnes

ON THE RIVIERA.

In tortuous windings up the steep incline  
The sombre street toils to the village square,  
Whose antique walls in stone and moulding bear  
Dumb witness to the Moor. Afar off shine,  
With tier on tier, cutting heaven's blue divine,  
The snowy Alps; and lower the hills are fair,  
With wave-green olives rippling down to where  
Gold clusters hang and leaves of sunburnt vine.

You may perchance, I never shall forget  
When, between twofold glory of land and sea,  
We leant together o'er the old parapet,  
And saw the sun go down. For, oh, to me,  
The beauty of that beautiful strange place  
Was its reflection beaming from your face.

Mathilde Blind

# Cedars Of Lebanon At Warwick Castle

CEDARS of Lebanon! Labyrinths of Shade,  
Making a mystery of open day;  
With layers of gloom keeping the Sun at bay,  
And solemn boughs which never bloom or fade.  
Contemporaries of that great Crusade,  
When militant Christendom leaped up one day,  
Fired by the Cross, and rushing to the fray,  
Poured Eastward as oracular Peter bade.

Borne hither when Christ's Sepulchre was won,  
And planted by hoar Warwick's feudal walls,  
You grew, o'ershadowing every rival stem.  
When English woods don May's fresh coronals,  
Say,--Mourn ye still lost Jerusalem,  
Funeral trees--beloved of Lebanon?

Mathilde Blind

# Christmas Even

Alone--with one fair star for company,  
The loveliest star among the hosts of night,  
While the grey tide ebbs with the ebbing light--  
I pace along the darkening wintry sea.  
Now round the yule-log and the glittering tree  
Twinkling with festive tapers, eyes as bright  
Sparkle with Christmas joys and young delight,  
As each one gathers to his family.

But I--a waif on earth where'er I roam--  
Uprooted with life's bleeding hopes and fears  
From that one heart that was my heart's sole home,  
Feel the old pang pierce through the severing years,  
And as I think upon the years to come  
That fair star trembles through my falling tears.

Mathilde Blind

# Cleave Thou The Waves

Cleave thou the waves that weltering to and fro  
Surge multitudinous. The eternal Powers  
Of sun, moon, stars, the air, the hurrying hours,  
The winged winds, the still dissolving show  
Of clouds in calm or storm, for ever flow  
Above thee; while the abysmal sea devours  
The untold dead insatiate, where it lowers  
O'er glooms unfathomed, limitless, below.

No longer on the golden-fretted sands,  
Where many a shallow tide abortive chafes,  
Mayst thou delay; life onward sweeping blends  
With far-off heaven: the dauntless one who braves  
The perilous flood with calm unswerving hands,  
The elements sustain: cleave thou the waves.

Mathilde Blind

## Cleve Woods

SWEET Avon glides where clinging rushes seem  
To stay his course, and, in his flattering glass,  
Meadows and hills and mellow woodlands pass,  
A fairer world as imaged in a dream.  
And sometimes, in a visionary gleam,  
From out the secret covert's tangled mass,  
The fisher-bird starts from the rustling grass,  
A jewelled shuttle shot along the stream.

Even here, methinks, when moon-lapped shallows smiled  
Round isles no bigger than a baby cot,  
Titania found a glowworm-lighted child,  
Led far astray, and, with anointing hand  
Sprinkling clear dew from a forget-me-not,  
Hailed him the Laureate of her Fairyland.

Mathilde Blind

# Cross-Roads

The rain beat in our faces,  
And shrill the wild airs grew;  
The long-maned clouds in races  
Coursed o'er heaven's windy blue.

The tortured trees were lashing  
Each other in their wrath,  
Their wet leaves wildly dashing  
Across the forest path.

We did not heed the sweeping  
Of storm-bewildered rain;  
Our cheeks were wet with weeping,  
Our hearts were wrung with pain.

For where the cross-roads sever,  
Parting to East and West,  
We bade good-bye for ever,  
To what we each loved best.

Mathilde Blind

# Dead Love

Mother of the unfortunate, mystic form,  
Who calm, immutable, like oldest fate,  
Sittest, where through the sombre swinging gate  
Moans immemorial life's encircling storm.  
My heart, sore stricken by grief's leaden arm,  
Lags like a weary pilgrim knocking late,  
And sigheth--toward thee staggering with its weight--  
Behold Love conquered by thy son, the worm!

He stung him mid the roses' purple bloom,  
The Rose of roses, yea, a thing so sweet,  
Haply to stay blind Change's flying feet,  
And stir with pity the unpitying tomb.  
Here, take him, cold, cold, heavy and void of breath!  
Nor me refuse, O Mother almighty, death.

Mathilde Blind

# Deep In A Yew-Sequestered Grove

Deep in a yew-sequestered grove  
I sat and wept my heart away;  
A child came by at close of day  
With eyes as sweet as new-born love.

He came from sun-bleached meadows where  
High on the hedge the topmost rose  
Curtseys to every wind that blows.  
A wanton of the summer air.

The sunset aureoled his brow,  
Kindling the roses in his hand,  
And by my side I saw him stand  
To offer me his rose-red bough:

Take back thy gift--I sighed forlorn,  
And showed where like the yew's red seed,  
My blood had trickled, bead on bead,  
From wounds made by his cruel thorn.

He smiled and said:--Nay, take my Rose;  
You know, when all is said and done,  
There's not a joy beneath the sun  
Worth lovers' joys but lovers' woes.

Mathilde Blind

# Delight

FLEETER than a tone scarce born  
That melts away,  
Sweeter than a dream of morn  
That shuns the day,  
Swifter than a rainbow fading out of sight:  
Sucked away as dewdrops by the burning light;  
Or like birds or blossoms, takest thou thy flight--  
Sunbeam of delight.

Mathilde Blind

# Despair

Thy wings swoop darkening round my soul, Despair!  
And on my brain thy shadow seems to brood  
And hem me round with stifling solitude,  
With chasms of vacuous bloom which are thy lair.  
No light of human joy, no song or prayer,  
Breaks ever on this chaos, all imbrued  
With heart's-blood trickling from the multitude  
Of sweet hopes slain, or agonising there.

Lo, wilt thou yield thyself to grief, and roll  
Vanquished from thy high seat, imperial brain,  
And abdicating turbulent life's control,  
Be dragged a captive bound in sorrow's chain?  
Nay! though my heart is breaking with its pain,  
No pain on earth has power to crush my soul.

Mathilde Blind

# Dost Thou Remember Ever

Dost thou remember ever, for my sake,  
When we two rowed upon the rock-bound lake?  
How the wind-fretted waters blew their spray  
About our brows like blossom-falls of May  
One memorable day?

Dost thou remember the glad mouth that cried--  
"Were it not sweet to die now side by side,  
To lie together tangled in the deep  
Close as the heart-beat to the heart--so keep  
The everlasting sleep?"

Dost thou remember? Ah, such death as this  
Had set the seal upon my heart's young bliss!  
But, wrenched asunder, severed and apart,  
Life knew a deadlier death: the blighting smart  
Which only kills the heart.

Mathilde Blind

# Echoes Of Spring

I.

I WALK about in driving snow,  
And drizzling rain, splashed o'er and o'er;  
No sign that radiant spring e'en now  
Stands at the threshold of the door.

No sign that fragrant violets burn  
To burst the ground and quicken forth;  
No sign that swallow flights return,  
To gladden all the serious north.

But in my breast--what flutterings here!  
What bursts of song! what twitt'rings blest!  
Sure the first swallow of the year  
Within my heart has built her nest.

II.

Oft on the gleaming April days,  
When skies are soft, and winds are warm,  
And in the air a subtle charm,  
And on the hill a flight of rays;

When silver clouds slide through the blue,  
Spreading a pure, transparent wing,  
And all the budding branches ring  
With blithesome birds, that warbling woo;

Beneath a pear tree's shade I lay,  
Deep bedded in the long thick grass,  
And heard the twitt'ring swallow pass,  
And grasshoppers at endless play.

I knew, though flowers mine eyes did screen,  
That butterflies danced in the light;  
For, breaking sunbeams in their flight,  
They flashed their shadows on the green.

And gazing up, in dreamful ease,

Where quiv'ring frail on shivery sprays,  
The blossoms mix a milky maze,  
What hum of golden-girted bees!

So lily-white, the tree, behold,  
Seems set on fire by burnished lights,  
And shoal on honeying shoal alights,  
And turns the snowy boughs to gold.

Thus on my spirit--music-fraught,  
Burst swarms of glimm'ring melodies,  
And like the yellow-banded bees,  
Make honey of my flutt'ring thought.

### III.

Sometimes on my soul will throng  
Such a blossom-burst of song,  
That I cannot seize it all,  
Letting sweetest measures fall.

Thus a child feels--sudden sunk  
On a crowding violet bank,  
And delighted and amazed,  
Gathers in a flushèd haste.

Gathers them so fast and fleet,  
Little fingers cannot meet  
O'er the lot; and swifter still  
Than they cull, the wealth they spill.

To that sweets o'erflooded nook,  
Casting back one longing look,  
At the last it takes away  
But one little odorous spray.

Yet through many a day and night,  
Flinging back the fragrant sight,  
Cleaves to face, and hands, and feet,  
All the woodland's violets sweet.

IV.

Fain would I sing of each sweet sight and sound,  
Of fleeting odours wheeling round and round,  
Of sunbeams dancing on the virgin grass,  
Of flocks of fleecy clouds that glimmer as they pass.

Of larks, that lost in the blue ether float,  
Of the weird blackbird's dream--enchanted note!  
While the glad hedges palpitate with song,  
That drops like murm'ring rain the dewy fields among.

Of blooming bushes and of budding trees,  
Of flaming flowers, dotting the grassy leas,  
Of glowing pools and of the babbling rills,  
That flash through azure mists, slumb'ring on folded hills.

Fain would I sing, sweet April-time, of thee,  
And mingle in thy wantonness of glee;  
But thou such overwealth of sweets dost fling,  
My heart is all too full, too full to speak or sing.

V.

There's somewhat in the loveliness of spring,  
In the young light, and in the fragrant bloom,  
In the sweet song that each soft breeze doth wing,  
In the bright flowers that rise from earth's dark womb;

Which fills with sadness the presentient mind,  
And for a far-off home awakes the sigh;  
Which makes us gaze, with longings undefined,  
On dim blue hills, and weep--we know not why.

VI.

Oh, birds, winged voices! children of the light!  
Whose song is love, whose love is melody;  
Shedding o'er hedge, and field, and bush, and tree,  
Your tuneful joy and musical delight,

Making the air, the earth, the heavens bright;  
Melodious, tender, sad and gay and free;

By all these gifts true poets born are ye;  
Love circumscribes alone your restless flight.

Poets, I say? Ah, not like poets here,  
That wander forth alone, companionless;  
Whose lays are wrung from them by care and pain;  
Who sing, while blinded by the hot salt tear.

Not such are ye; but free from all distress,  
Ye, with the sunlight, range o'er land and main.

#### VII.

Oh, soft sweet air of early spring,  
Again thou float'st on viewless wing,  
Coax'st snowdrops their white bells to ring,  
And wak'st the blackbird up to sing.

Again, upon the bright'ning lea,  
Beneath the budding bursting tree,  
The toddling baby-mites I see,  
Skip, jump, and frisk in lamb-like glee.

But I am sad, I know not why;  
My breast heaves with the long-drawn sigh;  
The tear rounds slowly in mine eye;  
I'd like to lay me down and die.

#### VIII.

The blooming hedge, the budding grove,  
Resound with notes of joy and love;  
The gleaming bush, the glimm'ring tree,  
Live with a dewy melody.

Along the meadows, flashing bright,  
Run trills of shrill and sweet delight;  
E'en the small snowy clouds among,  
Gush showers on showers of silver song.  
But thou, my heart, oh, tell me why  
Hast thou no language but a sigh?

IX.

Like a flower-fall of rain,  
Like a snowy elfin train,  
Like stray gleams of moonlight fair,  
Do you shift upon the air,  
Do you flutter on the breeze,  
Do you fall upon the leas,  
Blossoms of the apple-trees;  
Then on earth's bosom slow ye fade away,  
Like to a low and sweetly dying lay.

X.

With thousand gaps the earth is split,  
By sunbeams wounded o'er and o'er,  
My heart, it acheth bit by bit;  
Life's heat and dust have made it sore.

When wilt thou fall from clouds above,  
In silver showers, refreshing rain?  
When wilt thou come, reviving love,  
With dew, and make me whole again?

A little while, big drops will slake,  
Oh, earth, thy thirst's hot agony;  
But till my fevered heart doth break,  
Will solace ever come to me?

Mathilde Blind

# Egyptian Theosophy

Far in the introspective East  
A meditative Memphian Priest

Would solve--such is the Sage's curse--  
The riddle of the Universe.

Thought, turning round itself, revolved,  
How was this puzzling World evolved?

How came the starry sky to be,  
The sun, the earth, the Nile, the sea?

And Man, most tragi-comic Man,  
Whence came he here, and where began?

Communing with the baffling sky,  
Who twinkled, but made no reply,

He brooded, till his heated brain  
Grew fairly addled with the strain.

For in that dim, benighted age  
Philosopher and hoary sage

Had not yet had the saving grace  
To teach the Schools that Time and Space,

And all the marvels they contain,  
Are but the phantoms of the brain.

But that profound Egyptian Seer  
Maybe--who knows?--came pretty near;

When, after days of strenuous fast,  
He hit the startling truth at last;

And on select, mysterious nights,  
Veiled in occult, symbolic rites:

He taught--that once upon a time--  
To disbelieve it were a crime--

The World's great egg--refute who can,  
That meditates on Life and Man--

While deafening cacklings spread the news--  
Was laid by an Almighty Goose.

Mathilde Blind

# Entangled

I STOOD as one enchanted,  
All in the forest deep:  
As one that wond'ring wanders,  
Dream-bound within his sleep.

A thousand rustling footsteps  
Pattered upon the ground;  
A thousand whisp'ring voices  
Made the wide silence, sound.

Some murmured deep and deeper,  
Like waves in solemn seas;  
Some breathèd sweet and sweeter,  
Like elves on moon-lit leas.

Tall ferns, washed down in sunlight,  
Beckoned with fingers green;  
Tall flowers nodded strangely,  
With white and glimm'ring sheen;

They sighed, they sang so softly,  
They stretched their arms to me;  
My heart, it throbbed so wildly,  
In weird tumultuous glee.

I staggered in the mosses,  
It seemed to drag me down  
Into the gleaming bushes;  
To fall, to sink, to drown.

When lo! thro' scared foliage,  
A lovely bird did fly;  
And looked at me so knowing,  
With bright and curious eye;

It broke out into warbles,  
And singing sped away;  
But I, like one awakened,  
Fled down the mossy way.

Mathilde Blind

# Evensong

(Holy Trinity Church.)

THE hectic autumn's dilatory fire  
Has turned this lime tree to a sevenfold brand,  
Which, self consuming, lights the sunless land,  
A death to which all poet souls aspire.  
Above the graves, where all men's vain desire  
Is hushed at last as by a Mother's hand,  
And, Time confounded, Love's blank records stand,  
The Evensong swells from the pulsing choir.

What incommunicable presence clings  
To this grey church and willowy twilight stream?  
Am I the dupe of some delusive dream?  
Or, like faint fluid phosphorent rings  
On refluent seas, doth Shakespeare's spirit gleam  
Pervasive round these old familiar things?

Mathilde Blind

# Green Leaves And Sere

Three tall poplars beside the pool  
Shiver and moan in the gusty blast,  
The carded clouds are blown like wool,  
And the yellowing leaves fly thick and fast.

The leaves, now driven before the blast,  
Now flung by fits on the curdling pool,  
Are tossed heaven-high and dropped at last  
As if at the whim of a jabbering fool.

O leaves, once rustling green and cool!  
Two met here where one moans aghast  
With wild heart heaving towards the past:  
Three tall poplars beside the pool.

Mathilde Blind

# Haunted

Why will you haunt me unawares,  
And walk into my sleep,  
Pacing its shadowy thoroughfares,  
Where long-dried perfume scents the airs,

While ghosts of sorrow creep,  
Where on Hope's ruined altar-stairs,  
With ineffectual beams,  
The Moon of Memory coldly glares

Upon the land of dreams?  
My yearning eyes were fain to look  
Upon your hidden face;  
Their love, alas! you could not brook,

But in your own you mutely took  
My hand, and for a space  
You wrung it till I throbbed and shook,  
And woke with wildest moan

And wet face channelled like a brook  
With your tears or my own.

Mathilde Blind

# Haunted Streets

Lo, haply walking in some clattering street--  
Where throngs of men and women dumbly pass,  
Like shifting pictures seen within a glass  
Which leave no trace behind--one seems to meet,  
In roads once trodden by our mutual feet,  
A face projected from that shadowy mass  
Of faces, quite familiar as it was,  
Which beaming on us stands out clear and sweet.

The face of faces we again behold  
That lit our life when life was very fair,  
And leaps our heart toward eyes and mouth and hair:  
Oblivious of the undying love grown cold,  
Or body sheeted in the churchyard mould,  
We stretch out yearning hands and grasp--the air.

Mathilde Blind

# Heart's-Ease

As opiates to the sick on wakeful nights,  
As light to flowers, as flowers in poor men's rooms,  
As to the fisher when the tempest glooms  
The cheerful twinkling of his village lights;  
As emerald isles to flagging swallow flights,  
As roses garlanding with tendrilled blooms  
The unweeded hillocks of forgotten tombs,  
As singing birds on cypress-shadowed heights,

Thou art to me--a comfort past compare--  
For thy joy-kindling presence, sweet as May,  
Sets all my nerves to music, makes away  
With sorrow and the numbing frost of care,  
Until the influence of thine eyes' bright sway  
Has made life's glass go up from foul to fair.

Mathilde Blind

# Hope

All treasures of the earth and opulent seas,  
Metals and odorous woods and cunning gold,  
Fowls of the air and furry beasts untold,  
Vineyards and harvest fields and fruitful trees  
Nature gave unto Man; and last her keys  
Vouched passage to her secret ways of old  
Whence knowledge should be wrung, nay power to mould  
Out of the rough, his occult destinies.

But tired of these he craved a wider scope:  
Then fair as Pallas from the brain of Jove  
From his deep wish there sprang, full-armed, to cope  
With all life's ills, even very death in love,  
The only thing man never wearies of--  
His own creation--visionary Hope.

Mathilde Blind

# Hymn To Horus

Hail, God revived in glory!  
The night is over and done;  
Far mountains wrinkled and hoary,  
Fair cities great in story,  
Flash in the rising sun.

Behold the Dawn uncloses  
The shutters of the night;  
The Waste and her oases  
Blossoms a rose of roses  
Beneath thy rose-red light.

Hail, golden House of Horus,  
Lap of heaven's holiest God!  
From lotos-banks before us  
Birds in ecstatic chorus  
Fly, singing, from the sod.

Up, up, into the shining,  
Translucent morning sky,  
No longer dull and pining,  
With drooping plumes declining,  
The storks and eagles fly.

The Nile amid his rushes  
Reflects thy risen disk;  
A light of gladness gushes  
Through kindling halls, and flushes  
Each flaming Obelisk.

Vast Temples catch thy splendour;  
Vistas of columns shine  
Celestial, with a tender  
Rose-bloom on every slender  
Papyrus-pillared shrine.

In manifold disguises,  
And under many names,  
Thrice-holy son of Isis,

We worship him who rises  
A child-god fledged in flames.

Hail, sacred Hawk, who, winging,  
Crossest the heavenly sea!  
With harp-playing, with singing,  
With linen robes, white clinging,  
We come, fair God, to thee.

Thou whom our soul espouses,  
When weary of the way,  
Enter our golden houses,  
And, with thy mystic spouses,  
Rest from the long, long way.

Mathilde Blind

# I Am Athirst, But Not For Wine

I am athirst, but not for wine;  
The drink I long for is divine,  
Poured only from your eyes in mine.

I hunger, but the bread I want,  
Of which my blood and brain are scant,  
Is your sweet speech, for which I pant.

I am a-cold, and lagging lame,  
Life creeps along my languid frame;  
Your love would fan it into flame.

Heaven's in that little word--your love!  
It makes my heart coo like a dove,  
My tears fall as I think thereof.

Mathilde Blind

# I Charge You

I charge you, O winds of the West, O winds with the wings of the dove,  
That ye blow o'er the brows of my Love, breathing low that I sicken for love.

I charge you, O dews of the Dawn, O tears of the star of the morn,  
That ye fall at the feet of my love with the sound of one weeping forlorn.

I charge you, O birds of the Air, O birds flying home to your nest,  
That ye sing in his ears of the joy that for ever has fled from my breast.

I charge you, O flowers of the Earth, O frailest of things, and most fair,  
That ye droop in his path as the life in me shrivels consumed by despair.

O Moon, when he lifts up his face, when he seeth the waning of thee,  
A memory of her who lies wan on the limits of life let it be.

Many tears cannot quench, nor my sighs extinguish, the flames of love's fire,  
Which lifteth my heart like a wave, and smites it, and breaks its desire.

I rise like one in a dream when I see the red sun flaring low,  
That drags me back shuddering from sleep each morning to life with its woe.

I go like one in a dream, unbidden my feet know the way  
To that garden where love stood in blossom with the red and white hawthorn of  
May.

The song of the throstle is hushed, and the fountain is dry to its core,  
The moon cometh up as of old; she seeks, but she finds him no more.

The pale-faced, pitiful moon shines down on the grass where I weep,  
My face to the earth, and my breast in an anguish ne'er soothed into sleep.

The moon returns, and the spring, birds warble, trees burst into leaf,  
But Love once gone, goes for ever, and all that endures is the grief.

Mathilde Blind

# I Planted A Rose Tree

I planted a rose tree in my garden,  
In early days when the year was young;  
I thought it would bear me roses, roses,  
While nights were dewy and days were long.

It bore me once, and a white rose only--  
A lovely rose with petals of light;  
Like the moon in heaven, supreme and lonely;  
And the lightning struck it one summer night.

Mathilde Blind

# I Think Of Thee In Watches Of The Night

I think of thee in watches of the night,  
I feel thee near;  
Like mystic lamps consumed with too much light  
Thine eyes burn clear.

The barriers that divide us in the day  
And hide from view,  
Like idle cobwebs now are brushed away  
Between us two.

I probe the deep recesses of thy mind  
Without control,  
And in its inmost labyrinth I find  
My own lost soul.

No longer like an exile on the earth  
I wildly roam,  
I was thy double from the hour of birth  
And thou my home.

Mathilde Blind

# I Took Your Face Into My Dreams

I took your face into my dreams,  
It floated round me like a light;  
Your beauty's consecrating beams  
Lay mirrored in my heart all night.  
As in a lonely mountain mere,  
Unvisited of any streams,  
Supremely bright and still and clear,  
The solitary moonlight gleams,  
Your face was shining in my dreams.

Mathilde Blind

# I Was Again Beside Thee In A Dream

I was again beside thee in a dream:  
Earth was so beautiful, the moon was shining;  
The muffled voice of many a cataract stream  
Came like a love-song, as, with arms entwining,  
Our hearts were mixed in unison supreme.

The wind lay spell-bound in each pillared pine,  
The tasselled larches had no sound or motion,  
As my whole life was sinking into thine--  
Sinking into a deep, unfathomed ocean  
Of infinite love--uncircumscribed, divine.

Night held her breath, it seemed, with all her stars:  
Eternal eyes that watched in mute compassion  
Our little lives o'erleap their mortal bars,  
Fused in the fulness of immortal passion,  
A passion as immortal as the stars.

There was no longer any thee or me;  
No sense of self, no wish or incompleteness  
The moment, rounded to Eternity,  
Annihilated time's destructive fleetness:  
For all but love itself had ceased to be.

Mathilde Blind

# I Would I Were The Glow-Worm

I would I were the glow-worm, thou the flower,  
That I might fill thy cup with glimmering light;  
I would I were the bird, and thou the bower,  
To sing thee songs throughout the summer night.

I would I were a pine tree deeply rooted,  
And thou the lofty, cloud-beleaguered rock,  
Still, while the blasts of heaven around us hooted,  
To cleave to thee and weather every shock.

I would I were the rill, and thou the river;  
So might I, leaping from some headlong steep,  
With all my waters lost in thine for ever,  
Be hurried onwards to the unfathomed deep.

I would--what would I not? O foolish dreaming!  
My words are but as leaves by autumn shed,  
That, in the faded moonlight idly gleaming,  
Drop on the grave where all our love lies dead.

Mathilde Blind

## If You But Knew

Ah, if you knew how soon and late  
My eyes long for a sight of you,  
Sometimes in passing by my gate  
You'd linger until fall of dew,  
If you but knew!

Ah, if you knew how sick and sore  
My life flags for the want of you,  
Straightway you'd enter at the door  
And clasp my hand between your two,  
If you but knew!

Ah, if you knew how lost and lone  
I watch and weep and wait for you,  
You'd press my heart close to your own  
Till love had healed me through and through,  
If you but knew!

Mathilde Blind

## In A Kentish Rose Garden.

Beside a Dial in the leafy close,  
Where every bush was burning with the Rose,  
With million roses falling flake by flake  
Upon the lawn in fading summer snows:

I read the Persian Poet's rhyme of old,  
Each thought a ruby in a ring of gold--  
Old thoughts so young, that, after all these years,  
They're writ on every rose-leaf yet unrolled.

You may not know the secret tongue aright  
The Sunbeams on their rosy tablets write;  
Only a poet may perchance translate  
Those ruby-tinted hieroglyphs of light.

Mathilde Blind

# In A Lonesome Burial-Place

In a lonesome burial-place  
Crouched a mourner white of face;  
Wild her eyes--unheeding  
Circling pomp of night and day--  
Ever crying, "Well away,  
Love lies a-bleeding!"

And her sighs were like a knell,  
And her tears for ever fell,  
With their warm rain feeding  
That purpureal flower, alas!  
Trailing prostrate in the grass,  
Love lies a-bleeding.

Through the yews' black-tufted gloom  
Crimson light fell on the tomb,  
Funeral shadows breeding:  
In the sky the sun's light shed  
Dyed the earth one awful red--  
Love lies a-bleeding.

Came grey mists, and blanching cloud  
Bore one universal shroud;  
Came the bowed moon leading,  
From the infinite afar  
Star that rumoured unto star--  
Love that lies a-bleeding.

Mathilde Blind

# In Spring

THE young birds shy twitter  
In hedges and bowers,  
Fields brighten and glitter  
With dewdrops and flowers.  
Over flood, over fallow,  
Impelled by old yearning,  
The nest-building swallow  
Exults at returning;  
For dark days and hoary  
Are routed and over,  
Dark Winter is gone;  
Resplendent in glory,  
The earth meets her lover,  
Her bridegroom the Sun.

Must I alone sorrow,  
Despairingly languish,  
Breaks never a morrow  
On the night of my anguish?  
The jubilant gladness  
In bird, beam, and blossom,  
But deepens the sadness  
That weighs on my bosom.  
Oh, Spring, in whose azure  
Wake follow the starling,  
The daisy, the dove;  
Sweet spendthrift of pleasure,  
Brings also my darling,  
Oh bring me my love!

Mathilde Blind

## In The St. Gotthardt Pass

The storm which shook the silence of the hills  
And sleeping pinnacles of ancient snow  
Went muttering off in one last thunder throe  
Mixed with a moan of multitudinous rills;  
Yea, even as one who has wept much, but stills  
The flowing tears of some convulsive woe  
When a fair light of hope begins to glow  
Athwart the gloom of long remembered ills:

So does the face of this scarred mountain height  
Relax its stony frown, while slow uprolled  
Invidious mists are changed to veiling gold.  
Wild peaks still fluctuate between dark and bright,  
But when the sun laughs at them, as of old,  
They kiss high heaven in all embracing light.

Mathilde Blind

# Internal Firesides

Bewilderingly, from wildly shaken cloud,  
Invisible hands, deft moving everywhere,  
Have woven a winding sheet of velvet air,  
And laid the dead earth in her downy shroud.  
And more and more, in white confusion, crowd  
Wan, whirling flakes, while o'er the icy glare  
Blue heaven that was glooms blackening o'er the bare  
Tree skeletons, to ruthless tempest bowed.

Nay, let the outer world be winter-locked;  
Beside the hearth of glowing memories  
I warm my life. Once more our boat is rocked,  
As on a cradle by the palm-fringed Nile;  
And, sharp-cut silhouettes, in single file,  
Lank camels lounge against transparent skies.

Mathilde Blind

# Invocation

JUNE, 1866.

BREATHE thro' me in music,  
Spirit of the time!  
Pregnant with the future,  
Spirit of the time!

As the west wind sougheth,  
Through the swaying pine,  
Sweep tho' all my branches  
With thy song divine.

Nations now are rolling  
Onward, as the sea  
Which the moon upheaveth,  
Thus upheaved by thee.

Muffled mutt'ring groweth  
Louder on the air!  
Like a lion roaring,  
Rising from his lair.

As the anthem surgeth  
Through cathedral aisles,  
Swells the voice of nations  
Over miles of miles.

As the thunder growleth  
In yon cloud afar,  
In their bosoms broodeth  
The black bolt of war.

Snap in twain your fetters,  
Cleave your ancient yoke,  
Burst the gloom of ages  
With the lightning stroke.

Clap on clap, down-crashing,  
Clatter crowd on crowd,

From Venetia's dungeons,  
From the Roman shroud;

From the graves of Poland,  
From Germania's plains,  
From the death-pollution  
Of imperial chains.

Feel yourselves as brothers,  
Dare to think ye free;  
And in dust will shiver  
Thrones of tyranny.

Like night's phantoms, with'ring  
'Neath the glance of dawn,  
Kings and priests dissolveth  
Your full-flashing frown.

Forward, sons of morning,  
With a sacred ire!  
Lead ye, like Jehovah,  
In a pillar of fire.

Through the dreary desert,  
Through the burning sand  
Till, on shores of promise  
And of peace, ye land.

Where a purer people,  
Led by laws innate,  
Shall, towards the heavens,  
Tower in grander state.

Breathe and blow in music;  
On, from clime to clime;  
Baptize, with the Holy Spirit  
Spirit of the time.

Mathilde Blind

# Lassitude

I laid me down beside the sea,  
Endless in blue monotony;  
The clouds were anchored in the sky.  
Sometimes a sail went idling by.

Upon the shingles on the beach  
Grey linen was spread out to bleach,  
And gently with a gentle swell  
The languid ripples rose and fell.

A fisher-boy, in level line,  
Cast stone by stone into the brine:  
Methought I too might do as he,  
And cast my sorrows on the sea.

The old, old sorrows in a heap  
Dropped heavily into the deep;  
But with its sorrow on that day  
My heart itself was cast away.

Mathilde Blind

# L'Envoi

Thou art the goal for which my spirit longs;  
As dove on dove,  
Bound for one home, I send thee all my songs  
With all my love.

Thou art the haven with fair harbour lights;  
Safe locked in thee,  
My heart would anchor after stormful nights  
Alone at sea.

Thou art the rest of which my life is fain,  
The perfect peace;  
Absorbed in thee the world, with all its pain  
And toil, would cease.

Thou art the heaven to which my soul would go!  
O dearest eyes,  
Lost in your light you would turn hell below  
To Paradise.

Thou all in all for which my heart-blood yearns!  
Yea, near or far--  
Where the unfathomed ether throbs and burns  
With star on star,

Or where, enkindled by the fires of June,  
The fresh earth glows,  
Blushing beneath the mystical white moon  
Through rose on rose--

Thee, thee, I see, thee feel in all live things,  
Beloved one;  
In the first bird which tremulously sings  
Ere peep of sun;

In the last nestling orphaned in the hedge,  
Rocked to and fro,  
When dying summer shudders in the sedge,  
And swallows go;

When roaring snows rush down the mountain-pass,  
March floods with rills  
Or April lightens through the living grass  
In daffodils;

When popped cornfields simmer in the heat  
With tare and thistle,  
And, like winged clouds above the mellow wheat,  
The starlings whistle;

When stained with sunset the wide moorlands glare  
In the wild weather,  
And clouds with flaming craters smoke and flare  
Red o'er red heather;

When the bent moon, on frostbound midnights waking,  
Leans to the snow  
Like some world-mother whose deep heart is breaking  
O'er human woe.

As the round sun rolls red into the ocean,  
Till all the sea  
Glowes fluid gold, even so life's mazy motion  
Is dyed with thee:

For as the wave-like years subside and roll,  
O heart's desire,  
Thy soul glows interfused within my soul,  
A quenchless fire.

Yea, thee I feel, all storms of life above,  
Near though afar;  
O thou my glorious morning star of love,  
And evening star.

Mathilde Blind

## Like Some Wild Sleeper

Like some wild sleeper who alone at night  
Walks with unseeing eyes along a height,  
With death below and only stars above;  
I, in broad daylight, walk as if in sleep,  
Along the edges of life's perilous steep,  
The lost somnambulist of love.

I, in broad day, go walking in a dream,  
Led on in safety by the starry gleam  
Of thy blue eyes that hold my heart in thrall;  
Let no one wake me rudely, lest one day,  
Startled to find how far I've gone astray,  
I dash my life out in my fall.

Mathilde Blind

# Lines

THOU camest with the coming Spring!  
With swallows, and the murmuring  
Of unloosed waters, with the birth  
Of daisies dimpling the green earth.

And when the perfect rose of June  
Responded to the golden noon,  
My heart's deep core, suffused with bliss,  
Broke into flower beneath thy kiss.

But now the swallows seaward fly,  
The winds in chorus wail, 'Good-bye!'  
The dead leaves whirl, and like a leaf  
My heart shakes on the gusts of grief.

And yet awhile earth's flowerless breast  
In lethal folds of snow will rest;  
On thee too heart, with all thy woe,  
Death falls one day like falling snow.

Mathilde Blind

## Lines II

THOU camest with the coming Spring!  
With swallows, and the murmuring  
Of unloosed waters, with the birth  
Of daisies dimpling the green earth.

And when the perfect rose of June  
Responded to the golden noon,  
My heart's deep core, suffused with bliss,  
Broke into flower beneath thy kiss.

But now the swallows seaward fly,  
The winds in chorus wail, 'Good-bye!'  
The dead leaves whirl, and like a leaf  
My heart shakes on the gusts of grief.

And yet awhile earth's flowerless breast  
In lethal folds of snow will rest;  
On thee too heart, with all thy woe,  
Death falls one day like falling snow.

Mathilde Blind

# Lost Treasure

THE autumn day steals, pallid as a ghost,  
Along these fields and man-forsaken ways;  
And o'er the hedgerows bramble-knotted maze  
The whitening locks of Old Man's Beard are tost.  
Here, shrunk by centuries of fire and frost,  
A crab tree stands where--lingering gossip says--  
In ocean-moated England's golden days,  
Great treasure, in a frolic, once was lost.

Here--fresh from fumes of some Falstaffian bout,  
When famous champions, fired by many a bet,  
Had drained huge bumpers while the stars would set--  
Beneath its reeling branches by the way,  
Till twice twelve hours of April bloom were out--  
Locked in oblivion--Shakespeare lost a day.

Mathilde Blind

# Love And The Muse

STRUCK down by Love in cruel mood,  
That I ever met Love I rued,  
Bleeding and bruised I lay,  
Wet was my face as with the salt sea spray.

A lovely Muse on sparkling wing  
A painless elemental thing,  
Free as bird did float,  
Swift flames of song light leaping from her throat.

And being more pitiful than Love  
Stooped glowing from her path above,  
And an unearthly kiss  
Laid on my lips: Muse, answer, what is this?

In dreams or drunkenness divine  
My life is all transfused with thine;  
Like bubbles swept along,  
My tears dissolve on cataracts of song.

Mathilde Blind

# Love's Phantom

SHUT out day's wintry beams!  
Sleep, brood upon my brain!  
For sweet sleep bringeth dreams  
And love again!  
Love cold and wan and sere  
Heaped over with tears and snows;  
Lo, born within its bier,  
Blooms like a rose!

Its fragrance fills each vein,  
Its fervour flushes my heart,  
I feel through breast and brain  
Its rapturous smart;  
The look, the tone, the deep  
Supreme smile of delight:  
Ah, fickle as love, false sleep,  
Why take thy flight?

Mathilde Blind

## Love's Vision

TRANSPORTED out of self by Youth's sweet madness,  
Emulous of love, to Love's empyrean height,  
Where I beheld you aureoled in light,  
My soul upsprang on wings of angel-gladness.  
Far, far below, the earth and all earth's badness--  
A speck of dust--slipped darkling into night,  
As suns of fairer planets flamed in sight,  
Pure orbs or bliss unstained by gloom or sadness.

Lo, as I soared etherially on high,  
You vanished, from my swimming eyes aloof,  
Alone, alone, within the empty sky,  
I reached out giddily, and reeling fell  
From starriest heaven, to plunge in lowest hell,  
My proud heart broken on Earth's humblest roof.

Mathilde Blind

# Love-Trilogy

I.

SHE stood against the Orient sun,  
Her face inscrutable for light;  
A myriad larks in unison  
Sang o'er her, soaring out of sight.

A myriad flowers around her feet  
Burst flame-like from the yielding sod,  
Till all the wandering airs were sweet  
With incense mounting up to God.

A mighty rainbow shook, inclined  
Towards her, from the Occident,  
Girdling the cloud-wrack which enshrined  
Half the light-bearing firmament.

Lit showers flashed golden o'er the hills,  
And trees flung silver to the breeze,  
And, scattering diamonds, fleet-foot rills  
Fled laughingly across the leas.

Yea Love, the skylarks laud but thee,  
And writ in flowers thine awful name;  
Spring is thy shade, dread Ecstasy,  
And life a brand which feeds thy flame.

II.

WINDING all my life about thee,  
Let me lay my lips on thine;  
What is all the world without thee,  
Mine--oh mine!

Let me press my heart out on thee,  
Crush it like a fiery vine,  
Spilling sacramental on thee  
Love's red wine.

Let thy strong eyes yearning o'er me  
Draw me with their force divine;  
All my soul has gone before me  
Clasping thine.

Irresistibly I follow,  
As wherever we may run  
Runs our shadow, as the swallow  
Seeks the sun.

Yea, I tremble, swoon, surrender  
All my spirit to thy sway,  
As a star is drowned in splendour  
Of the day.

III.

I CHARGE you, O winds of the West, O winds with the wings of the dove,  
That ye blow o'er the brows of my Love, breathing low that I sicken for love.

I charge you, O dews of the Dawn, O tears of the star of the morn,  
That ye fall at the feet of my love with the sound of one weeping forlorn.

I charge you, O birds of the Air, O birds flying home to your nest,  
That ye sing in his ears of the joy that for ever has fled from my breast.

I charge you, O flowers of the Earth, O frailest of things, and most fair,  
That ye droop in his path as the life in me shrivels consumed by despair.

O Moon, when he lifts up his face, when he seeth the waning of thee,  
A memory of her who lies wan on the limits of life let it be.

Many tears cannot quench, nor my sighs extinguish, the flames of love's fire,  
Which lifteth my heart like a wave, and smites it, and breaks its desire.

I rise like one in a dream when I see the red sun flaring low,  
That drags me back shuddering from sleep each morning to life with its woe.

I go like one in a dream, unbidden my feet know the way  
To that garden where love stood in blossom with the red and white hawthorn of  
May.

The song of the throstle is hushed, and the fountain is dry to its core,  
The moon cometh up as of old; she seeks, but she finds him no more.

The pale-faced, pitiful moon shines down on the grass where I weep,  
My face to the earth, and my breast in an anguish ne'er soothed into sleep.

The moon returns, and the spring, birds warble, trees burst into leaf,  
But Love once gone, goes for ever, and all that endures is the grief.

Mathilde Blind

# Manchester By Night

O'er this huge town, rife with intestine wars,  
Whence as from monstrous sacrificial shrines  
Pillars of smoke climb heavenward, Night inclines  
Black brows majestic with glimmering stars.  
Her dewy silence soothes life's angry jars:  
And like a mother's wan white face, who pines  
Above her children's turbulent ways, so shines  
The moon athwart the narrow cloudy bars.

Now toiling multitudes that hustling crush  
Each other in the fateful strife for breath,  
And, hounded on by diverse hungers, rush  
Across the prostrate ones that groan beneath,  
Are swathed within the universal hush,  
As life exchanges semblances with death.

Mathilde Blind

# Many Will Love You

Many will love you; you were made for love;  
For the soft plumage of the unruffled dove  
Is not so soft as your caressing eyes.  
You will love many; for the winds that veer  
Are not more prone to shift their compass, dear,  
Than your quick fancy flies.

Many will love you; but I may not, no;  
Even though your smile sets all my life aglow,  
And at your fairness all my senses ache.  
You will love many; but not me, my dear,  
Who have no gift to give you but a tear  
Sweet for your sweetness' sake.

Mathilde Blind

# Marriage

LOVE springs as lightly from the human heart  
As springs the lovely rose upon the brier,  
Which turns the common hedge to floral fire,  
As Love wings Time with rosy-feathered dart.  
But marriage is the subtlest work of art  
Of all the arts which lift the spirit higher;  
The incarnation of the heart's desire--  
Which masters Time--set on Man's will apart.

The Many try, but oh! how few are they  
To whom that finest of the arts is given  
Which shall teach Love, the rosy runaway,  
To bide from bridal Morn to brooding Even.  
Yet this--this only--is the narrow way  
By which, while yet on earth, we enter heaven.

Mathilde Blind

# Motherhood

From out the front of being, undefiled,  
A life hath been upheaved with struggle and pain;  
Safe in her arms a mother holds again  
That dearest miracle--a new-born child.  
To moans of anguish terrible and wild--  
As shrieks the night-wind through an ill-shut pane--  
Pure heaven succeeds; and after fiery strain  
Victorious woman smiles serenely mild.

Yea, shall she not rejoice, shall not her frame  
Thrill with a mystic rapture! At this birth,  
The soul now kindled by her vital flame  
May it not prove a gift of priceless worth?  
Some saviour of his kind whose starry fame  
Shall bring a brightness to the darkened earth.

Mathilde Blind

# Mourning Women

All veiled in black, with faces hid from sight,  
Crouching together in the jolting cart,  
What forms are these that pass alone, apart,  
In abject apathy to life's delight?  
The motley crowd, fantastically bright,  
Shifts gorgeous through each dazzling street and mart;  
Only these sisters of the suffering heart  
Strike discords in this symphony of light.

Most wretched women! whom your prophet dooms  
To take love's penalties without its prize!  
Yes; you shall bear the unborn in your wombs,  
And water dusty death with streaming eyes,  
And, wailing, beat your breasts among the tombs;  
But souls ye have none fit for Paradise.

Mathilde Blind

# My Lady

Like putting forth upon a sea  
On which the moonbeams shimmer,  
Where reefs and unknown perils be  
To wreck, yea, wreck one utterly,  
It were to love you, lady fair,  
In whose black braids of billowy hair  
The misty moonstones glimmer.

Oh, misty moonstone-coloured eye,  
Latticed behind long lashes,  
Within whose clouded orbs there lies,  
Like lightning in the sleeping skies,  
A spark to kindle and ignite,  
And set a fire of love alight  
To burn one's heart to ashes.

I will not put forth on this deep  
Of perilous emotion;  
No, though your hands be soft as sleep,  
They shall not have my heart to keep,  
Nor draw it to your fatal sphere.  
Lady, you are as much to fear  
As is the fickle ocean.

Mathilde Blind

# Mystery Of Mysteries

BEFORE the abyss of the unanswering grave  
Each mortal stands at last aloof, alone,  
With his beloved one turned as deaf as stone,  
However rebel love may storm and rave.  
No will, however strong, avails to save  
The wrecked identity knit to our own;  
We may not hoard one treasured look or tone,  
Dissolved in foam on Death's dissolving wave.

Is this the End? This handful of brown earth  
For all releasing elements to take  
And free for ever from the bonds of birth?  
Or will true life from Life's disguises break,  
Called to that vast confederacy of minds  
Which casts all flesh as chaff to all the winds?

Mathilde Blind

# New Year's Eve

Another full-orbed year hath waned to-day,  
And set in the irrevocable past,  
And headlong whirled long Time's winged blast  
My fluttering rose of youth is borne away:  
Ah rose once crimson with the blood of May,  
A honeyed haunt where bees would break their fast,  
I watch thy scattering petals flee aghast,  
And all the flickering rose-lights turning grey.

Poor fool of life! plagued ever with thy vain  
Regrets and futile longings! were the years  
Not cups o'erbrimming still with gall and tears?  
Let go thy puny personal joy and pain!  
If youth with all its brief hope disappears,  
To deathless hope we must be born again.

Mathilde Blind

# Nirvana

Divest thyself, O Soul, of vain desire!  
Bid hope farewell, dismiss all coward fears;  
Take leave of empty laughter, emptier tears,  
And quench, for ever quench, the wasting fire  
Wherein this heart, as in a funeral pyre,  
Aye burns, yet is consumed not. Years on years  
Moaning with memories in thy maddened ears--  
Let at thy word, like refluent waves, retire.

Enter thy soul's vast realm as Sovereign Lord,  
And, like that angel with the flaming sword,  
Wave off life's clinging hands. Then chains will fall  
From the poor slave of self's hard tyranny--  
And Thou, a ripple rounded by the sea,  
In rapture lost be lapped within the All.

Mathilde Blind

# Noonday Rest

THE willows whisper very, very low  
Unto the listening breeze;  
Sometimes they lose a leaf which, flickering slow,  
Faints on the sunburnt leas.

Beneath the whispering boughs and simmering skies,  
On the hot ground at rest,  
Still as a stone, a ragged woman lies,  
Her baby at the breast.

Nibbling around her browse monotonous sheep,  
Flies buzz about her head;  
Her heavy eyes are shuttered by a sleep  
As of the slumbering dead.

The happy birds that live to love and sing,  
Flitting from bough to bough,  
Peer softly at this ghastly human thing  
With grizzled hair and brow.

O'er what strange ways may not these feet have trod  
That match the cracking clay?  
Man had no pity on her--no, nor God--  
A nameless castaway!

But Mother Earth now hugs her to her breast,  
Defiled or undefiled;  
And willows rock the weary soul to rest,  
As she, even she, her child.

Mathilde Blind

# Nuit

The all upholding,  
The all enfolding,  
The all beholding,  
Most secret Night;  
From whose abysses,  
With wordless blisses,  
The Sun's first kisses,  
Called gods to light.

One god undying,  
But multiplying,  
Restlessly trying,  
Doing: undone.  
Through myriad changes,  
He sweeps and ranges;  
But life estranges  
Many in one.

In wild commotion,  
Out of the ocean,  
With moan and motion,  
Wave upon waves,  
Mingling in thunder,  
Rise and go under:  
Break, life, asunder;  
Night has her graves.

Mathilde Blind

# O Moon

O moon, large golden summer moon,  
Hanging between the linden trees,  
Which in the intermittent breeze  
Beat with the rhythmic pulse of June!

O night-air, scented through and through  
With honey-coloured flower of lime,  
Sweet now as in that other time  
When all my heart was sweet as you!

The sorcery of this breathing bloom  
Works like enchantment in my brain,  
Till, shuddering back to life again,  
My dead self rises from its tomb.

And, lovely with the love of yore,  
Its white ghost haunts the moon-white ways;  
But, when it meets me face to face,  
Flies trembling to the grave once more.

Mathilde Blind

# Ode To A Child

BRIGHT as a morn of spring,  
That jubilates along the earth,  
With clouds, and winds, and flowers rejoicing,  
And all the creatures that on wing  
Scarce dip the ground in their ethereal mirth.  
Whilst the dew'd sunlight and the gold-flushed rain  
Wed midway in the air;  
And from the twain  
Is ever born that fairy gossamer,  
The iridescent bridge that spans the skies.  
Yea, e'en in such wild glory dost thou glow  
Soul-fresh exuberant child!  
And drops of heavenly freshness gleam  
On red, red lips, in dark-orbed eyes,  
Like morning dews that glimmering show  
On winter moss and heath'ry wild,  
And soft-cropped grasses undefiled,  
In all the shifting splendour of a dream.

Oh, thou, that in thy glee  
Know'st of no ending yet, and no beginning,  
Making the hours melodious with thy play,  
Like grasshoppers, that through the livelong day  
Hopping on the new-mown hay,  
Sun-struck trill their roundelay;  
Or the cricket, chirping cheerly  
Late at night, at morning early,  
With a little baby-singing  
Like an echo faintly ringing  
From the distant summer leas;  
And with tremulous murmurs clinging  
Round the hearth, like clustering bees  
Humming round the linden trees.

And yet athwart thy soul,  
At times, perchance, I seem to see  
The hid existence of far off events,  
Trailing their slumb'rous shadows silently.  
For in the dusky deeps

Of thy large eyes  
Sometime the veiled outline of a still  
And mute-born vision sleeps  
As in the hollows of a hill,  
With dim and darksome rents  
The dreamful shadow of the morning lies,  
And softly, slowly, ever down doth roll,  
Till lost in mystic deeps it flees our watchful eyes.

Yet from that silent trance  
Quick leap'st thou back into thy playfulness,  
As waters darkened by the drifting cloud  
Into the swift sweet sunlight crowd,  
Where dashed with dewy gold they dance  
In unbedimmèd sprightliness;  
Till with their blithesome strain  
They make the brooding mountains loud  
And fling their merriment across the voiceless plain.  
And buzzing lightly, here and there,  
Thou, like a little curious fly  
That fusses through the air,  
Dost pry and spy  
With thy keen inquisitive eye;  
Poking fatly-dimpled fingers  
Into corner, box, and closet,  
Where, perchance, there hidden lingers  
Some deposit,  
To be carried off triumphantly.  
And with many questions, ever  
Rippling like a restless river,  
Puzzling many an older brain,  
Dost thou hour by hour increase thy store  
Of marvellous lore.  
Thus a squirrel darting deftly  
Up and down autumnal trees,  
Sees its hoard of chesnuts growing swiftly  
In a heap upon the leaf-strewn leas.

Yea, open art thou to each influence  
That strikes on thy soft spirit from without  
Thy spirit not yet frozen, nor shut out  
From nature's kindling breath

By selfish aims, nor dulled the sense  
By hot desires; alas, too oft the death  
Of man's spiritual vision. No, thy soul  
Is yet all clear and bright  
And lieth naked 'neath the eye of heaven  
As a small mountain pool--  
A pure and azure pool,  
To whom its food is given  
By dews, and rains, and snows all lily-white,  
That softly fall  
Through many a summer's day and winter's night;  
And whose unspotted breast  
Glasses each pageant of the outer world,  
The cloud with pinions to the blast unfurled,  
The mountains' haughty crest,  
The slanting beam of twilight skies  
That like a golden ladder lies  
Stretching across perchance for angel hosts  
To slide  
Down to the earth with heavenly boon;  
And glasses too the hurrying mists that glide  
Like gliding ghosts,  
And stars, and all the mildness of the moon.

As yet 'tis early January with thee!  
Warm-cradled doth the summer leaf  
Lie folded in the winter leaf  
On the blank tree.  
And folded in the earth the seed  
The future mother of some glorious weed,  
Or flower blowing gorgeously,  
Or cedar branching wondrously,  
Lies slumbering; its whole destiny  
Of great or lowly, foul or fair,  
In this minutest space surely foreshadowed there.  
But let the west wind, ocean-born,  
Floating towards the meads of morn,  
But once spread out his wild and vasty wing  
Setting the sap a-cantring; till new life  
Works wonders: then thy being  
Will strangely stir, as at the sound  
Of sounding drum and fife

The war-horse paws the ground.  
And through thy sweet pure veins  
Life like a waterfall will grandly bound.

But now the Psyche of thy being  
Still shyly doth essay her delicate wing,  
Like to that airy nurseling of the sun  
When first it breaketh through its dun  
And hornèd shell, and tries  
To move its pinions, powdered o'er and o'er  
With rainbow dust of April skies,  
That have as not yet learnt to soar,  
And lie soft-folded in sweet mysteries.

Oh! looking on thee, I do speculate  
On thy futurity!  
What wilt thou be?  
Some great and glorious lot I dream for thee,  
Some starry fate!  
For in thy nature meet  
Such buoyant strength, and such a sweet  
Half-veiled heart tenderness, that on thy being doth rest  
Like soft dark bloom upon a pansy's breast;  
And pity gushes o'er thee, like warm rain,  
For everything in pain,  
Or great or small; and such a shoal  
Of thick-bred fancies ever swimmeth forth  
From the deep sea  
Of changeful fantasy,  
Like golden fish that glitter in the sun;  
And quick perception leading on and on,  
Into a maze of thought, fresh'ning the soul  
Of him who listens. Aye, what wilt thou be?  
Perchance, one of that sacred band  
That ever were the salt of earth,  
Whom men call dowered with genius! They who stand  
In grandeur and in glory like the Alps,  
With silver-shining scalps,  
Bathed in the ether; feeding all the land  
With the pure skyey waters that descend  
For ever from them; men who freed  
From narrow bonds of hate and greed,

Fetters of custom, and blind circumstance,  
Breathe the soul-quickenning air of thought and love.  
And struggling into freedom, sudden see  
The solid shroud of sense  
Consumèd by a heavenly flame,  
As is the vapour dense and dun,  
Which the earth-spirit fast doth breed  
By the great sun.  
And the large mind in native majesty  
Doth catch that radiance evermore above,  
Around us; finest effluence of being;  
Illuminating with sharp sudden blaze  
Nature's mysterious ways;  
Until his spirit, feeling itself one  
With all that is, and was, and is to be,  
Vibrates into intenser life,  
Which is creation!  
Then makes he revelation  
Of that one truth, that as a supreme ray  
With new existence heavily fraught,  
Lightened in awful loveliness  
And empyrean holiness,  
Upon his passive thought;  
Till with long peals of explosive oracular thunder,  
He bursts and cleaves and splinters asunder  
The clinging clinking manacles of life,  
That fall and curl in harsh black masses under  
His wingèd feet: and through time's noisy strife  
His infinite acts do strike like flame

Of a volcano seen across a sea,  
On nights when with earthquake the labouring hills are rife;  
And labouring, too, like heaving heights, doth he,  
Girt round with turbulent whirls of praise and blame,  
Breathe the hot spark of that which he did see,  
As vital force that pulses strong and warm  
In the mid-heart of creeds,  
Or rolls itself along the epic's flood,  
Or lives through ages in the marbled form,  
Or leaps to life in the heroic deeds,  
Watering with the heart's noble blood  
The seed of future world-reforming good.

But stay, my soul;  
Too far thou fliest, as a falcon flies,  
Forgetful of the hand  
Where he must perch, so tranced with the grand  
And boundless skies.  
Oh come my song, and roll  
Thy billows back, where on the swelling bank,  
Mid flowers, and reeds, and grasses rank,  
And feathered warblers, warbling wild,  
Sporteth the unconscious child,  
Safely roofed o'er by shielding mother's love,  
Like wee lamb-clouds of morn by tender skies above.  
Hark! now I hear thy low soft laughter falling  
Upon my heart, like to the murmurous calling  
Of brooding stock doves, now it sweet doth sound  
Like rippling rills of rain, that make the ground  
Harmonious on hot summer afternoons;  
And now thy joyous croons  
Blither and brighter tumble on my ear  
All clarion clear,  
Like songs of matin birds that in spring weather,  
Hid in young woods, do jubilate together.  
Yea, on the musing mind,  
That wrapt in meditation's sober dress,  
Looks inward in a half-forgetfulness  
Of the world's outer show,  
Thou breakest in, like a tumultuous wind  
That teasing tosses  
The foam of flickering fountain;  
Or like the flashing flow  
Of waves of light along the long green grasses;  
Or waters bickering low  
Down many a sloping mountain  
That make themselves a nest mid ferns and shining mosses.  
Of each free thing that in its joy  
All chains, and bonds, and obstacles o'erpasses  
In elemental gladnesses  
And wonderful wild wantonesses--  
Fire, water, wand'ring air,  
Hast a past, exuberant boy,  
Glorious, glad, and fresh, and fair,

And blowing in upon the tired brain  
Nature's undying, spirit-stirring strain.

Mathilde Blind

# On A Letter

I.

SUNBEAMS can fling no purer brightness o'er the sea  
And rain-showers bring no surer blessing to the lea,  
And lilies wing with no more sweetness the gold bee,  
Than those few lines thy hand has penned have brought to me.

II.

Soft lies the silent fall of snow  
Upon the hemlock tree;  
Soft lies the moonlight's silver flow  
Upon the troubled sea.

Sweet on the blossom of the vines  
The night-dews drop from high;  
But softer, sweeter far, thy lines  
Upon my spirit lie.

Mathilde Blind

# On A Torso Of Cupid

PEACH trees and Judas trees,  
Poppies and roses,  
Purple anemones  
In garden closes!  
Lost in the limpid sky,  
Shrills a gay lark on high;  
Lost in the covert's hush,  
Gurgles a wooing thrush.

Look, where the ivy weaves,  
Closely embracing,  
Tendrils of clinging leaves  
Round him enlacing,  
With Nature's sacredness  
Clothing the nakedness,  
Clothing the marble of  
This poor, dismembered love.

Gone are the hands whose skill  
Aimed the light arrow,  
Strong once to cure or kill,  
Pierce to the marrow;  
Gone are the lips whose kiss  
Held hives of honeyed bliss;  
Gone too the little feet,  
Overfond, overfleet.

O helpless god of old,  
Maimed mid the tender  
Blossoming white and gold  
Of April splendour!  
Shall we not make thy grave  
Where the long grasses wave;  
Hide thee, O headless god,  
Deep in the daisied sod?

Here thou mayst rest at last  
After life's fever;  
After love's fret is past

Rest thee for ever.  
Nay, broken God of Love,  
Still must thou bide above  
While, left for woe or weal,  
Thou has a heart to feel.  
Villa Mattei.

Mathilde Blind

# On A Viola D'Amore

CARVED WITH A CUPID'S HEAD, AND PLAYED ON FOR THE FIRST TIME AFTER  
MORE THAN A CENTURY.

What fairy music clear and light,  
Responsive to your fingers,  
Swells rippling on the summer night,  
And amorously lingers  
Upon the sense, as long ago  
In days of rouge and rococo!

A century of silence lay  
On strings that had not spoken  
Since powdered lords to ladies gay  
Gave, for a lover's token,  
Fans glowing fresh from Watteau's art,  
Well worth a marchioness's heart.

Your dormant music, tranced and bound,  
Was like the Sleeping Beauty  
Prince Charming in the forest found,  
And kissed in loyal duty:  
And when she woke her eyes' blue fire  
Turned the dumb forest to a lyre.

Thus Amor with the bandaged eyes,  
Fit symbol of hushed numbers,  
Most musically wakes and sighs  
After an age of slumbers:  
Beneath your magic bow's control  
The Viol has regained her soul.

Mathilde Blind

# On And On

By long leagues of wood and meadow  
On and on we drive apace;  
In the dreamy light and shadow  
Veiling earth's autumnal face.

Rosy clouds are drifting o'er us,  
Rooks rise parleying from their tryst,  
And the road lies far before us,  
Fading into amethyst.

On and on, through leagues of heather,  
Deeps of scarlet beaded lane,  
Like a pheasant's golden feather  
Golden leaves around us rain.

On and on, where woodlands hoary,  
In October's lavish fire,  
Flame up with unearthly glory,  
Beauteous summer's funeral pyre.

On and on, where casements blinking  
Lighten into transient gules,  
As the dying day in sinking  
Splashes all the wayside pools.

On and on; the land grows dimmer,  
And our road recedes afar;  
While on either hand there glimmer  
Setting sun and rising star.

Would I knew what thoughts steal o'er you,  
As the long road lengthens yet:  
Ah, like hope it winds before you,  
And behind me like regret.

Mathilde Blind

## On Guido's Aurora

GLORIOUS, in saffron robes and veil unfurled,  
Borne on the wind of her ecstatic flight,  
Aurora floats before the Lord of Light,  
And showers her roses on a jubilant world.  
Lo, where he beams, ambrosial, yellow curled,  
The God of Day, with unapparent might,  
Checking his fiery steeds, that plunge and bite  
As if from heaven his Chariot should be hurled.

And on the Clouds a many-tinted band  
Of Hours dance round their Leader, grave or gay  
As glowing near or in his wake they sway;  
While poised above the sun-awakened land  
The Morning Star, fair herald of the day,  
Hovers, a Cupid, back-blown torch in hand.

Mathilde Blind

# On Life's Long Round

On life's long round by chance I found  
A dell impearled with dew;  
Where hyacinths, gushing from the ground,  
Lent to the earth heaven's native hue  
Of holy blue.

I sought that plot of azure light  
Once more in gloomy hours;  
But snow had fallen overnight  
And wrapped in mortuary white  
My fairy ring of flowers.

Mathilde Blind

# On Reading The

In a Kentish Rose Garden.

Beside a Dial in the leafy close,  
Where every bush was burning with the Rose,  
With million roses falling flake by flake  
Upon the lawn in fading summer snows:

I read the Persian Poet's rhyme of old,  
Each thought a ruby in a ring of gold--  
Old thoughts so young, that, after all these years,  
They're writ on every rose-leaf yet unrolled.

You may not know the secret tongue aright  
The Sunbeams on their rosy tablets write;  
Only a poet may perchance translate  
Those ruby-tinted hieroglyphs of light.

Mathilde Blind

## On The Lighthouse At Antibes

A stormy light of sunset glows and glares  
Between two banks of cloud, and o'er the brine  
Thy fair lamp on the sky's carnation line  
Alone on the lone promontory flares:  
Friend of the Fisher who at nightfall fares  
Where lurk false reefs masked by the hyaline  
Of dimpling waves, within whose smile divine  
Death lies in wait behind Circean snares.

The evening knows thee ere the evening star;  
Or sees that flame sole Regent of the bight,  
When storm, hoarse rumoured by the hills afar,  
Makes mariners steer landward by thy light,  
Which shows through shock of hostile nature's war  
How man keeps watch o'er man through deadliest night.

Mathilde Blind

# Once On A Golden Day

Once on a golden day,  
In the golden month of May,  
I gave my heart away--  
Little birds were singing.

I culled my heart in truth,  
Wet with the dews of youth,  
For love to take, forsooth--  
Little flowers were springing.

Love sweetly laughed at this,  
And between kiss and kiss  
Fled with my heart in his:  
Winds warmly blowing.

And with his sun and shower  
Love kept my heart in flower,  
As in the greenest bower  
Rose richly glowing.

Till, worn at evensong,  
Love dropped my heart among  
Stones by the way ere long;  
Misprizèd token.

There in the wind and rain,  
Trampled and rent in twain,  
Ne'er to be whole again,  
My heart lies broken.

Mathilde Blind

# Once We Played

ONCE we played at love together--  
Played it smartly, if you please;  
Lightly, as a windblown feather,  
Did we stake a heart apiece.

Oh, it was delicious fooling!  
In the hottest of the game,  
Without thought of future cooling,  
All too quickly burned Life's flame.

In this give-and-take of glances,  
Kisses sweet as honey dews,  
When we played with equal chances,  
Did you win, or did I lose?

Was your heart then hurt to bleeding,  
In the ardour of the throw?  
Was it then I lost, unheeding,  
Lost my heart so long ago?

Who shall say? The game is over.  
Of us two who loved in fun,  
One lies low beneath the clover,  
One lies lonely in the sun.

Mathilde Blind

## Only A Smile

No butterfly whose frugal fare  
Is breath of heliotrope and clove,  
And other trifles light as air,  
Could live on less than doth my love.

That childlike smile that comes and goes  
About your gracious lips and eyes,  
Hath all the sweetness of the rose,  
Which feeds the freckled butterflies.

I feed my love on smiles, and yet  
Sometimes I ask, with tears of woe,  
How had it been if we had met,  
If you had met me long ago,

Before the fast, defacing years  
Had made all ill that once was well?  
Ah, then your smiling breeds such tears  
As Tantalus may weep in hell.

Mathilde Blind

# Our Souls Have Touched Each Other

Our souls have touched each other,  
Two fountains from one jet;  
Like children of one mother  
Our leaping thoughts have met.

We were as far asunder  
As green isles in the sea;  
And now we ask in wonder  
How that could ever be.

I dare not call thee lover  
Nor any earthly name,  
Though love's full cup flows over  
As water quick with flame.

When two strong minds have mated  
As only spirits may,  
The world shines new created  
In a diviner day.

Yea, though hard fate may sever  
My fleeting self from thine,  
Thy thought will live for ever  
And ever grow in mine.

Mathilde Blind

# Pastiche

I.

LOVE, oh, Love's a dainty sweeting,  
Wooing now, and now retreating;  
Brightest joy and blackest care,  
Swift as light, and light as air.

II.

Would you seize and fix and capture  
All his evanescent rapture?  
Bind him fast with golden curls,  
Fetter with a chain of pearls?

III.

Would you catch him in a net,  
Like a white moth pranked with jet?  
Clutch him, and his bloomy wing  
Turns a dead, discoloured thing!

IV.

Pluck him like a rosebud red,  
And he leaves a thorn instead;  
Let him go without a care,  
And he follows unaware.

V.

Love, oh Love's a dainty sweeting,  
Wooing now, and now retreating;  
Lightly come, and lightly gone,  
Lost when most securely won!



## Pauper Poet's Song

Sun, moon, and stars, the ample air,  
The birds shrill whistling everywhere,  
Fields white with lambs and daisies;  
The pearls of eve, the jewelled morn,  
The rose rich blowing on the thorn,  
The glow of blush-rose faces;  
The silver glint of sun-smit rain,  
The shattered sun-gold of the main,  
And heaven's sweet breath that moves it;  
The earth, our myriad-bosomed nurse,  
This whole miraculous universe  
Belongs to him who loves it!

Why fret then for the gold of this,  
The fame of that man, or the bliss,  
Or such another's graces?  
Oh heart that chim'st with golden verse,  
My heart, thou art the magic purse  
Which all dull trouble chases;  
Thine too fruition of all fame  
When the live soul, as flame with flame,  
Weds the dead soul that moves it;  
Then sing for aye, and aye rehearse,  
This whole miraculous universe  
Belongs to him who loves it!

Mathilde Blind

# Perfect Union

W.K.C.--3rd MARCH, 1879.

'A free man thinks of nothing so little as of death; and his wisdom is a meditation, not of death, but of life.' --Spinoza.

'DRAW back the curtain, wife,' he said;  
And, dying, raised his feeble head,  
As all his gathered soul leaped sheer  
Into his waning eyes, and yearned  
After the journeying sun which turned  
Towards that other hemisphere.

Then, as its incandescent bulk  
Sank slowly, like the foundering hulk  
Of some lone burning ship at sea,  
His life set with it--bright as brief--  
In that invincible belief  
Of Man's august supremacy.

Truth's vanward hero! Calmly brave  
Fronting the dumb unfathomed grave  
With unintimidated eyes;  
Though not for him, beyond its night,  
Resuscitated Hope alight  
Prescient, on peaks of Paradise.

And like some solemn parting word  
From one beloved friend on board  
Bound for some undiscovered shore,  
To one who stands with straining gaze  
To catch the last look of a face  
Which he may see, ah never more--

So, ere he drifted to the deep  
Unknowable, the utter sleep,  
Out, out beyond life's harbour bar,  
He whispered, 'Perfect! no one knows  
How perfect!' and his eyes did close  
Even like a sun-extinguished star.

His eyes did close: I held his hand:  
I loved, so came to understand  
The inmost working of his mind;  
Yea, in that clasp, I know not how,  
Did not his life of life then flow  
Through mine, while mine was left behind?

I know not how, and yet it seems  
As in some prank of shifting dreams,  
That it was I who died, not he:  
And then again, I know not how,  
I feel new powers upheave and glow,  
And all his life that stirs in me.

I am no longer what I was;  
My nature is the pictured glass,  
Where he who lived lives on and on;  
All ye who loved him, ye may see  
His spirits still investing me,  
As moonlight but reflects the sun.

For ever deepening grows his sway:  
A voice cries in me night and day:  
'He'll never die to me, his wife;  
In our strong love death hath no part;  
I hold and fold him in my heart--  
There he shall live while I have life.'

Mathilde Blind

# Prelude

What a twitter! what a tumult! what a whirr of wheeling wings!  
Birds of Passage hear the message which the Equinoctial brings.

Birds of Passage hear the message and beneath the flying clouds,  
Mid the falling leaves of autumn, congregate in clamorous crowds.

Shall they venture on the voyage? are the nestlings fledged for flight;  
Fit to face the fluctuant storm-winds and the elemental night?

What a twitter! what a tumult! to the wild wind's marching song  
Multitudinous Birds of Passage round the cliffs of England throng.

And o'er tempest-trodden Ocean, cloud-entangled day and night,  
Birds on birds, in corporate motion, wing a commonwealth in flight.

Waves, like hollow graves beneath them, hoarsely howling, yawn for prey;  
And the welkin glooms above them shifting formless, grey in grey.

And across the Bay of Biscay on undaunted wing they flee,  
Where mild seas move musically murmuring of the Odyssey;

Where the gurgling whirlpools glitter and by soft Circean Straits,  
Fell Charybdis lies in ambush, and the ravenous Scylla waits;

Where a large Homeric laughter lingers in the echoing caves,  
And in playful exultation Dolphins leap from dimpling waves;

Where, above the fair Sicilian, flock-browsed, flower-pranked meadows, looms  
Ætna--hoariest of Volcanoes--ominously veiled in fumes;

Where the seas roll blue and bluer, high and higher arch the skies,  
And as measureless as ocean new horizons meet the eyes;

Where at night the ancient heavens bend above the ancient earth,  
With the young-eyed Stars enkindled fresh as at their hour of birth;

Where old Egypt's desert, stretching leagues on leagues of level land,  
Gleams with threads of channelled waters, green with palms on either hand;

Where the Fellaḥ strides majestic through the glimmering dourah plain,  
And in rosy flames flamingoes rise from rustling sugar-cane;--

On and on, along old Nilus, seeking still an ampler light,  
O'er its monumental mountains, Birds of Passage take their flight.

Where the sacred Isle of Philæ, twinned within the sacred stream,  
Floats, like some rapt Opium-eater's labyrinthine lotos dream,

Birds on birds take up their quarters in each creviced capital,  
In each crack of frieze and cornice, in each cleft of roof and wall.

And within those twilight-litten, holy halls of Death and Birth,  
Even the gaily twittering swallows, even the swallows, hush their breath.

And they cast the passing shadows of their palpitating wings  
O'er the fallen gods of Egypt and the prostrate heads of Kings.

Even as shadows Birds of Passage cast upon their onward flight  
Have men's generations vanished, waned and vanished into night.

Mathilde Blind

# Question And Answer

'CAN the soul die, believe you?  
Because it seems to me  
My soul is dead and buried,  
So still it seems to be.

'It quivers not with joy;  
It moaneth not with pain;  
There is no note in nature  
Awakens it again.

'Those white clouds in the azure;  
Those lanes; those breezy trees;  
Those softly gliding swallows;  
Those fluted melodies;

'Those shadows in the meadows,  
Running a fitful race;  
With pleasure once they thrilled me,  
But coldly now I gaze.'

Fear not; oh! not so lightly  
The soul of mortal dies;  
It has but wept itself to sleep,  
And all unconscious lies.

The surging feelings overwrought,  
They have but ebbed away,  
And left the soul a little while  
With all their changeful spray.

But stronger, deeper, fuller, in  
The billowy tide will roll,  
And overflow, with life and love,  
The ever living soul.

Mathilde Blind

# Reapers

Sun-Tanned men and women, toiling there together;  
Seven I count in all, in yon field of wheat,  
Where the rich ripe ears in the harvest weather  
Glow an orange gold through the sweltering heat.

Busy life is still, sunk in brooding leisure:  
Birds have hushed their singing in the hushed tree tops;  
Not a single cloud mars the flawless azure;  
Not a shadow moves o'er the moveless crops;

In the grassy shallows, that no breath is creasing,  
Chestnut-coloured cows in the rushes dank  
Stand like cows of bronze, save when they flick the teasing  
Flies with switch of tail from each quivering flank.

Nature takes a rest-even her bees are sleeping,  
And the silent wood seems a church that's shut;  
But these human creatures cease not from their reaping  
While the corn stands high, waiting to be cut.

Mathilde Blind

# Renunciation

When ich Dich liebe was geht es Dich an?

I.

THE air is full of the peal of bells,  
The rhythmical pealing of marriage bells;  
But athwart and above their ringing--  
Throbbing clear like the light of a star  
Lost in the sunrise--I hear afar  
The skylark's jubilant singing.

II.

The clouds all woollen and white on high,  
Like flocks of heavenly sheep go by,  
Go through heaven's sapphire meadows;  
While here on the earth's green meadows, deep  
In sapphire flowers, our earthly sheep  
Loll in their loitering shadows.

III.

Come, we will sit by the wayside here,  
They must cross this field to the chapel, dear,  
The loved by the side for her lover.  
Grey, through the glimmer of vernal green,  
Its time-worn tower may just be seen  
Through the yews which curtain it over.

IV.

Nay, little brother, why should I pine?  
Dare a violet ask that the sun should shine,  
The shining sun shine for it solely?  
Lowly it lifteth its meek blue eye,  
And yields up its soul to the sun on high,  
Nor asks for love, loving so wholly.

V.

He passed by the garden where, snow-white and red,  
I tended the flowers which give us our bread,  
And watered my lilies and roses;  
He passed and repassed both early and late,

And lingering, often would lean on the gate  
While I tied for him one of my posies.

VI.

Day after day would he pass this way,  
And his smiling was sweet as the flowers of May,  
Or the scent of the bee-haunted clover;  
And a softer flame seemed to light up his eye  
Than the lily-white moon's in the rose-hued sky,  
Ere the blush of the May-day is over.

VII.

Aye, day after day he would stop on his way,  
While the trees were in leaf and the meadows were gay,  
And the curled little lambs were grazing;  
As he went, or returned in the waning light  
From the smoke-capped city whose lamps by night  
Turn the black clouds red with their blazing.

VIII.

It's a year to-day when the young sun sets  
Since I gave him that first bunch of violets  
From the root on the grave of our mother.  
Though thou seest them not with the bodily eye,  
The language of flowers much better than I  
I know that thou knowest, my brother.

IX.

Violets--then golden daffodils  
Which the light of the sun like a wine-cup fills--  
Tall tulips like flames upspringing--  
Golden-brown wallflowers bright as his locks--  
Marigolds--balsams--and perfumed stocks  
Whose scent's like a blackbird's singing.

X.

You see, my darling, I never forget!  
Aye, those were your own very words--ere yet  
Our father lost his all in yon city,  
Where the people, they say, in their struggle for gold,  
Become like wild beasts, and the feeble and old  
Are trampled upon without pity.

XI.

Poor father was better to-day: for the smile  
Of the sun seemed to gladden him too for awhile  
As he sat by the bright little casement,  
With buttercups heaped on his knees without stint,  
Which, deeming them childishly fresh from the mint,  
He counted in chuckling amazement.

XII.

The air is full of the peal of bells--  
The rhythmical pealing of marriage bells!  
And there floats o'er the fields, o'er the fallows,  
Borne on the wind with the wind-blown chimes,  
From the old house hidden in older limes,  
A chatter of maidens and swallows.

XIII.

Ah, give me the flowers!--the last year was all  
In tune with the flowers from the spring to the fall,  
And with singing of birds in the bowers;  
And once--ah, look not so angry, dear!--  
He whispered so softly I scarce could hear,  
'You yourself are the flower of all flowers!'

XIV.

But oh, when the wind was loud in the trees,  
When the fluttering petals snowed down on the leas,  
And the dim sun went out like an ember,  
He stood by the gate all drenched with the mist,  
And I gave him my last Christmas rose, which he kissed  
For the last time that last of November.

XV.

Say, could he help if a hope as sweet  
As the wild thyme had sprouted under his feet?  
If his face in my heart is enfolden,  
As the sun-smit globes of the summer rain  
Reflect and hold and refract again  
The sun, the eternally golden.

XVI.

He cometh, he cometh, oh brother, there!  
Ah would that you saw the glint of his hair,  
For he looks like that saint in the story  
Whom you loved so to hear of in days of old,  
Till he lit up your dreams with his curls of gold,  
Exhaling a mystical glory.

XVII.

The unseen wings of the morning air  
Fan his brow and ruffle his hair  
As he steps with a stately measure;  
White daisies under his feet are spread,  
White butterflies hover above his head,  
White clouds high up in the azure:

XVIII.

Pelt him with sunlit April rain,  
Rain which ripens the earth-hid grain,  
Which brings up the grass and the heather!  
Hark at the peal of the bridal bells,  
How their musical chiming swells and swells  
As they enter the church door together.

XIX.

Let us go hence now--'tis over--the twain  
One will they be when they pass here again:  
All my flowers in their pathway I scatter;  
Though he forget me as yesterday's rose,  
My heart with a sweet tender feeling o'erflows:  
If I love him, to whom can it matter?

XX.

Yea, let us go now; the stile, love, is here:  
Henceforth I live but for thee. What! a tear  
Splashed on thy hand? Nay, a drop from the shower  
That has passed over, for yon, on that dark  
Ominous cloud, dearest brother, the arc  
Of the Lord's bow now breaks into flower.

Mathilde Blind

# Rest

WE are so tired, my heart and I.  
Of all things here beneath the sky  
One only thing would please us best--  
Endless, unfathomable rest.

We are so tired; we ask no more  
Than just to slip out by Life's door;  
And leave behind the noisy rout  
And everlasting turn about.

Once it seemed well to run on too  
With her importunate, fevered crew,  
And snatch amid the frantic strife  
Some morsel from the board of life.

But we are tired. At Life's crude hands  
We ask no gift she understands;  
But kneel to him she hates to crave  
The absolution of the grave.

Mathilde Blind

## Roman Anemones

THE maiden meadows softly blush  
Beneath the enamoured breeze,  
And break into one purple flush  
Of frail anemones.

Violet and rose and vermeil white,  
Woven of sun and showers,  
They seem to be embodied light  
Transfigured into flowers.

Mathilde Blind

## Rose D'Amour

Oh haste while roses bloom below,  
Oh haste while pale and bright above  
The sun and moon alternate glow,  
To pluck the rose of love.

Yea, give the morning to the lark,  
The nightingale its glimmering grove,  
Give moonlight to the hungry dark,  
But to man's heart give love!

Then haste while still the roses blow,  
And pale and bright in heaven above  
The sun and moon alternate glow,  
Pluck, pluck the rose of love.

Mathilde Blind

## Saving Love

Would we but love what will not pass away!  
The sun that on each morning shines as clear  
As when it rose first on the world's first year;  
The fresh green leaves that rustle on the spray.  
The sun will shine, the leaves will be as gay  
When graves are full of all our hearts held dear,  
When not a soul of those who loved us here,  
Not one, is left us--creatures of decay.

Yea, love the Abiding in the Universe  
Which was before, and will be after us.  
Nor yet for ever hanker and vainly cry  
For human love--the beings that change or die;  
Die--change--forget: to care so is a curse,  
Yet cursed we'll be rather than not care thus.

Mathilde Blind

# Scarabæus Sisyphus

I've watched thee, Scarab! Yea, an hour in vain  
I've watched thee, slowly toiling up the hill,  
Pushing thy lump of mud before thee still  
With patience infinite and stubborn strain.  
Strive as thou mayst, spare neither time nor pain,  
To screen thy burden from all chance of ill;  
Push, push, with all a beetle's force of will,  
Thy ball, alas! rolls ever down again.

Toil without end! And why? That after thee  
Dim hosts of groping Scarabs too shall climb  
This self-same height? Accursèd progeny  
Of Sisyphus, what antenatal crime  
Has doomed us too to roll incessantly  
Life's Stone, recoiling from the Alps of time?

Mathilde Blind

# Seeking

In many a shape and fleeting apparition,  
Sublime in age or with clear morning eyes,  
Ever I seek thee, tantalising Vision,  
Which beckoning flies.

Ever I seek Thee, O evasive Presence,  
Which on the far horizon's utmost verge,  
Like some wild star in luminous evanescence,  
Shoots o'er the surge.

Ever I seek Thy features ever flying,  
Which ne'er beheld I never can forget:  
Lightning which flames through love, and mimics dying  
In souls that set.

Ever I seek Thee through all clouds of error;  
As when the moon behind earth's shadow slips,  
She wears a momentary mask of terror  
In brief eclipse.

Ever I seek Thee, passionately yearning;  
Like altar-fire on some forgotten fane,  
My life flames up irrevocably burning,  
And burnt in vain.

Mathilde Blind

# Shakespeare

YEARNING to know herself for all she was,  
Her passionate clash of warring good and ill,  
Her new life ever ground in Death's old mill,  
With every delicate detail and en masse,--  
Blind Nature strove. Lo, then it came to pass,  
That Time, to work out her unconscious Will,  
Once wrought the Mind which she had groped for still,  
And she beheld herself as in a glass.

The world of men, unrolled before our sight,  
Showed like a map, where stream and waterfall  
And village-cradling vale and cloud-capped height  
Stand faithfully recorded, great and small;  
For Shakespeare was, and at his touch, with light  
Impartial as the Sun's, revealed the All.

Mathilde Blind

# She Stood Against The Orient Sun

She stood against the Orient sun,  
Her face inscrutable for light;  
A myriad larks in unison  
Sang o'er her, soaring out of sight.

A myriad flowers around her feet  
Burst flame-like from the yielding sod,  
Till all the wandering airs were sweet  
With incense mounting up to God.

A mighty rainbow shook, inclined  
Towards her, from the Occident,  
Girdling the cloud-wrack which enshrined  
Half the light-bearing firmament.

Lit showers flashed golden o'er the hills,  
And trees flung silver to the breeze,  
And, scattering diamonds, fleet-foot rills  
Fled laughingly across the leas.

Yea, Love, the skylarks laud but thee,  
And writ in flowers thine awful name;  
Spring is thy shade, dread Ecstasy,  
And life a brand which feeds thy flame.

Mathilde Blind

# Sleep

Love-cradling Night, lit by the lucent moon,  
Most pitiful and mother-hearted Night!  
Blest armistice in life's tumultuous fight,  
Resolving discords to a spheral tune!  
When tired with heat and strenuous toil of noon,  
With ceaseless conflict betwixt might and right,  
With ebb and flow of sorrow and delight,  
Our panting hearts beneath their burdens swoon:

To thee, O star-eyes comforter, we creep,  
Earth's ill-used step-children to thee make moan,  
As hiding in thy dark skirts' ample sweep;  
--Poor debtors whose brief life is not their own;  
For dunned by Death, to whom we owe its loan,  
Give us, O Night, the interest paid in sleep.

Mathilde Blind

## Snow Or Snowdrops?

Is it snow or snowdrops' shimmer  
Whitens thus the bladed grass,  
With a faint aërial glimmer,--  
Spring or winter, which did pass?  
For the sky is dim and tender  
With an evanescent light,  
And the fading fields are white,  
White with snow or snowdrops, under  
The fair firstling stars of night.

Little robin, softly, cheerly  
Piping on yon wintry bough,  
Why have all the fields that pearly  
Iridescence, knowest thou?  
Did old Winter, grim and hoary,  
Aim a parting dart at Spring  
As she fled on azure wing,  
Or did she with rainbow glory  
In his face her snowdrops fling?

Mathilde Blind

# Sometimes I Wonder

Sometimes I wonder if you guess  
The deep impassioned tenderness  
Which overflows my heart;  
The love I never dare confess;  
Yet hard, yea, harder to repress  
Than tears too faint to start.

Sometimes I ponder, O my sweet,  
The things I'll tell you when we meet;  
But straightway at your sight  
My heart's blood oozes to my feet  
Like thawing waters in the heat,  
Confused with too much light.

I hardly know, when you are near,  
If it is love, or joy, or fear  
Which fills my languid frame;  
Enveloped in your atmosphere,  
My dark self seems to disappear,  
A moth entombed in flame.

Mathilde Blind

## Song I

OH haste while roses bloom below,  
Oh haste while pale and bright above  
The sun and moon alternate glow,  
To pluck the rose of love.

Yea, give the morning to the lark,  
The nightingale its glimmering grove,  
Give moonlight to the hungry dark,  
But to man's heart give love!

Then haste while still the roses blow,  
And pale and bright in heaven above  
The sun and moon alternate glow,  
Pluck, pluck the rose of love.

Mathilde Blind

## Song II

ALL my heart is stirring lightly  
Like dim violets winter-bound,  
Quickening as they feel the brightly  
Glowing sunlight underground.

Yea, this drear and silent bosom,  
Hushed as snow-hid grove but now,  
Breaketh into leaf and blossom  
Like a gleaming vernal bough.

Oh the singing, singing, singing!  
Callow hopes that thrill my breast!  
Can the lark of love be winging  
Back to its abandoned nest?

Mathilde Blind

# Soul-Drift

I LET my soul drift with the thistledown  
Afloat upon the honeymooning breeze;  
My thoughts about the swelling buds are blown,  
Blown with the golden dust of flowering trees.

On fleeting gusts of desultory song,  
I let my soul drift out into the Spring;  
The Psyche flies and palpitates among  
The palpitating creatures on the wing.

Go, happy Soul! run fluid in the wave,  
Vibrate in light, escape thy natal curse;  
Go forth no longer as my body-slave,  
But as the heir of all the Universe.  
Villa Borghese

Mathilde Blind

# Soul's Call

When you wake from troubled slumbers  
With a dream-bewildered brain,  
And old leaves which no man numbers  
Chattering tap against the pane;

And the midnight wind is wailing  
Till your very life seems quailing  
As the long gusts shudder and sigh:  
Know you not that homeless cry

Is my love's, which cannot die,  
Wailing through Eternity?

\* \* \* \* \*

When beside the glowing embers,  
Sitting in the twilight lone,  
Drop on drop you hear November's  
Melancholy monotone,

As the heavy rain comes sweeping,  
With a sound of weeping, weeping,  
Till your blood is chilled with fears;  
Know you not those falling tears,

Flowing fast through years on years,  
For my sobs within your ears?

\* \* \* \* \*

When with dolorous moan the billows  
Surge around where, far and wide,  
Leagues on leagues of sea-worn hollows  
Throb with thunders of the tide,

And the weary waves in breaking  
Fill you, thrill you, as with aching  
Memories of our love of yore  
Where you pace the sounding shore,

Hear you not, through roll and roar,  
Soul call soul for evermore?

Mathilde Blind

# Sphinx-Money

Where Pyramids and temple-wrecks are piled  
Confusedly on camel-coloured sands,  
And the mute Arab motionlessly stands,  
Like some swart god who never wept or smiled,--  
I picked up mummy relics of the wild  
(And sea-shells once with clutching baby hands),  
And felt a wafture from old Motherlands,  
And all the morning wonder of a Child

To find Sphinx-money. So the Beduin calls  
Small fossils of the waste. Nay, poet's gold;  
'Twill give thee entrance to those rites of old,  
When hundred-gated Thebes, with storied walls,  
Gleamed o'er her Plain, and vast processions rolled  
To Amon-Ra through Karnak's pillared halls.

Mathilde Blind

# Spring In The Alps

THE flowers are at their Bacchanals  
Among the lusty green;  
Wild Orchis and Narcissus waltz  
With Marguerite for queen.  
Birds join in glees and madrigals  
To little loves unseen;  
And unimprisoned Waterfalls  
Flash laughing in between.

The Sunlight, leaping from the Heights,  
Flames o'er the fields of May,  
Winged with unnumbered swallow-flights  
Fresh from the long sea way;

And butterflies and insect mites,  
Born with the new-blown day,  
Cross fires in shifting opal lights  
From spray to beckoning spray.

The dandelion puffs her balls,  
Free spinsters of the air,  
Who scorn to wait for beetle calls  
Or bees to find them fair;  
But breaking through the painted walls  
Their sisters tamely bear,  
Fly off in dancing down, which falls  
And sprouts up everywhere.

And far above Earth's flower-filled lap  
And rosy revelry,  
The mountain mothers feed her sap  
From herded clouds on high--  
Each pinnacle and frozen pap  
Whose life has long gone by,  
A bridge which spans the mighty gap  
Between the earth and sky.  
St. Gotthardt.



# Suffering

Oh ye, all ye, who suffer here below,  
Schooled in the baffling mystery of pain,  
Who on life's anvil bear the fateful strain,  
Wrong as forged iron, hammered blow on blow.  
Take counsel with your grief, in that you know,  
That he who suffers suffers not in vain,  
Nay, that it shall be for the whole world's gain,  
And wisdom prove the priceless price of woe.

Thus in some new-found land where no man's feet  
Have trod a path, bold voyagers astray,  
May fall foredone by torturing thirst and heat:  
But from the impotent body of defeat--  
The winners spring who carve a conquering way--  
Measured by milestones of their perished clay.

Mathilde Blind

# Sundered Paths

TWO travellers, worn with sun and rain  
And gropings o'er dim paths unknown,  
Meet where long separate ways have grown  
To one, and then diverge again.

They halt anigh the green wayside,  
Where groves pant with the impassioned song  
Of nightingales; wild roses throng  
There round them leaning side by side.

As close and still more close they cling,  
Like some weird tale--once more in dreams  
Lived through with ghastlier horror--seems  
That old, cold, lonely wayfaring.

Oh close sweet clasp of hands! oh sweet  
Close beat of heart on happy heart;  
Beating as though no more apart  
Their pulses ever again should beat!

One look of love! one long embrace!  
One kiss that welds two lives in one!  
And lo, the sudden lifted sun  
Lights their slow feet on separate ways.

Fledged by strong love, their wingèd speech  
Is borne awhile from soul to soul,  
Then ever-widening waters roll  
And drown their voices each from each.

Mathilde Blind

# The Abandoned

SHE sat by the wayside and wept, where roses, red roses and white,  
Lay wasted and withered and sere, like her life and its ruined delight;  
Like chaff blown about in the wind whirled roses, white roses and red,  
And pale, on night's threshold, the moon bent over the day that was dead.

She sat by the wayside and wept; far over the desolate plain  
A noise as of one that is weeping re-echoed in wind and in rain,  
And the long dim line of the spectral poplars with dolorous wail  
Nodded their bald-headed tops as they chattered with cold in the gale.

She sat by the wayside and wept in a passion of vain desire,  
And her weak heart fluttered and failed like the flame of a faltering fire,  
Fluttered and failed in her breast like the broken wing of a bird  
When its feathers are dabbled with gore, and the low last gurgle is heard.

And behold, like balm on her soul, while she sat by the wayside and wept,  
There came a forgetting of sorrow, a lulling of grief, and she slept;  
Yea, like the wings of a dove when cooing it broods on the nest,  
So the wings of slumber about her assuaged and filled her with rest.

And a light that was not the sun's nor the moon's light illumined her brain;  
From afar in the country of dreams three maidens stole over the plain,  
Three loveliest maidens they were, like roses, red roses and white;  
And behold the earth and the heavens were glorified in their light.

And the first of the maidens was fair, as fair as the blue-kirtled Spring,  
When she comes with a snowfall of blossoms and a rustling of birds on the wing,  
When a glimmer of green like a tide rolls over the woodland and vales,  
And odours are blown on the winds with the song of the nightingales.

The second was loftier of stature, a huntress of grief;  
The wilderness glowed as she passed and broke into blossom and leaf;  
Yea, it seemed that her upturned eyes, with their fathomless gaze,  
Could pierce to the shining stars through the veil of the noonday blaze.

But the third was a splendour incarnate, a luminous form,  
Thrilling with raptures that keep the heart of the cold earth warm,  
Who hidden far in the mystical glory of quivering rays  
Sets the whole world on fire for an absolute sight of her face.

But darkling ever they see her, and ever as through a veil,  
For if naked she lightens upon them, their lives must shrivel and fail,  
Must fail and shrivel consumed by that burst of insufferable light,  
As a tree set on fire by lightning which burns to the ground in a night.

The first one kissed her cheek, her cheek grew pallid and wan:  
'Goodbye,' she cried, 'we must part; I am Youth, and I follow the sun;  
I am Youth, and I love to build in the heart that is buoyant and gay;  
Goodbye, we shall meet not again,' she cried, as she fluttered away.

The second she kissed her eyes, then the glamour went out of their gaze,  
Through the magical show she beheld life staring her straight in the face;  
With a terrible Gorgon stare that turned her heart into stone--  
'Adieu,' she sighed, 'I am Hope, all is over between us and done.'  
The third one she kissed her lips, and the kiss was a quenchless fire,  
It burned up her life like a victim's in the flames of a funeral pyre--  
'Farewell,' she wailed, 'I am Love,' and her wings were spread as for flight--  
It seemed like the wail of the wind as they left her alone with the night.

Mathilde Blind

# The After-Glow

It is a solemn evening, golden-clear--  
The Alpine summits flame with rose-lit snow  
And headlands purpling on wide seas below,  
And clouds and woods and arid rocks appear  
Dissolving in the sun's own atmosphere  
And vast circumference of light, whose slow  
Transfiguration--glow and after-glow--  
Turns twilight earth to a more luminous sphere.

Oh heart, I ask, seeing that the orb of day  
Has sunk below, yet left to sky and sea  
His glory's spiritual after-shine:  
I ask if Love, whose sun hath set for thee,  
May not touch grief with his memorial ray,  
And lend to loss itself a joy divine?

Mathilde Blind

# The Agnostic

NOT in the hour of peril, thronged with foes,  
Panting to set their heel upon my head,--  
Or when alone from many wounds I bled  
Unflinching beneath Fortune's random blows;  
Not when my shuddering hands were doomed to close  
The unshrinking eyelids of the stony dead;--  
Not then I missed my God, not then--but said:  
'Let me not burden God with all man's woes!'

But when resurgent from the womb of night  
Spring's Oriflamme of flowers waves from the Sod;  
When peak on flashing Alpine peak is trod  
By sunbeams on their missionary flight;  
When heaven-kissed Earth laughs, garmented in light;--  
That is the hour in which I miss my God.

Mathilde Blind

# The Avon

WHAT are the Willows whispering in a row,  
Nodding their old heads o'er the river's edge?  
What does the West wind whisper to the sedge  
And to the shame-faced purples drooping low?  
Why sobs the water, in its broken flow  
Lapping against the grey weir's ruined ledge?  
And, in the thorny shelter of the hedge,  
What bird unloads his heart of woe?

Green Avon's haunted! Look, from yonder bank  
The willow leans, that hath not ceased to weep,  
Whence, hanging garlands, fair Ophelia sank;  
Since Jacques moped here the trees have had a tongue;  
And all these streams and whispering willows keep  
The moan of Desdemona's dying song.

Mathilde Blind

# The Beautiful Beeshareen Boy

Beautiful, black-eyed boy,  
O lithe-limbed Beeshareen!  
Face that finds no maid coy,  
Page for some peerless queen:  
Some Orient queen of old,  
Sumptuous in woven gold,  
Close-clinging fold on fold,  
Lightning, with gems between.

Bred in the desert, where  
Only to breathe and be  
Alive in living air  
Is finest ecstasy;  
Where just to ride or rove,  
With sun or stars above,  
Intoxicates like love,  
When love shall come to thee.

Thy lovely limbs are bare;  
Only a rag, in haste,  
Draped with a princely air,  
Girdles they slender waist.  
And gaudy beads and charms,  
Dangling from neck and arms,  
Ward off dread spells and harms  
Of Efreets of the waste.

Caressed of wind and sun,  
Across the white-walled town  
Fawnlike we saw thee run,  
Light Love in Mocha brown!  
Wild Cupid, without wings,  
Twanging thy viol strings;  
With crocodiles and rings  
Bartered for half a crown.

Spoilt darling of our bark,  
Smiling with teeth as white  
As when across the dark

There breaks a flash of light.  
And what a careless grace  
Showed in thy gait and pace;  
Eyes starlike in a face  
Sweet as a Nubian night!

Better than Felt or Fez,  
High on thy forehead set,  
Countless in lock and tress,  
Waved a wild mane of jet.  
Kings well might envy thee  
What courts but rarely see,  
Curls of rich ebony  
Coiled in a coronet.

Lo--in dim days long since--  
The strolling Almehs tell,  
Thou shouldst have been a prince,  
Boy of the ebon fell!  
If truth the poet sings,  
Thy tribe, oh Beduin, springs  
From those lost tribes of Kings,  
Once Kings in Israel.

Ah me! the camp-fires gleam  
Out yonder, where the sands  
Fade like a lotos dream  
In hollow twilight lands.  
Our sail swells to the blast,  
Our boat speeds far and fast,  
Farewell! And to the last  
Smile, waving friendly hands.

\* \* \* \* \*

From England's storm-girt isle,  
O'er seas where seagulls wail,  
Rocked on the rippling Nile,  
We drift with drooping sail.  
On waters hushed at night,  
Where stars of Egypt write  
In hieroglyphs of light

Their undeciphered tale.

Forlorn sits Assouan;  
Where is her boy, her pride?--  
Now in the lamplit Khan,  
Now by the riverside,  
Or where the Soudanese,  
Under mimosa trees,  
Chaunt mournful melodies,  
We've sought him far and wide.

Oh, desert-nurtured Child,  
How dared they carry thee,  
Far from thy native Wild,  
Across the Western Sea?  
Packed off, poor boy, at last,  
With many a plaster cast  
Of plinth and pillar vast,  
And waxen mummies piled!

Ah! just like other ware,  
For a lump sum or so  
Shipped to the World's great Fair--  
To big Chicago Show!  
With mythic beasts and things,  
Beetles and bulls with wings,  
And imitation Sphinx,  
Ranged row on curious row!

Beautiful, black-eyed boy;  
Ah me! how strange it is  
That thou, the desert's joy,  
Whom heavenly winds would kiss,  
With Ching and Chang-hwa ware,  
Blue pots and bronzes rare,  
Shouldst now be over there  
Shown at Porkopolis.

Gone like a lovely dream,  
Child of the starry smile;  
Gone from the glowing stream  
Glassing its greenest isle!

We've sought, but sought in vain;  
Thou wilt not come again,  
Never for bliss or pain,  
Home to thy orphaned Nile.

Mathilde Blind

# The Colossi Of The Plain

Ancient of Days! Before the Trojan Wars  
You towered as now in your colossal prime,  
Watching the rosy footed morning climb  
O'er far Arabia's flushing mountain bars.  
Despite your weird disfigurement and scars  
You dwarf all other monuments. Sublime  
Survivors of old Thebes! you baffle Time,  
And sit in silent conclave with the Stars.

Ah, once below you through the glittering plain  
Stretched avenues of Sphinxes to the Nile;  
And, flanked with towers, each consecrated fane  
Enshrined its god. The broken gods lie prone  
In roofless halls, their hallowed terrors gone,  
Helpless beneath Heaven's penetrating smile.

Mathilde Blind

# The Dead

The dead abide with us! Though stark and cold  
Earth seems to grip them, they are with us still:  
They have forged our chains of being for good or ill;  
And their invisible hands these hands yet hold.  
Our perishable bodies are the mould  
In which their strong imperishable will--  
Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil--  
Hath grown incorporate through dim time untold.

Vibrations infinite of life in death,  
As a star's travelling light survives its star!  
So may we hold our lives, that when we are  
The fate of those who then will draw this breath,  
They shall not drag us to their judgment bar,  
And curse the heritage which we bequeath.

Mathilde Blind

# The Desert

Uncircumscribed, unmeasured, vast,  
Eternal as the Sea;  
What lacks the tidal sea thou hast--  
Profound stability.

Beneath the sun that burns and brands  
In hushed Noon's halting breath,  
Calm as the Sphinx upon thy sands  
Thou art--nay, calm as death.

The desert foxes hide in holes,  
The jackal seeks his lair;  
The sombre rocks, like reddening coals,  
Glow lurid in the glare.

Only some vulture far away,  
Bald-headed, harpy-eyed,  
Flaps down on lazy wing to prey  
On what has lately died.

No palm tree lifts a lonely shade,  
No dove is on the wing;  
It seems a land which Nature made  
Without a living thing,

Or wreckage of some older world,  
Ere children grew, or flowers,  
When rocks and hissing stones were hurled  
In hot, volcanic showers.

The solemn Blue bends over all;  
Far as winged thought may flee  
Roll ridges of black mountain wall,  
And flat sands like the sea.

No trace of footsteps to be seen,  
No tent, no smoking roof;  
Nay, even the vagrant Beeshareen  
Keeps warily aloof.

But yon, mid tumbled hillocks prone,  
Some human form I scan--  
A human form, indeed, but stone:  
A cold, colossal Man!

How came he here mid piling sands,  
Like some huge cliff enisled,  
Osiris-wise, with folded hands,  
Mute spirit of the Wild?

Ages ago the hands that hewed,  
And in the living rock  
Carved this Colossus, granite-thewed  
And curled each crispy lock:

Ages ago have dropped to rest  
And left him passive, prone,  
Forgotten on earth's barren breast,  
Half statue and half stone.

And Persia ruled and Palestine;  
And o'er her violet seas  
Arose, with marble gods divine,  
The grace of god-like Greece.

And Rome, the Mistress of the World,  
Amid her diadem  
Of Eastern Empires set impearled  
The Scarab's mystic gem.

Perchance he has been lying here  
Since first the world began,  
Poor Titan of some earlier sphere  
Of prehistoric Man!

To whom we are as idle flies,  
That fuss and buzz their day;  
While still immutable he lies,  
As long ago he lay.

Empurpled in the Afterglow,

Thou, with the Sun alone,  
Of all the stormy waste below,  
Art King, but king of stone!

Uncircumscribed, unmeasured, vast,  
Eternal as the Sea,  
The present here becomes the past,  
For all futurity.

Mathilde Blind

# The Dying Dragoman

Far in the fiery wilderness,  
Beyond the town of Assouan,  
Left languishing in sore distress,  
There lay a dying Dragoman.  
Alone amid the waste, alone,  
The hot sand burnt him to the bone;  
And on his breast, like heated stone,  
The burden of the air did press.

His head was pillowed on a tomb,  
Reared to some holy Sheik of old;  
The irresistible Simoom  
Whirled drifts of sand that rose and rolled  
Around him, and the panting air  
Was one sulphureous spectral glare,  
Shot with such gleams as lights the lair  
Of tigers in a jungle's gloom.

Groaning, he closed his bloodshot eyes,  
As if to shut out all he feared;  
And greedily a swarm of flies  
Fell on his face and tangled beard.  
He lay like one who ne'er would lift  
His head above that ashy drift;  
When lo, there gleamed across a rift  
The blue oasis of the skies.

Like smoke dispersing far and wide,  
The draggled sands were blown away;  
The wild clouds in a refluent tide  
Receded from the face of day.  
The lingering airs yet lightly blew  
Till the last speck cleared out of view,  
And left the hushed Eternal Blue,  
And nothing else beside.

Then once again, with change of moods,  
A mighty shadow, broadening, fell  
Across those shadeless solitudes,

Without a Palm, without a Well.  
Wing wedged in wing, an ordered mass  
Unnumbered numbers pass and pass,  
As if one Will, one only, was  
In all those moving multitudes.

A chord thrilled in the sick man's brain;  
He raised his heavy-lidded eyes,  
He raised his heavy head with pain,  
And caught a glimpse of netted skies,  
Meshed in ten thousand wings in flight  
That cleft the air. Oh wondrous sight!  
He gasped, he shrieked in sheer delight:  
"The Storks! The Storks fly home again!

"I too, O Storks, I too, even I,  
Would see my native land again.  
Oh, had I wings that I might fly  
With you, wild birds, across the main!  
Take, take me to the land, I pray,  
The land where nests are full in May,  
The land where my young children play:  
Oh, take me with you, or I die.

"My lonely heart blooms like a flower,  
My children, when I think of you,  
My love is like an April shower,  
And fills my heart with drops of dew.  
Along their unknown tracks, ah me!  
The Storks will fly across the sea;  
My children soon will hail with glee  
Their red bills on the rain-washed tower."

Home-sickness seized him for the herds  
That browse upon the fresh green leas;  
Home-sickness for the cuckoo birds  
That shout afar in feathery trees;  
For running stream and rippling rill  
That, racing, turning his woodland mill:  
And tears on tears began to fill  
His eyes, confusing all he sees.

Again he doats on rosy cheeks  
Of children rolling in the grass;  
Again the busy days and weeks,  
The months and years serenely pass.  
Black forest clocks tick day and night,  
His board and bed are snowy white,  
His humble house is just as bright  
As if it were a house of glass.

Again, beneath the high-peaked roof,  
His wife's unresting shuttle flies  
Across the even warp and woof;  
Again his thrifty mother plies  
Her wheel, that hums like noontide bees;  
And lint-locked babes about her knees  
Hark to strange tales of talking trees,  
And Storks deep versed in sage replies.

Again the ring of swinging chimes  
Calls all the pious folk to church,  
With shining Sunday face, betimes,  
Through rustling woods of beech and birch

Full of moist glimmering hollows where  
The pines bow murmuring as in prayer,  
And musically through the air  
The forest's mighty Choral swells.

Again, O Lord, again he sees  
The place where Heaven came down one day;  
Where, in a space of bloom and bees,  
He won his wife one morn of May.  
Warm pulses shook and thrilled his blood,  
Wild birds were singing in the wood,  
The flowering world in bridal mood  
Joined in the Pinewood's symphonies.

Again, O Lord, in grief and fear,  
He bids good-bye to all he loves;  
The waters swell, the woods are sere,  
The Storks are gone, and hushed the doves.  
He goes with them; he goes to heal

The sickness whose insidious seal  
Is set on him. Ah, tears will steal  
And blur the Storks that disappear.

A furnace fire behind the hill,  
The sun has burnt itself away;  
The ghost of light, transparent, chill,  
Yet floats upon the edge of day.  
And all the desert holds its breath  
As if it felt and crouched beneath  
The filmy, flying bat of death  
About a heart for ever still.

And one by one, seraphic, bland,  
The bright stars open in the skies;  
The large above the Shadow land  
The white-faced moon begins to rise.  
And all the wilderness grows wan  
Beneath the stars, that one by one  
Look down upon the lifeless man  
As if they were his children's eyes.

Mathilde Blind

# The Evening Of The Year

Wan mists enwrap the still-born day;  
The harebell withers on the heath;  
And all the moorland seems to breathe  
The hectic beauty of decay.  
Within the open grave of May  
Dishevelled trees drop wreath on wreath;  
Wind-wrung and ravelled underneath  
Waste leaves choke up the woodland way.

The grief of many partings near  
Wails like an echo in the wind:  
The days of love lie far behind,  
The days of loss lie shuddering near.  
Life's morning-glory who shall bind?  
It is the evening of the year.

Mathilde Blind

# The Forest Pool

LOST amid gloom and solitude,  
A pool lies hidden in the wood,  
A pool the autumn rain has made  
Where flowers with their fair shadows played.

Bare as a beggar's board, the trees  
Stand in the water to their knees;  
The birds are mute, but far away  
I hear a bloodhound's sullen bay.

Blue-eyed forget-me-nots that shook,  
Kissed by a little laughing brook,  
Kissed too by you with lips so red,  
Float in the water drowned and dead.

And dead and drowned 'mid leaves that rot,  
Our angel-eyed Forget-me-not,  
The love of unforgotten years,  
Floats corpse-like in a pool of tears

Mathilde Blind

# The Hunter's Moon

The Hunter's Moon rides high,  
High o'er the close-cropped plain;  
Across the desert sky  
The herded clouds amain  
Scamper tumultuously,  
Chased by the hounding wind  
That yelps behind.

The clamorous hunt is done,  
Warm-housed the kennelled pack;  
One huntsman rides alone  
With dangling bridle slack;  
He wakes a hollow tone,  
Far echoing to his horn  
In clefts forlorn.

The Hunter's Moon rides low,  
Her course is nearly sped.  
Where is the panting roe?  
Where hath the wild deer fled?  
Hunter and hunted now  
Lie in oblivion deep:  
Dead or asleep.

Mathilde Blind

# The Mirror Of Diana

Popular Name for Lake Nemi.

SHE floats into the quiet skies,  
Where, in the circle of hills,  
Her immemorial mirror fills  
With light, as of a Virgin's eyes  
When, love a-tremble in their blue,  
They glow twin violets dipped in dew.

Mild as a metaphor of Sleep,  
Immaculately maiden-white,  
The Queen Moon of ancestral night  
Beholds her image in the deep:  
As if a-gaze she beams above  
Lake Nemi's magic glass of love.

White rose, white lily of the vale,  
Perfume the even breath of night;  
In many a burst of sweet delight  
The love throb of the nightingale  
Swells through lush flowering woods and fills  
The circle of the listening hills.

White rose, white lily of the skies,  
The Moon-flower blossoms in the lake;  
The nightingale for her fair sake  
With hopeless love's impassioned cries  
Seems fain to sing till song must kill  
Himself with one tumultuous trill.

And all the songs and all the scents,  
The light of glowworms and the fires  
Of fire-flies in the cypress spires;  
And all the wild wind instruments  
Of pine and ilex as the breeze  
Sweeps out their mystic harmonies;--

All are but Messengers of May

To that white orb of maiden fire  
Who fills the moth with mad desire  
To die enamoured in her ray,  
And turns each dewdrop in the grass  
Into a fairy looking-glass.

O Beauty, far and far above  
The night moth and the nightingale!  
Far, far above life's narrow pale,  
O Unattainable! O Love!  
Even as the nightingale we cry  
For some Ideal set on high.

Haunting the deep reflective mind,  
You may surprise its perfect Sphere  
Glassed like the Moon within her mere,  
Who at a puff of alien wind  
Melts in innumerable rings,  
Elusive in the flux of things.

Mathilde Blind

# The Moat

AROUND this lichened home of hoary peace,  
Invulnerable in its glassy moat,  
A breath of ghostly summers seems to float  
And murmur mid the immemorial trees.  
The tender slopes, where cattle browse at ease,  
Swell softly, like a pigeon's emerald throat;  
And, self-oblivious, Time forgets to note  
The flight of velvet-footed centuries.

The very sunlight hushed within the close,  
Sleeps indolently by the Yew's slow shade;  
Still as a relic some old Master made  
The jewelled peacock's rich enamel glows;  
And on yon mossy wall that youthful rose  
Blooms like a rose that never means to fade.

Mathilde Blind

# The Moon Of Ramadân

The sunset melts upon the Nile,  
The stony desert glows,  
Beneath heaven's universal smile,  
One burning damask rose;  
And like a Peri's pearly boat,  
No longer than a span,  
Look, faint on fiery sky afloat,  
The Moon of Ramadân.

Our boat drifts idly with the Stream,  
Our boatmen ship the oar;  
Vistas of endless temples gleam  
On either topaz shore;  
And swimming over groves of Palm,  
A crescent weak and wan,  
There steals into the perfect calm  
The Moon of Ramadân.

All nature seems to bask in peace  
And hush her lowest sigh;  
Above the river's golden fleece  
The happy Halcyons fly.  
And lost in some old lotos dream,  
The pensive Pelican  
Sees mirrored in the mazy stream  
The Moon of Ramadân.

Black outlined on the golden air  
A turbaned Silhouette,  
The Mueddin invites to prayer  
From many a Minaret.  
Our dusky boatmen hear the call,  
And prostrate, man on man,  
They bow, adoring, one and all,  
The Moon of Ramadân.

Where Luxor's rose-flushed columns shine  
Above the river's brim,  
The priests with incense once, and wine,

Made sacrifice to Him,  
The highest god of Thebes, and head  
Of all the heavenly clan;  
But now the Moslem hails instead  
The Moon of Ramadân.

The gods have come, the gods have gone,  
Yet wedded to their walls,  
Winged with the serpent of the Sun  
In mute processions,  
They stride from door to massy door,  
Bound nations in their van,  
Though Amon's Sun has waned before  
The Moon of Ramadân.

Yea, even proud Egypt's proudest king,  
Who chastised rebel lands,  
And brought his gods for offering  
Mountains of severed hands;  
Who singly, like a god of War,  
Smote hosts that swerved and ran,  
Lies low 'neath Allah's scimitar--  
The Moon of Ramadân.

And Isis, Queen, whose sacred disk's  
Horned splendour crowned her brow,  
While fires of flashing Obelisks  
Flamed in the Afterglow;  
And white-robed priests who served her shrine  
Have turned Mahomedan,  
And worship Him who wears for sign  
The Moon of Ramadân.

The rosy lotos, flower and leaf,  
Which wreathed each sacred lake,  
With Nature's loveliest bas-relief,  
Has followed in their wake;  
Yea, with the last true Pharaoh's death,  
The lotos leaves, grown wan,  
Have changed to lily white beneath  
The Moon of Ramadân.

The gods may come, the gods may go,  
And royal realms change hands;  
But the most ancient Nile will flow,  
And flood the desert sands;  
And nightly will he glass the stars'  
Unearthly caravan,  
Nor care if it be Rome's red Mars  
Or Moon of Ramadân.

The sunset fades upon the Nile;  
The desert's stony gloom,  
Receding blankly mile on mile,  
Grows silent as a tomb.  
All weary wanderers, man and beast,  
Hie, fasting, to the Khan,  
While shines above their nightly feast  
The Moon of Ramadân.

Mathilde Blind

# The Music-Lesson

A thrush alit on a young-leaved spray,  
And, lightly clinging,  
It rocked in its singing  
As the rapturous notes rose loud and gay;  
And with liquid shakes,  
And trills and breaks,  
Rippled though blossoming bough of May.

Like a ball of fluff, with a warm brown throat  
And throbbing bosom,  
'Mid the apple-blossom,  
The new-fledged nestling sat learning by rote  
To echo the song  
So tender and strong,  
As it feebly put in its frail little note.

O blissfullest lesson amid the green grove!  
The low wind crispeth  
The leaves, where lispeth  
The shy little bird with its parent above;  
Two voices that mingle  
And make but a single  
Hymn of rejoicing in praise of their love.

Mathilde Blind

# The Mystic's Vision

Ah! I shall kill myself with dreams!  
These dreams that softly lap me round  
Through trance-like hours in which meseems  
That I am swallowed up and drowned;  
Drowned in your love, which flows o'er me  
As o'er the seaweed flows the sea.

In watches of the middle night,  
'Twixt vesper and 'twist matin bell,  
With rigid arms and straining sight,  
I wait within my narrow cell;  
With muttered prayers, suspended will,  
I wait your advent--statue-still.

Across the convent garden walls  
The wind blows from the silver seas;  
Black shadow of the cypress falls  
Between the moon-meshed olive-trees;  
Sleep-walking from their golden bowers,  
Flit disembodied orange flowers.

And in God's consecrated house,  
All motionless from head to feet,  
My heart awaits her heavenly Spouse,  
As white I lie on my white sheet;  
With body lulled and soul awake,  
I watch in anguish for your sake.

And suddenly, across the gloom,  
The naked moonlight sharply swings;  
A Presence stirs within the room,  
A breath of flowers and hovering wings:--  
Your presence without form and void,  
Beyond all earthly joys enjoyed.

My heart is hushed, my tongue is mute,  
My life is centred in your will;  
You play upon me like a lute  
Which answers to its master's skill,

Till passionately vibrating,  
Each nerve becomes a throbbing string.

Oh, incommunicably sweet!  
No longer aching and apart,  
As rain upon the tender wheat,  
You pour upon my thirsty heart;  
As scent is bound up in the rose,  
Your love within my bosom glows.

Mathilde Blind

# The New Proserpine

WHERE, countless as the stars of night,  
The daisies made a milky way  
Across fresh lawns, and flecked with light,  
Old Ilex groves walled round with bay,--

I saw thee stoop, oh lady sweet,  
And with those pale, frail hands of thine  
Gather the spring flowers at our feet,  
Fair as some late-born Proserpine.

Yea, gathering flowers, thou might'st have been  
That goddess of the ethereal brow,  
Revisiting this radiant scene  
From realm of dolorous shades below.

Thou might'st have been that Queen of Sighs,  
Love-bound by Hades' dreadful spell;  
For veiled within thy heaven-blue eyes,  
There lay the Memory of Hell.  
Villa Pamfili Doria.

Mathilde Blind

# The Orange-Peel In The Gutter

BEHOLD, unto myself I said,  
This place how dull and desolate,  
For lovely thoughts how all unmeet,  
This drear and darksome London street.  
Above, beneath, and all around,  
Not one slight crumb is to be found;  
Not one so slight poetic crumb  
For sparrow-poet to feed upon.  
For lo! above there is no sky!  
No living blue to glad the eye!  
No sun that shines, no flying cloud!  
But fog, that in a huge dun shroud  
Wraps all the London town about;  
And with it comes the drizzling rain,  
And dusky houses wets in vain--  
It ne'er can wash them white again.  
Those houses, yea, how cold and bare,  
With self-same aspect stand they there,  
With grimy windows two and two,  
It makes me sick to look at you!  
No tree, no shrub, to lend you grace,  
With drooping branch to hide your face;  
No solitary blossom e'en  
To brighten you with flow'ry sheen;  
Nor living things I here espy,  
Save yon black cat, with sharp green eye,  
Sliding along with stealthy pace:  
The very spirit of the place.  
And in the road hops here and there  
A sparrow, searching scanty fare,  
The pauper of the sons of air.  
Nought! nought! but wall and iron spike,  
Cold, cruel, as if fain 'twould like  
To run some beggar through and through,  
And guard the door from him and you.  
And underfoot?--no flowers, no grass,  
T' arrest the step before you pass,  
To send up whispers low and sweet,  
To smile, to beckon, and to greet;

No gurgling brook, no silent pool,  
In whose pure waters, still and cool,  
The flying bird, the flitting cloud,  
The sunbeam peering in and out,  
The star that slides through limpid air,  
Are glassed in beauty wondrous fair.  
None--none of these, but miry clay,  
To cling tenaciously all day,  
With heavy clutch to your poor heel,  
And in the gutter you, the peel  
Of some sweet golden orange fruit,  
Though smothered now with dirt and soot  
Still darting forth through dull decay,  
The splendour of a by-gone day,  
The ling'ring of a dying ray.  
Oh, wondrous strange! I feel the deep  
Hush of Italian nights slow creep  
Around me, see the fuller light  
Of southern stars strike through the night,  
And hear the sweeter breathèd sighs  
Of southern breezes swell and rise;  
Rise, swell I hear the balm-fed breeze,  
Through the dark grove of orange trees,  
Where silver gleams of creamy bloom,  
In fragrance flash along the gloom;  
And the gold fruit through dark doth shine  
A star! a mystery divine!  
I hear the sweeter sighs of love,  
By southern hearts breathed through the grove,  
Like to the cooing of a dove;  
Like to the soft falls of summer rain,  
On hoary wood and parched plain;  
Like to the drops of pale moonlight,  
That sink upon the sea at night;  
Heart melts with heart, and kiss with kiss,  
In holy night, in holy bliss,  
As in the wondrous sunset skies  
Hues melt with hues, and dyes with dyes,  
Till all in one vast glory lies.

But what a full and deep-set roar  
Heaves, swells, and surges more and more,

Like billows on a stormy shore.  
Yet here flows not the dark blue sea,  
But street on street continually;  
Here walls on walls press nigh and nigher,  
And roofs on roofs rise high and higher,  
And spire still greets the rising spire.  
The clang, the clash, the row, the roar,  
London, great London, 'tis once more,  
With hurry, flurry, to and fro,  
Time scarce to snarl a 'yes' or 'no;'  
Time scarce t' evade your neighbour's toe.  
But here's the market fair to see,  
An island green within that sea  
Of streets, a little flow'ry spot,  
Reminding him who's long forgot,  
Of country fields and waving trees,  
Of hedges, birds and flowers and bees.  
The snowdrop stands in moist brown ground,  
And purifies the air around;  
The violet scatters woodland smells,  
And hyacinths ring their honeyed bells.  
This man sells grapes from sunny Spain;  
Lombardian almonds this again;  
Pears, peaches, with the morning down,  
All in that world-wide lap are thrown,  
By all the nations, and they vie  
In fruits, nursed by a southern sky.  
The chaff'ring crowd, the bart'ring maid,  
Here buy and sell, and choose and trade.  
There sits a woman lean and old,  
She shivers in the east wind's cold;  
She knits; how fast her fingers fly!  
Her fingers, oh! how worn and dry.  
But still she knits, because she knows  
Her crying grandchild's icy toes.  
Her basket stands close by her side,  
With orange heaps in golden pride;  
Surely imprisoned sunbeams throw  
Around them such a flush and glow,  
That seeing them we seem to see  
A glimpse of sun-loved Italy.  
Oh, may they all be bought, and give

The old woman wherewithal to live!

Here in the garret, 'neath the leads,  
Slowly spin out life's weary threads;  
Slowly and slowly ebbs away  
The breath of one poor child of clay.  
The throbbing pulse, the great'ning eye,  
The parchèd lips, the impatient sigh,  
The mother marks 'twixt hope and fright,  
From weary noon to weary night,  
From midnight round to noon again:  
Each hour crammed full with aching pain,  
And anxious fluttering of hope,  
As both alternately find scope.  
And as she breathless notes each sound,  
He whispers, turning round and round,  
'Oh! mother, mother, give me drink.'  
She's up, she's back scarce in a wink,  
And to her darling's burning lips,  
The luscious fruit she holds, he sips  
With breaths long drawn, still on and on,  
Till all the cooling juice is gone,  
And only left of fragrant meal,  
Is that still golden orange-peel.

The orange-peel! ah, where am I?  
Beneath the deep Italian sky?  
In Covent Garden's crowded fair?  
Or 'neath the roof of pain and care?  
Ah, still within the darksome street,  
So all unlovely and unsweet!  
The welt'ring fog, the drizzling rain,  
The dirt, the dust upon each pane,  
The iron rails so hard and bare,  
The miry clay, they all are here!  
What did befall? Then did I dream?  
Was all but air? Did all but seem?  
How caught I then this wondrous gleam?  
Ah! here you bit of sunny gold,  
Within the gutter I behold;  
Across my mind its life it flashed,  
The fragrance of the past it dashed,

Dying, it kindled life, and hurled  
My soul through heights and depths of world.  
In bud and blossom, fruit and tree,  
Revealed life's perfect harmony!  
Revealed the throbs of mutual love,  
Ensphered by kindling stars above!  
Revealed the stir of busy life,  
The trade, the turmoil, and the strife!  
Struggles of honest poverty;  
A watching mother's agony!  
Child-life that hangs upon a breath,  
The tremblings betwixt life and death--  
Revealed the mystic link, that thrills  
Through joy and pain, through good and ills,  
Wafts influences from afar,  
Connects the worm still with the star,  
And binds the earth, the skies, the main,  
The worlds, with one electric chain!  
Behold, unto myself I said,  
There's nought on earth so desolate,  
But if the eye is there to see  
Will find a joy and mystery,  
As under dark and mossy dells  
The violet hides with spring-like smells!  
No cell, no garret, and no tomb,  
For which no flower of love doth bloom!  
No place so waste, so dark, so drear,  
But heavenly beauty lurketh there!  
And from these two will ever spring,  
As music from the harp's sweet string,  
As from the nest the lark soars high,  
As from the flame the live sparks fly,  
The fountain of great poesy,  
Will shine and flash, and flame and glow,  
Like to the million coloured bow  
Of hope and peace, a lovely sign,  
Flinging around that world of thine  
A glory that is all divine!

Mathilde Blind

# The Passing Year

No breath of wind stirs in the painted leaves,  
The meadows are as stirless as the sky,  
Like a Saint's halo golden vapours lie  
Above the restful valley's garnered sheaves.  
The journeying Sun, like one who fondly grieves,  
Above the hills seems loitering with a sigh,  
As loth to bid the fruitful earth good-bye,  
On these hushed hours of luminous autumn eves.

There is a pathos in his softening glow,  
Which like a benediction seems to hover  
O'er the tranced earth, ere he must sink below  
And leave her widowed of her radiant Lover,  
A frost-bound sleeper in a shroud of snow,  
While winter winds howl a wild dirge above her.

Mathilde Blind

# The Prophecy Of St. Oran: Part I

'Earth, earth on the mouth of Oran, that he may blab no more.' Gaelic Proverb.

I.

THE storm had ceased to rave: subsiding slow  
Lashed ocean heaved, and then lay calm and still;  
From the clear North a little breeze did blow  
Severing the clouds: high o'er a wooded hill  
The slant sun hung intolerably bright,  
And spanned the sea with a broad bridge of light.

II.

Now St. Columba rose from where he sat  
Among his monkish crew; and lifting high  
His pale worn hands, his eagle glances met  
The awful glory which suffused the sky.  
As soars the lark, sweet singing from the sod,  
So prayer is wafted from his soul to God.

III.

For they in their rude coracle that day  
Shuddered had climbed the crests of mountainous wave,  
To plunge down glassy walls of shifting spray,  
From which death roared as from an open grave;  
Till, the grim fury of the tempest o'er,  
Bursts on their ravished sight an azure shore.

IV.

Ah! is this solid earth which meets their view,  
Or some still cloud-land islanded on high?  
Those crags are too aërially blue,  
Too soft those mountains mingling with the sky,  
And too ineffable their dewy gleam,  
For aught but fabric of a fleeting dream.

V.

Entranced they gaze, and o'er the glimmering track  
Of seething gold and foaming silver row:  
Now to their left tower headlands, bare and black  
And blasted, with grey centuries of snow,  
Deep in whose echoing caves, with hollow sighs,  
Monotonous seas for ever ebb and rise.

VI.

Rounding these rocks, they glide into a deep  
And tranquil bay, in whose translucent flood  
The shadows of the azure mountains sleep:  
High on a hill, amid green foliage, stood  
A square and rough-hewn tower, whose time-bleached stone,  
Like some red beacon, with the sunset shone.

VII.

A few more vigorous strokes, and the sharp keel  
Grates on the beach, on which, inclining low  
Their tonsured heads, the monks adoring kneel;  
While St. Columba, his pale face aglow  
With outward light and inward, lifts on high  
The Cross, swart outlined on the burning sky.

VIII.

Impassive, though in silent wonder, stood  
The islesmen while these worshipped, on their shore,  
A thorn-crowned figure nailed upon the wood,  
From whose pierced side the dark blood seemed to pour;  
While on the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost  
They loudly called as brow and breast they crost.

IX.

Spoke now their Master, in a voice whose ring  
Was like the west wind's in a twilight grove:  
'Glad tidings to this sea-girt isle we bring,  
Good tidings of our heavenly Father's love,  
Who sent His only Son,--oh, marvellous

Deep love!--to die that He might ransom us.'

X.

'Come! listen to the story of our Lord!  
Sweet Jesus Christ, a child of lowly birth,  
Whom in the manger the wise kings adored,  
For well they knew Him Lord of Heaven and Earth,  
With myrrh and spice they journeyed from the far  
Prophetic East, led by the Pilgrim Star:

XI.

'And when the star stood still, and mildly shone  
Above a shed where lay the new-born child,  
They hailed Him God's only-begotten Son,  
Saviour of sinners and Redeemer mild;  
Eve's promised seed, when she with streaming eyes  
Saw the bright sword wave her from Paradise.

XII.

'For we are children of a fallen race,  
Our sins are grievous in the Father's sight,  
Death was our doom, but that by heavenly grace  
God sent His Son to be a steadfast light,  
Which calmly shining o'er life's troubled wave,  
The storm-tossed souls of erring men might save.

XIII.

'Go unto Him, all ye that toil and weep,  
Ye that are weary with the long day's load;  
He is the Shepherd watching o'er His sheep,  
He leads His flock along the narrow road;  
And when He hears the bleating lamb's alarm  
He folds the weak one in His sheltering arm.

XIV.

'Ah, tender Shepherd, who didst love us so,  
Choosing to die that we Thy flock might live;

What bitter anguish, ah! what heavy woe  
To think, O Lord! that mortal hands should give  
This wound that cleaves Thy side, that mortal scorn  
In mockery crowned Thee with the barren thorn!

XV.

Sad was Columba's face, his words were slow  
As though reluctant to the piteous tale--  
But now his eyes with sacred rapture glow,  
And his wan features kindle, like a pale  
Dissolving cloud through which the moon is shed:  
He speaks of Christ re-risen from the dead.

XVI.

He ceased, then cried: 'Glory unto the Lord  
Whose mercy is as boundless as the sea;  
Fruitful to-day makes He my feeble word,  
For with faith's eye an ancient chief I see,  
Whose bark o'er the blue deep is drawing nigh,  
He comes to be baptised before he die.'

XVII.

Scarce had he ended when towards the land  
A wicker boat sped swiftly o'er the bay;  
There by the Pictish chieftain, hand in hand,  
Her golden locks entangled with his grey,  
His grandchild sat, lit by the level rays;  
The loveliest and the last of all her race.

XVIII.

They hailed the Chief as to a sea-worn stone  
Two fishers bore him; and his muffled sense  
Struggled with feeble eld to seize the tone  
Of the Saint's voice, as he in words intense  
Proclaimed the saving truth of gospel lore,  
Then with his hands baptised the Chieftain hoar.

XIX.

And when the holy dew had wet his brow,  
And his wan lips tasted the sacrament,  
His head against Columba's breast sank low,  
And o'er his face a smile of rapt content  
Played softly, smoothing out the lines of care  
Which joy and grief and toil had planted there.

XX.

Then on the spot where he has breathed his last  
They lay him, letting dust to dust return;  
Then one by one, as solemnly they cast  
A little earth upon his grave, they turn  
To the benighted heathen, look above,  
And chant: 'His soul is God's, and God is love.'

XXI.

A piteous cry and terrible then rung  
Even like a very echo to the word  
Upon the startled hearers, whom it wrung  
With answering grief, as when along the chord  
Of palpitating harp the breezes sigh  
Each string responsive wails in sympathy.

XXII.

A maiden with wild eyes and streaming hair  
And features white with horror rose aghast,  
Unconscious of the pitying people's stare,  
And on the new-made grave herself she cast  
In utter desolation, till her frame  
Convulsed by sobs shook like a wind-blown flame.

XXIII.

'Oh father, father,' she at last made moan,  
'My father's father, last of all our race,  
Hast thou gone too, and left me here alone  
So helpless as I am, so weak to face  
The dreadful shifts of war with all its woes,

Cold, hunger, shame, fear of insulting foes.'

XXIV.

'Nay, child, blaspheme not in thine agony!  
Art thou not in our heavenly Father's care?  
He who upholds the everlasting sky  
Throughout the ages, suffers not a hair  
Of thine to fall but that it is His will;  
Bless Him for joy, for sorrow bless Him still.

XXV.

'Yea! clasp thine unused hands in prayer, and lift  
Thy still down-drooping eyes to Him above.  
Is not the giver greater than His gift?  
Must not His love contain all lesser love  
Of father, mother, brother, husband, wife--  
The Alpha He and Omega of life?'

XXVI.

Thus spake Columba, burning to allay  
The pains of earthly love with saving truth;  
But she, who deemed confusedly that they  
With their sad rites had slain her sire, forsooth,  
Was deaf to him, and ever made her moan,  
'Hast thou gone too, and left me here alone!'

XXVII.

At last--when all his words and prayers had failed  
To comfort or assuage the orphan's woe,  
Who prostrate on the grave still wept and wailed,--  
Columba muttered as he turned to go:  
'Nay, sooner parley with the roaring main  
Than with a woman maddening in her pain.'

XXVIII.

So thus they left her, as she would not come,  
Left her to night and a few firstling stars

That here and there from the celestial dome  
Peered brightly through the narrow cloudy bars,  
As though some great white seraph's lidless eyes  
Were looking down on her from Paradise.

XXIX.

But one there was who could not rest in peace,  
For pity of that maiden's lonely pain!  
Was there no balm in Gilead to appease  
Her wounded spirit?--yea, might not he gain  
That soul benighted to eternal bliss,  
By teaching her God's love through grief like this?

XXX.

Thus Oran mused, the youngest and most fair  
Of that devoted zealous little band  
That now for many a laborious year  
Followed Columba's lead from land to land,  
Daring the danger of the narrow seas  
To plant the Cross among the Hebrides.

XXXI.

Young, but most fervid of their brotherhood,  
Fair Oran was, whose faith leaped like a sword  
From out the sheath, and could not be subdued  
When brandished in the service of the Lord,  
To whom--as sparks leap upward from a fire--  
His soaring thoughts incessantly aspire.

XXXII.

Yea, he must save her soul, that like a bark  
Drifting without a rudder, rudely tossed  
On life's rough sea, might founder in the dark,  
In the abysm of hell engulfed and lost.  
Thus musing, he retraced his steps once more  
Towards the grave beside the sounding shore.

XXXIII.

'Arise, and let the dead bury their dead!'  
He said to her still shedding stanchless tears.  
Affrighted by his voice, she raised her head  
With eyes dilated like a startled deer's;  
With lovely, longing, melancholy eyes,  
She looked up at him with a dumb surprise.

XXXIV.

'Come unto Jesus, He will give thee rest,'  
Oran began, but stammered as he spoke:  
Why throbbed his heart so loudly in his breast,  
As if impatient of the heavy yoke  
Of faith, that curbed desire as soon as born,  
That nipped the rose, but left its piercing thorn?

XXXV.

A moment has undone the work of years!  
A single glance o'erthrown an austere saint!  
And the clear faith, achieved with stripes and tears  
And midnight fasts and vigils, now grows faint,  
And like a star lost in the new-born light  
Flickers awhile, then fades into the night.

XXXVI.

Still Oran wrestles with the fiend within,  
Striving to teach the gospel to the maid;  
He tells her of man's fall through deadly sin,  
And of the Saviour who our ransom paid:  
She, with her eyes now bent upon the ground,  
Listens like one by strong enchantment bound.

XXXVII.

It was a clear and cloudless summer night,  
Stars without number clustered in the blue,  
Some like mere sparks of evanescent light  
Receding infinite from mortal view,  
Some with a steadier lustre softly glow,

Like golden flames or silver flakes of snow.

XXXVIII.

But lo! like some lost soul from heaven's height  
Hurled headlong, shivering to its awful doom,  
A wingèd star shoots dazzling through the night,  
And vanishes in some stupendous gloom:  
Thus once the brightest of the angels fell  
Through yawning space into profoundest hell.

XXXIX.

And trembling for his own soul, Oran prayed:  
'Oh blessed Virgin, whom the angelic quire  
Rapturous adore! immaculate Mother-maid!  
Pure Queen! make pure my heart of every fire  
Which is not kindled on thy sacred shrine,  
Of every thought not wholly, solely thine!'

XL.

Even while suppliant's lips devoutly move,  
A heavenly face, though not the Virgin's, filled  
His eyes with beauty, and his heart with love,  
Till with dread rapture all his pulses thrilled:  
A face whose heavenly innocence might well  
Eradicate the very thought of hell.

XLI.

Perplexed, bewildered, breathless Oran stood,  
Torn by the passions he had still suppressed  
With macerations of the flesh and blood;  
But now this idol which enthralled his breast  
With subtle witchcraft, snake-like seemed to hiss,  
'Thine immortality for one long kiss!'

XLII.

'Get thee behind me, Satan!' wildly cries  
The monk, and flees in horror from the place.

Did not the devil tempt him through those eyes  
Burning like two fair lights in that fair face,  
Till moth-like drawn in ever-narrowing rings  
Towards the flame, his soul must scorch her wings?

XLIII.

Far o'er the moorland through the starlit night  
He rushed, like one who flies in mortal fear  
Of some dread enemy that dogs his flight,  
And who, whate'er his speed, still draweth near:  
Yea, though he shall outspeed the wingèd wind,  
How fly the haunting thought of his own mind?

XLIV.

At last he knelt all breathless on the sod,  
And gathered up his whole soul in one prayer,  
Yea,--even as Jacob wrestled before God  
While angels hovered on the heavenly stair,  
He wrestled,--loudly calling on the Lord  
To keep him from the sin his soul abhorred.

XLV.

When his long prayer was done, and the pale priest  
Rose cold with clinging vapour, one by one  
The flickering stars went out, and in the East  
The dim air kindled with the coming sun,  
While in illimitable sheer delight  
The holy larks rose worshipping the light.

Mathilde Blind

# The Prophecy Of St. Oran: Part II

I.

THERE was a windless mere, on whose smooth breast  
A little island, flushed with purple bloom,  
Lay gently cradled like a moorhen's nest:  
It glowed like some rich jewel 'mid the gloom  
Of sluggish leagues of peat and black morass,  
Without or shrub or tree or blade of grass.

II.

But on the isle itself the birch was seen  
With its ethereal foliage, like some haze  
Floating among the rowan's vivid green;  
The ground with fern all feathered, and ablaze  
With heath's and harebell's hyacinthine hue,  
Was mirrored in the wave's intenser blue.

III.

This was the immemorial isle of graves,  
Here, under nameless mound and dateless stone,  
The generations, like successive waves,  
Had rolled one o'er the other, and had gone  
As these go, indistinguishably fused  
Their separate lives in common death confused.

IV.

And here amid the dead Columba chose  
To found God's holy house and sow His word;  
Already here and there the walls arose,  
Built from the stones imbedded in the sward;  
These did the natives without mortar pile,  
As was the ancient custom of their isle.

V.

For many of them to the work were won  
By reverence for the saint, and thus apace

The chapel grew which they had first begun  
As dedicate to God's perpetual praise;  
So many of the monks again were free  
To give thought wholly to their ministry.

VI.

And ever first in hastening to his task  
St. Oran was, though last to seek repose;  
Columba's best beloved, he still would ask  
For heaviest share of duty, while he chose  
Rude penances, till shadow-like he grew  
With fasts and vigils that the flesh subdue.

VII.

Yet there was that which would not be subdued--  
A shape, a presence haunting every dream;  
Fair as the moon that shines above a flood,  
And ever trembles on the trembling stream;  
Sweet as some gust of fragrance, unaware  
Stealing upon us on the summer air.

VIII.

Even so it stole upon his ravished heart,  
Suffusing every fibre with delight,  
Till from his troubled slumber he would start,  
And, as with ague shivering and affright,  
Catch broken speech low murmuring in his ears,  
And feel his eyelids ache with unshed tears.

IX.

But it befell one windy afternoon,  
While monks and men were busied with the roof,  
Laying the beams through which the sun and moon  
Might shed their light as yet without reproof,  
That there came one across the lonely waste  
Toward these men of God, crying in haste,--

X.

'Ye say ye came to save us, save us then!  
Save us if ye spake truth, and not a lie!  
Famine and fever stalk among us,--men,  
Women, and children are struck down and die!  
For lo, the murrain smites our cowering sheep,  
The fishers haul no fish from out the deep.

XI.

'Ye tell us that your God did multiply  
A few small fishes, wherewithal He fed  
A multitude; in sooth, if 'tis no lie,  
Then come, ye holy men, and give us bread!  
For they are starving by the waterside,--  
Come then, and give us bread,' he loudly cried.

XII.

He was a man inspiring dread surprise,  
Half-naked, with long glibs of bristling hair  
In fiery meshes tumbling o'er his eyes,  
Which, like a famished wolf's from out its lair,  
Glanced restlessly; his dog behind him came,  
Whose lolling tongue hung down like scarlet flame.

XIII.

'Let me arise, and go to them withal!  
Cried Oran, flinging down his implement:  
'This heavy tribulation is a call  
From the Most High; a blessed instrument  
To compass their salvation: let me go  
Teach them what mercy worketh in their woe.'

XIV.

'Go then, my son, and God go with thee still,  
While I abide to speed His temple here,'  
Said St. Columba; 'and thy basket fill  
With herbs and cordials, also wine to cheer  
And bread to feed the poor, so that their days

May still endure to God's eternal praise.'

XV.

Then Oran and that wild man forth did fare,  
And o'er the little lake they rowed in haste,  
And mounting each a small and shaggy mare,  
They ambled o'er that solitary waste,  
Then through a sterile glen their road did lie  
Whose shrouded peaks loomed awfully on high.

XVI.

When for a mile or two they thus had gone,  
The mountains opened wide on either hand,  
And lo, amid those labyrinths of stone  
The sea had got entangled in the land,  
And turned and twisted, struggling to get free,  
And be once more the immeasurable sea.

XVII.

It was a sorcerous, elemental place,  
O'er which there now came rushing from the plain--  
Like some dark host whom yelling victors chase--  
A moving pillar of resistless rain  
Shivering the gleaming lances in its flight  
Against the bastions of each monstrous height.

XVIII.

Fast, fast it raced before the roaring gale,  
With shrieks and frenzied howlings that did shake  
The very stones with long-resounding wail,  
And in outlying gorges would it wake  
The startled echo's sympathetic scream,  
Then whirling on would vanish like a dream,--

XIX.

Would vanish dream-like, whither no man knows,  
Fading afar in vaporous gulfs of light,

While the wet mountain-tops flushed like a rose,  
And following the spent tempest in its flight  
Its hues ethereal mantling o'er the gloom,  
There glowed the rainbow's evanescent bloom.

XX.

And while that rain still drenched him to the skin,  
St. Oran, unappalled, intoned a psalm,  
And lifting up his voice amidst the din,  
He sang, 'We laud Thee, Lord, through storm and calm,  
In the revolving stars we see Thine hand,  
The sun and moon rise as Thou dost command.

XXI.

'We laud Thee for the evening and the morn,  
And the prolific seasons' changing boon,  
For singing-birds, and flowers, and ripening corn,  
For tides that rise and fall beneath the moon;  
As in a mirror darkling do we see  
The shadow that Thou castest on the sea.'

XXII.

Up many a wild ascent, down many a steep  
Clothed with scant herbage, rode that battered pair,  
Where lay the bleaching bones of mangled sheep,  
And carrion crows wheeled hoarsely in the air;  
At last through mist and darkness they espied  
Small lights that twinkled by the waterside.

XXIII.

There in dark turf-built hovels close to earth  
Lay the poor sufferers on their beds of heath,  
Gnawed to the very bone by cruel dearth,  
Cold to the marrow with approaching death;  
Thither came Oran like some vision bright,  
And ministered to each one through the night.

XXIV.

And so dispensing alms he went and came,  
Stooping to enter the last house of all;  
There, by the peat-fire's orange-coloured flame,  
Whose flashes fitfully did rise and fall  
On the smoke-blackened rafters--sat a crone  
Ancient it might be as the lichened stone.

XXV.

Fast through her bony fingers flies the thread,  
And as her foot still turns the whirring wheel,  
She seems to spin the yarn of quick and dead!  
But oh, what makes St. Oran's senses reel?  
Whose is the shape clad in its golden hair  
That turns and tosses on the pallet there?

XXVI.

Like some wan water lily veiled in mist  
When puffs of wind its tender petals shake,  
Whose chalice by the shining moonbeams kissed  
Sways to and fro upon the swelling lake,  
So white--so wan--so wonderfully fair,  
Showed Mona tossing mid her golden hair.

XXVII.

What should he do? Ah, whither should he turn?  
Why had God let this trial come again?  
Her beauty, half-revealed, did straightly burn  
Through his hot eyeballs to his kindling brain.  
Was it his duty to go hence or stay?  
He wavered--gazed on her--then turned away.

XXVIII.

But that old woman tottered to the door  
And clutched his cassock with a shaking hand,  
And mumbled, 'Priest, ah! dost thou shun the poor?  
They say that ye go bragging through the land  
Of some new God called Christian Charity;

But in our need ye turn from us and fly.'

XXIX.

So spake the crone, but Oran bowed his head  
And murmured, 'If thou bid'st me, I abide.'  
With downcast eyes he turned towards the bed  
In fervent prayer low kneeling by its side:  
At last he rose, pale, cold, and deadly still,  
With heart subdued to his stern Maker's will.

XXX.

Thus through her fever did he tend the maid,  
Who babbled wildly in delirious trance  
Of her lost home, and her loved kindred laid  
In alien earth--and of a countenance  
Fair as a spirit's comforting her pain,  
But soon withdrawn to its own heaven again.

XXXI.

All this unflinching would the monk endure,  
And having cured her body's sickness, strove  
With double zeal her sicker soul to cure:  
But when he told her of the Saviour's love,  
Of sin, and its atonement, and free grace,  
She looked in puzzled wonder on his face.

XXXII.

She could not understand his mournful creed,  
Nor knew, poor child, of what she should repent,  
Nor why her heart was wicked, and had need  
That some poor pitying God should once have spent  
His blood for her five hundred years ago--  
Ancestral voices never told her so!

XXXIII.

She could not understand, but she could feel!  
And while she sat before him by the flame

The pathos of his pleading voice would steal  
Sweeter than sweetest music through her frame,  
And as the ocean murmur in a shell  
Through her dim soul his solemn accents swell.

XXXIV.

He was the air she breathed--all living things  
Were pale reflections of him--as the hart  
In desert places thirsts for water-springs,  
Even thus for him she thirsted in her heart;  
To her it seemed as if life's aim and end  
Were just to lay her hand within his hand.

XXXV.

Her eyes were full of love as stars of light,  
And pierced the cold obstructive atmosphere  
Of his joy-killing creed, and did ignite  
His inmost spirit of sense with fire as clear  
And radiant as their own--their beaming looks  
Mingled as flames of fire or meeting brooks.

XXXVI.

Was he not young and beautiful?--in face  
Like to that radiant god whose flame divine  
The Druid worshipped in those younger days  
Ere sin had stamped the green earth with its sign,  
Had made the loveliness of flowers a snare,  
And bid frail man of woman's love beware.

XXXVII.

Oh, not for him, through all the lonely years  
Never for him a woman's love might bloom;  
Her smiles would never cheer him, nor her tears  
Fall softly on his unlamented tomb;  
Never till quenched in death's supreme eclipse  
His lips would know the sweetness of her lips.

XXXVIII.

Oh God! would nothing quench that secret fire,  
Nor yet assuage that hunger of the heart?  
To feel this flagellation of desire,  
To be so near, yet evermore apart,  
Never to clasp this woman as a wife--  
This was the crowning penance of his life.

XXXIX.

But lo! one day at dusk they were alone,  
The rain was beating down on roof and wall,  
The round of earth with solid rock and stone  
Had turned phantasmal in its misty pall:  
They were alone, but neither spake a word--  
Only their hearts in throbbing might be heard.

XL.

Whose is that low involuntary cry  
That like a flash of lightning shook each frame  
With thrill electric? Simultaneously  
Their yearning lips had sobbed each other's name!  
With swift instinctive dread they move apart  
While magnet-like each draws the other's heart.

XLI.

What boots it thus to struggle with his sin,  
So much more sweet than all his virtues were?  
Like a great flood let all her love roll in  
And his soul stifle mid her golden hair!  
And so he barter his eternal bliss  
For the divine delirium of her kiss!

XLII.

What cares he for his soul's salvation now?  
Let it go to perdition evermore  
For breaking that accursed monastic vow  
Which cankers a man's nature to the core;  
For he had striven as never mortal strove,

But than his Lord a mightier lord was Love.

Mathilde Blind

# The Prophecy Of St. Oran: Part Iii

I.

'A CURSE is on this work!' Columba cried;  
And with their dark robes flapping in the gale,  
The frightened monks came hurrying to his side,  
And looked at one another turning pale;  
For every night the work done in the day  
Strewn on the ground in wild confusion lay.

II.

'A curse is on this work!' he cried again  
As his keen glances swept each face in turn:  
'Behold, God smites us in the hurricane,  
And in the lightning doth His anger burn.  
Brethren, some secret deadly sin there is  
Known to the Lord for which we suffer this.

III.

'Why is it that the elements combine  
Against us, raging in relentless ire  
Against our humble wave-encircled shrine?  
That air, that water, that consuming fire  
Inveterately war against this fane  
Which we would build, but ever build in vain?

IV.

'Why is it that the billows of the deep  
Rise in revolt against the rock-bound shore,  
Lashing themselves to fury on each steep,  
Till inland lakes, awakening at the roar,  
Now roar in mad response, and swell amain,  
Till broadening waters hide the drowning plain?

V.

'One night, ye know, from out the imminent gloom,  
Shrouding the firmament as in a pall,

The levin, like a spirit from the tomb,  
Leaped with a ghastly glare, and in its fall  
Struck the new roof-tree with reverberate crash,  
And left a little heap of shrivelled ash.

VI.

'Another night--why need I tell the tale?--  
The winds in legions thundered through the air,  
Battering the walls with sudden gusts of hail,  
They rushed with piercing shrieks and strident blare  
Athwart the cloisters and the roofless hall,  
Till stone by stone fell from the rocking wall.

VII.

'And then the very water turned our foe,  
For in the dead of night it slowly crept,  
Soft wave on wave, till in its overflow  
It deluged all the basement while we slept;  
And where the convent yesterday did stand,  
There spreads the lake as level as my hand.

VIII.

'And then, when slowly after many days  
The waters had subsided to the main,  
And through the toilsome hours we sought to raise  
Our ever-shattered structure once again,  
Behold! the earth herself with stone and block  
Shudders convulsive and begins to rock.

IX.

'For lo, the fiends let loose at God's command  
Burrow and delve in subterranean gloom,  
Till like the troubled ocean all the land  
Heaves to and fro as tottering to its doom:  
The quiet graves themselves now bursting yawn,  
God's holy house once more lies overthrown!

X.

'And now hath come the hour of darkest need--  
The people have abandoned us! They wail  
That their dead fathers rage against our creed,  
That in dark rushing cloud and roaring gale  
The houseless spirits ride and fill the air  
With lamentations for the gods that were!

XI.

'The Lord rebukes us in His wrath! I ask,  
Again I ask, what man among you all  
Living in deadly sin, yet wears the mask  
Of sanctity? Yea, let him cleanse his soul,  
Confessing all the crying guilt of it,  
Or go for ever to the burning pit!

XII.

Again his eagle glances swept each face,  
While the assembled monks, with anxious sigh,  
Asked with a thrill of horror and amaze,  
'Was it indeed a judgment from on high?'  
As with one voice then cried the saintly throng,  
'Not I--not I--know of that hidden wrong.'

XIII.

And with uplifted arms they loudly prayed,  
'Oh Lord, if in our midst the traitor bides  
Who breaks the sacramental vow he made,  
And takes Thy name in vain, and basely hides  
His wicked ways from every eye save Thine--  
Let his dark sin stand forth, and make a sign.'

XIV.

All day expectant, waiting on His will,  
The monks in reverential silence stand  
Beneath the rustling pine-trees of the hill,  
Whence their eyes sweep across the level land:  
Lo, from afar the vision of a maid

Comes o'er the shining pools the flood has made.

XV.

Swiftly she came across the devious track,  
With glimmering waterways on either hand;  
Against the luminous vapour at her back  
Her dusky form looms mystically grand;  
While in the liquid crystal by her side  
The phantom of herself seems still to glide.

XVI.

Was she a spirit risen from the grave  
When its foul depths lay open to the sky,  
Or ghost of Druid priestess wont to rave  
Her blasphemous oracles in times gone by,  
Who ventured thus upon the sacred isle  
For ever barred against a woman's wile?

XVII.

But no! as nearer and more near she draws,  
They see a maiden with the wild deer's grace  
Bounding from stone to stone, whose beauty awes  
These Christian fathers, riveting their gaze;  
For like the full moon framed in amber air  
Her face shone mid the glory of her hair.

XVIII.

Then in their midst all breathless did she stand,  
But paused bewildered and as one affrayed,--  
Even as a swift wave making for the strand  
With all its waters gathering to a head  
Delays, suspended with back-fluttering locks,  
Then breaks in showers of brine upon the rocks.

XIX.

So for a moment motionless she stood,  
From monk to monk her wildered glances stray;

Immovable, like figures carved in wood,  
These waited what their master's lips would say,  
But ever and anon, in mute appeal,  
Her piteous eyes to Oran's face would steal.

XX.

Only for one brief moment she delayed,  
Struck speechless at his cold averted mien,  
Then with a long low moan she blindly swayed  
With her fair arms towards him, and in keen  
Unutterable anguish cried aghast--  
'Is this a dream, or am I mad at last?

XXI.

'Dost thou not know me, Oran--Oran mine?  
Look on me; I am Mona, I am she  
For whom thy soul so thirstily did pine!  
Nay, turn not from me! Say, art thou not he  
Whose mouth to my mouth yearningly was pressed,  
Whose dearest head lay pillowed on my breast?

XXII.

'Dear, be not wroth with me in that I came;  
For our love's sake look not so stern and grave;  
Ah, surely thou wilt think me free from blame  
For having dared to break the word I gave,  
When I have told thee what has brought me here,  
How sore distraught I was with grief and fear.

XXIII.

Oh love, when night came swooping o'er the sea,  
And on the poor folk's tired eyelids sleep  
Fell like a seabird's feather, stealthily  
I climbed the jagged overhanging steep  
Whose giddy summit looks towards thy home,  
Wondering if haply I might see thee come.

XXIV.

When, lo! the solid cliff began to shake  
As in an ague fit, and while I stood  
Trembling, methought the maddening sea would break  
Its everlasting limits, for the flood  
Came crashing in loud thunder o'er the land,  
And swept our huts like seaweed from the sand.

XXV.

Then a great horror seized me, and I reeled  
And fell upon my face, and knew no more.  
When from that trance I woke, the sun had wheeled  
Far up the sky and shone upon the shore,  
And there beneath the bright and cloudless sky  
I saw a heap of mangled corpses lie.

XXVI.

Shrieking I fled, and paused not in my fright  
Fleeing I knew not whither, but my feet  
Flew swift as ever arrow in its flight  
To thee, my love! Hast thou no smile to greet  
Thy Mona with,--no kiss? For pity's sake,  
Speak to me, Oran, or my heart will break.'

XXVII.

All held their breath when she had made her moan:  
All eyes were fixed on that pale monk, who stood  
Unnaturally quiet--like a stone  
Whose flinty sides are fretted by the flood--  
When St. Columba turned on him, and said,  
'I bid thee speak,--man, knowest thou this maid?'

XXVIII.

Then answered him the other, but his words  
Rang hollow like the toll of funeral bell,  
And on his humid brows like knotted cords  
The livid veins and arteries seemed to swell,  
Facing the accusation of his eyes,

'Master, I know her not--the woman lies!'

XXIX.

A hum of indignation, doubt, alarm,  
Ran through their circle, but none durst to speak  
Before the Master, who with lifted arm  
And eyes whence fiery flashes seemed to break,  
Cried very loudly, 'Is it even so,--  
Then help me God but I will rout this foe!

XXX.

'Look, brethren, on this lovely maiden, fair  
As virginal white lilies newly blown,  
Fresh as the first breath of the vernal air,  
Pure as an incarnation of the dawn;  
Look on that golden glory of her hair,--  
It is a man-trap, Satan's deadliest snare.

XXXI.

'Brethren, let the two eldest of you seize  
This fiend in angel's garb, this beast of prey  
Which lies in wait behind that snowy fleece  
Lusting to take our brother's name away,  
And blast his fame for purest sanctity  
With lies forged by our common enemy!

XXXII.

'Seize her, and bear her to that frightful steep  
Where, bristling with huge pier and jagged spire,  
The spectre rock which overhangs the deep  
Pierces the ghastly clouds like frozen fire;  
There standing, fling her from its giddiest cone--  
Into the ocean fling her, like a stone.'

XXXIII.

The sentence had gone forth; the monks obeyed;  
Two venerable brothers, deep in years,

First crossed themselves, then seized the struggling maid  
In their stout arms; despite her prayers and tears,  
And wild appears on him she called her love,  
They with their burden now began to move.

XXXIV.

But he, whose human flesh seemed petrified  
To marble, started from that rigid mood,  
And blindly running after them, he cried,  
'Hold! hold! stain not your hands with innocent blood;  
I broke my vow, I am the sinner, I  
Seduced the maid,--spare her, and let me die.'

XXXV.

They halted midway, marvelling, aghast,  
When St. Columba thundered to them 'Stay!  
His voice was like a dreadful battle-blast,  
And startled coveys rose and whirred away:  
'He broke his vow, he is the sinner; aye  
Do as he says--spare her, and let him die!

XXXVI.

'Yea, well I saw the gnawing worm within,  
But wished to tear the mask from off his soul,  
That in the naked hideousness of sin  
He might stand pilloried before you all:  
This is a judgment on me from above  
For loving him with more than woman's love.'

XXXVII.

His voice here failed him and he hid his face;  
And as before some imminent storm all sound  
In earth, air, ocean ceases for a space,  
There fell a breathless silence on that mound;  
But when Columba raised his voice once more,  
It seemed the muffled thunder's boding roar.

XXXVIII.

'Oh perjured one! oh breaker of thy vow!  
Oh base, apostate monk, whose guilt abhorred  
Weighed down our walls and laid our chapel low!  
Thy life shall be an offering to the Lord,  
And with thy blood we will cement the fane  
Which for thy sin's sake still was built in vain.

XXXIX.

'Seize him, and bear him to that dolorous site  
Where mid our ruined cells the chapel stands  
Whose holy walls and columns every night  
Have fallen beneath the blow of dæmon hands;  
There, living, bury him beneath its sod,  
And so propitiate the Lord our God.'

Mathilde Blind

# The Prophecy Of St. Oran: Part Iv

I.

It is the night: across the starless waste  
Of silent heaven the solitary moon  
Flits like a frightened maid who flies in haste,  
And wild with terror seems to reel and swoon,  
As in her rear the multitudinous clouds  
Follow like spectral huntsmen in their shrouds.

II.

And sometimes the wild rout o'ertakes its prey,  
And holds her captive in the lowering sky,  
But ever and anon she bursts away,  
And her white orb floats lustrously on high,  
And with its lambent flame transmutes the haze  
Into a living halo for her face.

III.

And far o'er black morass and barren moor  
The fitful splendour of the moonlight falls,  
Its broken eddies sweep across the floor,  
And dance in chequered silver on the walls,  
And flood the chapel's grave-encircled site  
With sudden flashes of unearthly light.

IV.

And as the unquiet moonlight comes and flies  
Athwart the little roofless house of prayer,  
Like some lost spirit strayed from Paradise  
Or dæmon-angel of the realms of air,  
A pallid shape flits through the open door  
And flings itself, low wailing, on the floor;

V.

And wailing, wailing, lay there in its pain,  
When suddenly it snatched from the out the sod

Some late-forgotten spade, while tears like rain  
Poured from its eyes, enough to melt the clod,  
And digging hard the small breach grew apace,  
Till the soil lay like molehills round the place.

VI.

But through the silence suddenly there swells  
Along the gusty breaths of midnight air  
The mellow tinkling sound of magic bells,  
Such as the pious brethren love to wear,  
To keep the fiends and goblins off that prowl  
For ever near to catch a tripping soul.

VII.

And as the monks, chanting a solemn hymn,  
Draw nigh the chapel to perform their rite,  
That wailing shape flies far into the dim  
Recess behind the altar full of night;  
While they with burning torches move in file  
To consecrate afresh their sacred pile.

VIII.

Three days, three nights have fled since in that spot,  
Where fiends and dæmons revelled unforbid,  
They buried that false monk who was a blot  
Upon their rule: but since the earth has hid  
His bones accursed, God's sun has shone again,  
Nor has fresh ill assailed their prospering fane

IX.

Which now they enter, singing hymns of praise,  
Columba at their head--when lo, behold  
The grave yawns open and a bloodless face,  
The face of him they knew, rose from the mould:  
Slowly he rose from the incumbent clay  
Lifting the white shroud in the moonlight grey.

X.

Slowly his arm beneath the winding-sheet  
He waved three times, as though to bid them hear;  
Then in the moonlight rose he to his feet  
Showing his shrunken body, and his sere  
Discoloured hair, and smouldering eyes that lie  
Sunk in their sockets, glaring hot and dry.

XI.

Slowly he raised his voice--once rich in tone  
Like sweetest music, now a mournful knell  
With dull sepulchral sounds, as of a stone  
Cast down into a black unfathomed well--  
And murmured, 'Lo, I come back from the grave,--  
Behold, there is no God to smite or save.

XII.

'Poor fools! wild dreamers! No, there is no God;  
Yon heaven is deaf and dumb to prayer and praise;  
Lo, no almighty tyrant wields the rod  
For evermore above our hapless race;  
Nor fashioned us, frail creatures that we be,  
To bear the burden of eternity.

XIII.

'Hear it, self-torturing monks, and cease to wage  
Your mad, delirious, suicidal war;  
There is no devil who from age to age  
Waylays and tempts all souls of men that are;  
For ever seeking whom he may devour,  
And damn with wine and woman, gold and power.

XIV.

'Deluded priests, ye think the world a snare,  
Denouncing every tender human tie!  
Behold, your heaven is unsubstantial air,  
Your future bliss a sick brain's phantasy;  
There is no room amid the stars which gem

The firmament for your Jerusalem.

XV.

'Rejoice, poor sinners, for I come to tell  
To you who hardly dare to live for fright;  
There is no burning everlasting hell  
Where souls shall be tormented day and night:  
The fever ye call life ends with your breath;  
All weary souls set in the night of death.

XVI.

'Then let your life on earth be life indeed!  
Nor drop the substance, snatching at a shade!  
Ye can have Eden here! ye bear the seed  
Of all the hells and heavens and gods ye made  
Within that mighty world-transforming thought  
Which permeates the universe it wrought--

XVII.

'Wrought out of stones and plants and birds and beasts,  
To flower in man, and know itself at last:  
Around, about you, see what endless feasts  
The spring and summer bountifully cast!  
'A vale of tears,' ye cry--'if ye were wise,  
The earth itself would change to Paradise.

XVIII.

'The earth itself--the old despisèd earth,  
Would render back your love a thousandfold,  
Nor yet afflict the sons of men with dearth,  
Disease, and misery, and drought and cold;  
If you would seek a blessing in her sod,  
Instead of crying vainly on your God.

XIX.

'Cast down the crucifix, take up the plough!  
Nor waste your breath which is the life in prayer!

Dare to be men, and break you impious vow,  
Nor fly from woman as the devil's snare!  
For if within, around, beneath, above  
There is a living God, that God is Love.'

XX.

'The fool says in his heart, There is no God,'  
Cried St. Columba, white with Christian ire  
'Seize Oran, re-inter him in the sod  
And may his soul awake in endless fire:  
Earth on his mouth--the earth he would adore,  
That his blaspheming tongue may blab no more.'

XXI.

Then like swart ravens swooping on their prey  
These monks rushed upon Oran; when there came  
One gliding towards them in wild disarray  
With hair that streamed behind her like a flame  
And face dazed with the moon, who shrilly cried,  
'Let not death part the bridegroom from his bride.'

XXII.

But deeming her some fiend in female guise,  
They drive her forth with threats, till, crazed with fear,  
Across the stones and mounded graves she flies  
Towards that lapping, moon-illuminated mere;  
And like a child seeking its mother's breast  
She casts her life thereon, and is at rest.

XXIII.

And while the waves close gurgling o'er her head,  
A grave is dug whence he may never stray,  
Or come back prophesying from the dead,--  
All shouting as they stifle him with clay:  
'Earth on his mouth--the earth he would adore,  
That his blaspheming tongue may blab no more.'



# The Red Sunsets I, 1883

The twilight heavens are flushed with gathering light,  
And o'er wet roofs and huddling streets below  
Hang with a strange Apocalyptic glow  
On the black fringes of the wintry night.  
Such bursts of glory may have rapt the sight  
Of him to whom on Patmos long ago  
The visionary angel came to show  
That heavenly city built of chrysolite.

And lo, three factory hands begrimed with soot,  
Aflame with the red splendour, marvelling stand,  
And gaze with lifted faces awed and mute.  
Starved of earth's beauty by Man's grudging hand,  
O toilers, robbed of labour's golden fruit,  
Ye, too, may feast in Nature's fairyland.

Mathilde Blind

## The Red Sunsets II, 1883

THE boding sky was characterized with cloud,  
The scripture of the storm--but high in air,  
Where the unfathomed zenith still was bare,  
A pure expanse of rose-flushed violet glowed  
And, kindling into crimson light, o'erflowed  
The hurrying wrack with such a blood-red glare,  
That heaven, igniting, wildly seemed to flare  
On the dazed eyes of many an awe-struck crowd.

And in far lands folk presaged with blanched lips  
Disastrous wars, earthquakes, and foundering ships,  
Such whelming floods as never dykes could stem,  
Or some proud empire's ruin and eclipse:  
Lo, such a sky, they cried, as burned o'er them  
Once lit the sacking of Jerusalem!

Mathilde Blind

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Mathilde Blind

# The Robin Redbreast

The year's grown songless! No glad pipings thrill  
The hedge-row elms, whose wind-worn branches shower  
Their leaves on the sere grass, where some late flower  
In golden chalice hoards the sunlight still.  
Our summer guests, whose raptures used to fill  
Each apple-blossomed garth and honeyed bower,  
Have in adversity's inclement hour  
Abandoned us to bleak November's chill.

But hearken! Yonder russet bird among  
The crimson clusters of the homely thorn  
Still bubbles o'er with little rills of song--  
A blending of sweet hope and resignation:  
Even so, when life of love and youth is shorn,  
One friend becomes its last, best consolation.

Mathilde Blind

# The Sâkiyeh

"How long shall Man be Nature's fool?" Man cries;  
"Be like those great, gaunt oxen, drilled and bound,  
Inexorably driven round and round  
To turn the water-wheel with bandaged eyes?  
And as they trudge beneath Egyptian skies,  
Watering the wrinkled desert's beggared ground,  
The hoarse Sâkiyeh's lamentable sound  
Fills all the land as with a people's sighs?"

Poor Brutes! Who in unconsciousness sublime,  
Replenishing the ever-empty jars,  
Endow the waste with palms and harvest gold:  
And men, who move in rhythm with moving stars,  
Should shrink to give the borrowed lives they hold:  
Bound blindfold to the groaning wheel of Time.

Mathilde Blind

# The Sleeping Beauty

There was intoxication in the air;  
The wind, keen blowing from across the seas,  
O'er leagues of new-ploughed land and heathery leas,  
Smelt of wild gorse whose gold flamed everywhere.  
And undertone of song pulsed far and near,  
The soaring larks filled heaven with ecstasies,  
And, like a living clock among the trees,  
The shouting cuckoo struck the time of year.

For now the Sun had found the earth once more,  
And woke the Sleeping Beauty with a kiss;  
Who thrilled with light of love in every pore,  
Opened her flower-blue eyes, and looked in his.  
Then all things felt life fluttering at their core--  
The world shook mystical in lambent bliss.

Mathilde Blind

# The Songs Of Summer

The songs of summer are over and past!  
The swallow's forsaken the dripping eaves;  
Ruined and black 'mid the sodden leaves  
The nests are rudely swung in the blast:  
And ever the wind like a soul in pain  
Knocks and knocks at the window-pane.

The songs of summer are over and past!  
Woe's me for a music sweeter than theirs--  
The quick, light bound of a step on the stairs,  
The greeting of lovers too sweet to last:  
And ever the wind like a soul in pain  
Knocks and knocks at the window-pane.

Mathilde Blind

# The Sower

The winds had hushed at last as by command;  
The quiet sky above,  
With its grey clouds spread oer the fallow land,  
Sat brooding like a dove.

There was no motion in the air, no sound  
Within the tree-tops stirred,  
Save when some last leaf, fluttering to the ground,  
Dropped like a wounded bird.

Or when the swart rooks in a gathering crowd  
With clamorous noises wheeled,  
Hovering awhile, then swooped with wrangling loud  
Down to the stubbly field.

For now the big-thewed horses, toiling slow  
In straining couples yoked,  
Patiently dragged the plowshare to and fro  
Till their wet haunches smoked.

Till the stiff acre, broken into clods,  
Bruised by the harrow's tooth,  
Lay lightly shaken, with its humid sods  
Ranged into furrows smooth.

There looming lone, from rise to set of sun,  
Without or pause or speed,  
Solemnly striding by the furrows dun,  
The sower sows the seed.

The sower sows the seed, which mouldering,  
Deep confined in the earth,  
Is buried now, but with the future spring  
Will quicken into birth.

Oh, poles of birth and death! Controlling Powers  
Of human toil and need!  
On this fair earth all men are surely sowers,  
Surely all life is seed!

All life is seed, dropped in Time's yawning furrow,  
Which with slow sprout and shoot,  
In the revolving world's unfathomed morrow,  
Will blossom and bear fruit.

Mathilde Blind

# The Sphinx

Wanderer, behold Life's riddle writ in stone,  
Fronting Eternity with lidless eyes;  
Of all that is beneath the changing skies,  
Immutably abiding and alone.

The handiwork of hands unseen, unknown,  
When Pharaohs of immortal dynasties  
Built Pyramids to brave the centuries,  
Cheating Annihilation of her own.

The heart grows hushed before it. Nay, methinks  
That Man, and all on which Man wastes his breath,  
The World, and all the World inheriteth,  
With infinite, inexorable links  
Grappling the soul; that love, hate, birth and death  
Dwindle to nothingness before thee--Sphinx.

Mathilde Blind

# The Street-Children's Dance

NOW the earth in fields and hills  
Stirs with pulses of the Spring,  
Next-embowering hedges ring  
With interminable trills;  
Sunlight runs a race with rain,  
All the world grows young again.

Young as at the hour of birth:  
From the grass the daisies rise  
With the dew upon their eyes,  
Sun-awakened eyes of earth;  
Fields are set with cups of gold;  
Can this budding world grow old?

Can the world grow old and sere,  
Now when ruddy-tasselled trees  
Stoop to every passing breeze,  
Rustling in their silken gear;  
Now when blossoms pink and white  
Have their own terrestrial light?

Brooding light falls soft and warm,  
Where in many a wind-rocked nest,  
Curled up 'neath the she-bird's breast,  
Clustering eggs are hid from harm;  
While the mellow-throated thrush  
Warbles in the purpling bush.

Misty purple bathes the Spring:  
Swallows flashing here and there  
Float and dive on waves of air,  
And make love upon the wing;  
Crocus-buds in sheaths of gold  
Burst like sunbeams from the mould.

Chestnut leaflets burst their buds,  
Perching tiptoe on each spray,  
Springing toward the radiant day,  
As the bland, pacific floods

Of the generative sun  
All the teeming earth o'errun.

Can this earth run o'er with beauty,  
Laugh through leaf and flower and grain,  
While in close-pent court and lane,  
In the air so thick and sooty,  
Little ones pace to and fro,  
Weighted with their parents' woe?

Woe-predestined little ones!  
Putting forth their buds of life  
In an atmosphere of strife,  
And crime breeding ignorance;  
Where the bitter surge of care  
Freezes to a dull despair.

Dull despair and misery  
Lie about them from their birth;  
Ugly curses, uglier mirth,  
Are their earliest lullaby;  
Fathers have they without name,  
Mothers crushed by want and shame.

Brutish, overburthened mothers,  
With their hungry children cast  
Half-nude to the nipping blast;  
Little sisters with their brothers  
Dragging in their arms all day  
Children nigh as big as they.

Children mothered by the street:  
Shouting, flouting, roaring after  
Passers-by with gibes and laughter,  
Diving between horses' feet,  
In and out of drays and barrows,  
Recklessly, like London sparrows.

Mudlarks of our slums and alleys,  
All unconscious of the blooming  
World behind those housetops looming.  
Of the happy fields and valleys,

Of the miracle of Spring  
With its boundless blossoming.

Blossoms of humanity!  
Poor soiled blossoms in the dust!  
Through the thick defiling crust  
Of soul-stifling poverty,  
In your features may be traced  
Childhood's beauty half effaced--

Childhood, stunted in the shadow  
Of the light-debarring walls:  
Not for you the cuckoo calls  
O'er the silver-threaded meadow;  
Not for you the lark on high  
Pours his music from the sky.

Ah! you have your music too!  
And come flocking round that player  
Grinding at his organ there,  
Summer-eyed and swart of hue,  
Rattling off his well-worn tune  
On this April afternoon.

Lovely April lights of pleasure  
Flit o'er want-beclouded features  
Of these little outcast creatures,  
As they swing with rhythmic measure,  
In the courage of their rags,  
Lightly o'er the slippery flags.

Little footfalls, lightly glancing  
In a luxury of motion,  
Supple as the waves of ocean  
In your elemental dancing,  
How you fly, and wheel, and spin,  
For your hearts too dance within.

Dance along with mirth and laughter,  
Buoyant, fearless, and elate,  
Dancing in the teeth of fate,  
Ignorant of your hereafter

That with all its tragic glooms  
Blindly on your future looms.

Past and future, hence away!  
Joy, diffused throughout the earth,  
Centre in this moment's mirth  
Of ecstatic holiday:  
Once in all their lives' dark story,  
Touch them, Fate! with April glory.

Mathilde Blind

# The Tombs Of The Kings

Where the mummied Kings of Egypt, wrapped in linen fold on fold,  
Couched for ages in their coffins, crowned with crowns of dusky gold,

Lie in subterranean chambers, biding to the day of doom,  
Counterfeit life's hollow semblance in each mazy mountain tomb,

Grisly in their gilded coffins, mocking masks of skin and bone,  
Yet remain in change unchanging, balking Nature of her own;

Mured in mighty Mausoleums, walled in from the night and day,  
Lo, the mortal Kings of Egypt hold immortal Death at bay.

For-so spake the Kings of Egypt-those colossal ones whose hand  
Held the peoples from Pitasa to the Kheta's conquered land;

Who, with flash and clash of lances and war-chariots, stormed and won  
Many a town of stiff-necked Syria to high-towering Askalon:

'We have been the faithful stewards of the deathless gods on high;  
We have built them starry temples underneath the starry sky.

'We have smitten rebel nations, as a child is whipped with rods:  
We the living incarnation of imperishable gods.

'Shall we suffer Death to trample us to nothingness? and must  
We be scattered, as the whirlwind blows about the desert dust?

'No! Death shall not dare come near us, nor Corruption shall not lay  
Hands upon our sacred bodies, incorruptible as day.

'Let us put a bit and bridle, and rein in Time's headlong course;  
Let us ride him through the ages as a master rides his horse.

'On the changing earth unchanging let us bide till Time shall end,  
Till, reborn in blest Osiris, mortal with Immortal blend.'

Yea, so spake the Kings of Egypt, they whose lightest word was law,  
At whose nod the far-off nations cowered, stricken dumb with awe.

And Fate left the haughty rulers to work out their monstrous doom;  
And, embalmed with myrrh and ointments, they were carried to the tomb;

Through the gate of Bab-el-Molouk, where the sulphur hills lie bare,  
Where no green thing casts a shadow in the noon's tremendous glare;

Where the unveiled Blue of heaven in its bare intensity  
Weighs upon the awe-struck spirit with the world's immensity;

Through the Vale of Desolation, where no beast or bird draws breath,  
To the Coffin-Hills of Tuat-the Metropolis of Death.

Down-down-down into the darkness, where, on either hand, dread Fate,  
In the semblance of a serpent, watches by the dolorous gate;

Down-down-down into the darkness, where no gleam of sun or star  
Sheds its purifying radiance from the living world afar;

Where in labyrinthine windings, darkly hidden, down and down,-  
Proudly on his marble pillow, with old Egypt's double crown,

And his mien of cold commandment, grasping still his staff of state,  
Rests the mightiest of the Pharaohs, whom the world surnamed the Great.

Swathed in fine Sidonian linen, crossed hands folded on the breast,  
There the mummied Kings of Egypt lie within each painted chest.

And upon their dusky foreheads Pleiades of flaming gems,  
Glowing through the nether darkness, flash from luminous diadems.

Where is Memphis? Like a Mirage, melted into empty air:  
But these royal gems yet sparkle richly on their raven hair.

Where is Thebes in all her glory, with her gates of beaten gold?  
Where Syenê, or that marvel, Heliopolis of old?

Where is Edfu? Where Abydos? Where those pillared towns of yore  
Whose auroral temples glittered by the Nile's thick-peopled shore?

Gone as evanescent cloudlands, Alplike in the afterglow;  
But these Kings hold fast their bodies of four thousand years ago.

Sealed up in their Mausoleums, in the bowels of the hills,  
There they hide from dissolution and Death's swiftly grinding mills.

Scattering fire, Uræus serpents guard the Tombs' tremendous gate;  
While Troth holds the trembling balance, weighs the heart and seals its fate.

And a multitude of mummies in the swaddling clothes of death,  
Ferried o'er the sullen river, on and on still hasteneth.

And around them and above them, blazoned on the rocky walls,  
Crowned with stars, enlaced by serpents, in divine processions,

Ibis-headed, jackal-featured, vulture-hooded, pass on high,  
Gods on gods through Time's perspectives-pilgrims of Eternity.

There, revealed by fitful flashes, in a gloom that may be felt,  
Wild Chimæras flash from darkness, glittering like Orion's belt.

And on high, o'er shining waters, in their barks the gods sail by,  
In the Sunboat and the Moonboat, rowed across the rose-hued sky.

Night, that was before Creation, watches sphinx-like, starred with eyes,  
And the hours and days are passing, and the years and centuries.

But these mummied Kings of Egypt, pictures of a perished race,  
Lie, of Death forgotten, face by immemorial face.

Though the glorious sun above them, burning on the naked plain,  
Clothes the empty wilderness with the golden, glowing grain;

Though the balmy Moon above them, floating in the milky Blue,  
Fills the empty wildernesses with a silver fall of dew;

Though life comes and flies unresting, like the shadow which a dove  
Casts upon the Sphinx, in passing, for a moment from above;-

Still these mummied Kings of Egypt, wrapped in linen, fold on fold,  
Bide through the ages in their coffins, crowned with crowns of dusky gold.

Had the sun once brushed them lightly, or a breath of air, they must  
Instantaneously have crumbled into evanescent dust.

Pale and passive in their prisons, they have conquered, chained to death;  
And their lineaments look living now as when they last drew breath!

Have they conquered? Oh the pity of those Kings within their tombs,  
Locked in stony isolation in those petrifying glooms!

Motionless where all is motion in a rolling Universe,  
Heaven, by answering their prayer, turned it to a deadly curse.

Left them fixed where all is fluid in a world of star-winged skies;  
Where, in myriad transformations, all things pass and nothing dies;

Nothing dies but what is tethered, kept when Time would set it free,  
To fulfil Thought's yearning tension upward through Eternity.

Mathilde Blind

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Lie in subterranean chambers, biding to the day of doom,  
Counterfeit life's hollow semblance in each mazy mountain tomb,

Grisly in their gilded coffins, mocking masks of skin and bone,  
Yet remain in change unchanging, balking Nature of her own;

Mured in mighty Mausoleums, walled in from the night and day,  
Lo, the mortal Kings of Egypt hold immortal Death at bay.

For--so spake the Kings of Egypt--those colossal ones whose hand  
Held the peoples from Pitasa to the Kheta's conquered land;

Who, with flash and clash of lances and war-chariots, stormed and won  
Many a town of stiff-necked Syria to high-towering Askalon:

"We have been the faithful stewards of the deathless gods on high;  
We have built them starry temples underneath the starry sky.

"We have smitten rebel nations, as a child is whipped with rods:  
We the living incarnation of imperishable gods.

"Shall we suffer Death to trample us to nothingness? and must  
We be scattered, as the whirlwind blows about the desert dust?

"No! Death shall not dare come near us, nor Corruption shall not lay  
Hands upon our sacred bodies, incorruptible as day.

"Let us put a bit and bridle, and rein in Time's headlong course;  
Let us ride him through the ages as a master rides his horse.

"On the changing earth unchanging let us bide till Time shall end,  
Till, reborn in blest Osiris, mortal with Immortal blend."

Yea, so spake the Kings of Egypt, they whose lightest word was law,  
At whose nod the far-off nations cowered, stricken dumb with awe.

And Fate left the haughty rulers to work out their monstrous doom;  
And, embalmed with myrrh and ointments, they were carried to the tomb;

Through the gate of Bab-el-Molouk, where the sulphur hills lie bare,  
Where no green thing casts a shadow in the noon's tremendous glare;

Where the unveiled Blue of heaven in its bare intensity  
Weighs upon the awe-struck spirit with the world's immensity;

Through the Vale of Desolation, where no beast or bird draws breath,  
To the Coffin-Hills of Tuat--the Metropolis of Death.

Down--down--down into the darkness, where, on either hand, dread Fate,  
In the semblance of a serpent, watches by the dolorous gate;

Down--down--down into the darkness, where no gleam of sun or star  
Sheds its purifying radiance from the living world afar;

Where in labyrinthine windings, darkly hidden, down and down,--  
Proudly on his marble pillow, with old Egypt's double crown,

And his mien of cold commandment, grasping still his staff of state,  
Rests the mightiest of the Pharaohs, whom the world surnamed the Great.

Swathed in fine Sidonian linen, crossed hands folded on the breast,  
There the mummied Kings of Egypt lie within each painted chest.

And upon their dusky foreheads Pleiades of flaming gems,  
Glowing through the nether darkness, flash from luminous diadems.

Where is Memphis? Like a Mirage, melted into empty air:  
But these royal gems yet sparkle richly on their raven hair.

Where is Thebes in all her glory, with her gates of beaten gold?  
Where Syenê, or that marvel, Heliopolis of old?

Where is Edfu? Where Abydos? Where those pillared towns of yore  
Whose auroral temples glittered by the Nile's thick-peopled shore?

Gone as evanescent cloudlands, Alplike in the afterglow;  
But these Kings hold fast their bodies of four thousand years ago.

Sealed up in their Mausoleums, in the bowels of the hills,  
There they hide from dissolution and Death's swiftly grinding mills.

Scattering fire, Uræus serpents guard the Tombs' tremendous gate;  
While Troth holds the trembling balance, weighs the heart and seals its fate.

And a multitude of mummies in the swaddling clothes of death,  
Ferried o'er the sullen river, on and on still hasteneth.

And around them and above them, blazoned on the rocky walls,  
Crowned with stars, enlaced by serpents, in divine processions,

Ibis-headed, jackal-featured, vulture-hooded, pass on high,  
Gods on gods through Time's perspectives--pilgrims of Eternity.

There, revealed by fitful flashes, in a gloom that may be felt,  
Wild Chimæras flash from darkness, glittering like Orion's belt.

And on high, o'er shining waters, in their barks the gods sail by,  
In the Sunboat and the Moonboat, rowed across the rose-hued sky.

Night, that was before Creation, watches sphinx-like, starred with eyes,  
And the hours and days are passing, and the years and centuries.

But these mummied Kings of Egypt, pictures of a perished race,  
Lie, of Death forgotten, face by immemorial face.

Though the glorious sun above them, burning on the naked plain,  
Clothes the empty wilderness with the golden, glowing grain;

Though the balmy Moon above them, floating in the milky Blue,  
Fills the empty wildernesses with a silver fall of dew;

Though life comes and flies unresting, like the shadow which a dove  
Casts upon the Sphinx, in passing, for a moment from above;--

Still these mummied Kings of Egypt, wrapped in linen, fold on fold,  
Bide through the ages in their coffins, crowned with crowns of dusky gold.

Had the sun once brushed them lightly, or a breath of air, they must  
Instantaneously have crumbled into evanescent dust.

Pale and passive in their prisons, they have conquered, chained to death;  
And their lineaments look living now as when they last drew breath!

Have they conquered? Oh the pity of those Kings within their tombs,  
Locked in stony isolation in those petrifying glooms!

Motionless where all is motion in a rolling Universe,  
Heaven, by answering their prayer, turned it to a deadly curse.

Left them fixed where all is fluid in a world of star-winged skies;  
Where, in myriad transformations, all things pass and nothing dies;

Nothing dies but what is tethered, kept when Time would set it free,  
To fulfil Thought's yearning tension upward through Eternity.

Mathilde Blind

# The Torrent

OH torrent, roaring in thy giant fall,  
And thund'ring grandly o'er th' opposing blocks,  
Thy voice, far louder than the lion's call,  
Through trackless forests shakes the heart of rocks,  
Runs through the marrow of the earth with shocks,  
Lashes the clouds with terror, for they fly  
Along the high wide blue with streaming locks,  
And round thee foam white dazzling flashes high  
And with forked water-flames half licks the central sky.

Oh, what a storm of waters! Oh, what chasms  
Of foam! what seething hills! what whirling rain!  
Billows on billows press, though torn by spasms;  
Wounded and bleeding, yet defying pain!  
They grappled with the stones, that gnash in vain  
Their cruel teeth, for smarting wounds they brave,  
And toss in scorn their wildly flowing mane,  
When with exulting cries big wave on wave  
Rolls with a mighty sweep o'er a slain foeman's grave.

Roll on, great torrent, with triumphal song,  
Through caverned cliff, through rock and mountain roll;  
Force all the barriers that around thee throng,  
Thou know'st th' eternal ocean for thy goal.  
Hence thine impetuous rush, and roar, and roll;  
Hence thy wild heavings as thou flow'st amain;  
Hence thy far-reaching and tempestuous call  
For stream and river, brook and rill and rain,  
Thou on thy Titan breast would'st carry to the main.

Roll on! The heavens are with thee, for they fling  
Their lovely rainbows round thy gleaming brow;  
Rainbows, that like the crown of heroes cling  
For ever round thee with their magic glow;  
Or like the wondrous halo which will flow  
Around the martyr's head; for those sweet hues,  
They hover round thee in thy weal and woe,  
Like love, that with its tender tears bedews  
And heals the bitter pain of ev'ry earthly bruise!

Roll on! with a white heat upon thy way!  
Lo yon, a little tiny woodland bird  
Flits on wet wing through all the surf and spray,  
And settles on a jagged rock unscared,  
Round whose grim base a billowy din is heard;  
A bright amazed ray from its black eyes  
It darts around, and listens not afeared--  
Then diamond-powdered to the woods it flies,  
And sings to forest ears the mighty melodies.

E'en thus thou art! for that Titanic stream  
But a material symbol was of thee!  
A dim reflection of thy being did seem  
Thou man, high-souled as son of man can be!  
Into whose mind, vast, noble, pure, and free,  
Flash awful revelations light-like in:  
Unveiling spiritual laws to thee;  
Great central truths, that glow all life within,  
That move the nations on, and make the planets spin.

Thou hero! for through prejudice's walls,  
That lock up earth against the quick'ning floods,  
And 'gainst the fresh regenerating falls  
Of young ideas, that in sprouting mood  
Seethe like new wine, stirred by the grape's hot blood,  
In the old bottles; thou, oh, brave and bold!  
Didst force thy way, crushing night's deathly brood,  
As George the sainted, in the days of old--  
The dragon, who beneath his footstep writhing roll'd.

Dragons, alas! still darken the green earth,  
War with the good, the beautiful, the wise;  
From gulfs of ancient night they've issued forth,  
And with their shadowy wings blot out the skies;  
Old creeds that gasp forth curses, tyrannies  
All foul with feeding on their own decay,  
Old cramping forms, and crippling social lies,  
Whose venomous breathing with corruption slay,  
Like loathsome rattlesnakes that glut upon their prey.

But thou assail'st them, fearless, though they spurt

Their reeking poison in thy smarting face;  
And careless of thy bruises and thy hurt,  
Thou still press'st on with an undaunted pace;  
A bold path-finder for the coming race,  
And in thy faith, strong as the morning star,  
Piercing the welt'ring clouds with lucent rays;  
Thy voice, a light above time's din and war,  
Proclaimeth to mankind the rosy dawn afar!

Thou martyr! for the world it knows thee not,  
Scoffs at thee, scorns thee, rails and laughs and sneers;  
With barbèd darts embitters thy hard lot,  
As oft of old to prophets and to seers;  
With its bleared sight the veil it cannot pierce,  
And see the future rise upon the days!  
Thus persecutes with hatred blind and fierce,  
And, 'stead of crowns plucked from the living bays,  
It binds thy brows with thorns--thorns that will turn to rays!

Still from thy heart's vast deeps the shouts arise,  
And swell along, a rushing lava stream--  
A lava stream of burning melodies,  
Shaking thy brethren from a sluggish dream,  
To strive and be the thing they fain would seem;  
With thee, false custom's cramping bounds to leap,  
To trust the rising of the virgin beam,  
And at thy call through death and danger sweep  
Towards the free, the pure, the renovating deep.

And still around thee, thro' the battle's roar,  
Shimmers in splendour and unfading bloom,  
Brighter than moonlight on the seething shore,  
Sweeter than roses clust'ring round the tomb,  
Born of the struggle with the fatal gloom;  
A subtle gleam, fleeting 'mid tears and ruth,  
A dewy prophecy of days to come,  
When one great rainbow, love, and light and truth,  
Encircle will the world with an eternal youth!

But I, behold, like to the tiny thing,  
The forest bird; I feel a magic spell,  
That draws me strongly on uncertain wing

Away from all the violet woodland smell,  
To hear the words that from thy spirit well:  
Enchained, entranced, oh! let me list, while flame  
And dazzling light in billows round me swell;  
Then flying back to shades from whence I came  
I will heroic deeds, prophetic words, proclaim.

Mathilde Blind

# The Wanderer

ON unknown paths I falter forth,  
A homeless wand'rer in the world;  
Doubtful I flit across the earth,  
Whither by blowing fates I'm hurled.

I grope about the pathless wood;  
I tread along the boundless plain;  
And with the wind's capricious mood,  
I sink and rise upon the main.

The lonely cloud within the sky,  
That by conflicting gales is torn,  
Sways to and fro no more than I,  
Now eastward, and now westward borne.

The crested billow on the deep  
Knows to which shore its current lies;  
The blast--the realms which he must sweep;  
The ant--the hill to which it hies.

The stork that seeks the tropic glows,  
It knoweth whither it is bound;  
And the revolving planet knows  
The circle of its luminous round.

But I, confusèd, seek a way  
In darkness here; I fall, I sigh,  
Upon a broken wing I stray,  
And all my help lies in a cry!

Mathilde Blind

# The Wind

ACROSS the barren moors the wild, wild wind  
Went sweeping on, and with his sobs and shrieks  
Filled the still night, and tore the woof of clouds  
Through which the moon did shed her cold clear light.  
From age to age a houseless wanderer he--  
Neither of heaven, nor yet of earth, but doomed  
For evermore to waver 'twixt the two:--  
Begging the moon with moans to take him up  
Into her charmèd calm; now with a wail,  
Piteous and low, beseeching that the earth  
Might fold him to her bosom, but in vain!  
A lonely outcast, frenzied does he storm  
Wildly from land to land, from sea to sea,  
Driving the clouds before him, ploughing up  
The shaking sod, splitting the tow'ring masts,  
And laying low the oaks of thousand years.  
But I that night ne'er closed an eye in sleep,  
For I did see him wand'ring o'er the moor--  
A giant phantom lost in midnight gloom,  
Flitting a restless shadow 'twixt the earth  
And round orbèd moon; loose tattered folds of clouds,  
Ragged with ages, swept behind, as he  
With Titan strides did bridge the rocky chasms;  
Oh how he sobbed and shrieked, and howled and roared,  
Torn with eternal hunger after home.  
So roars the lion from Numidian peaks,  
Swaying his manèd head from side to side,  
As low, then loud and louder swell his tones,  
Till big with horror thro' the forest lone  
They roll towards the plain, curdling the blood  
Of flocks and herds returning to the fold.  
So howls the famished wolf across the waste  
Siberian snows, with glare of restless eyes,  
Making a hideous brilliance in the dark.  
Now worn away, the wild wind's voice would die  
Fainting with its excess; then draw a sigh--  
Sounding far off, and then a soughing wail,  
A roar, a shriek, to pierce the ears of night;  
So on and on, through all the livelong night;

And all the livelong night I tossed about;  
His stormy voice, it would not let me rest,  
But woke an echo in me, rolling on  
Over my boundless waste of soul, till all  
The weary longings and the phantoms wild,  
The cravings with their thirst unquenchable,  
The doubts--dark looming in the nether mists,  
Rose up in tumult, shrieking with one voice:  
'Is there no goal? shall we for aye and aye  
Be hurried restlessly through endless space?  
Oh has the storm no nest? the soul no home?  
And the foundation stone of all my being  
Shook, and a flood, brackish with tears unshed,  
Surged o'er and o'er me.--Tortured I arose,  
Went to the open casement, and looked out.--  
There was a lull.--Upon the gravelled talks  
And smooth-cut sward, patches of moonlight lay;  
The clouds were swept away; and sharp and clear  
The trees did cast their shadows on the ground.  
Weird-like and moonlit the wan brood of night  
Did flit adown the ridges of the moors,  
Up from the river, and from out the trees,  
Gliding with noiseless movements in and out  
The pale moonlight, making my flesh to creep;  
And sick with fear I turned me to my rest--  
But not to sleep, for he on dewèd wings  
Had shyly fled before the moaning wind,  
Who now arose again in all his strength,  
And tore along, blasting the peace of night;  
And the old clock did toll the weary hours,  
As one by one night dropped them from her lap,  
And weary, wearily I counted them,  
With burning eyes and with a burning brain.  
But, lo!  
What golden touch falls on the curtain now?  
Up from my bed I spring--I look, I see  
A trembling light gleam faintly in the east,  
A trembling light, while all around is dark;  
It grows, it deepens into liquid gold  
And glowing orange and vermilion bright;  
It spreads along in billowy ripples, like  
A glittering ocean when the tide rolls in.

Smiling, it greets the mist-enshrouded earth,  
And draws her up with hill and tree and field,  
Driving the host of pris'ning fogs to flight,  
That brooding vengeance fly behind the hills,  
And gath'ring force from night, swoop in one mass  
Of densest black across the swooning earth.  
Trees weep, and long drawn sighs float here and there;  
Have shadows then wiped out the golden light?  
See! see! the strangling cloud  
Sinks back; pierced by the arrow of the dawn,  
Her blood--it trickles on the grass, and all  
The vague wan children of the night, they fly  
In dire confusion westward. . . . Hark! oh hark!  
The lovely morn now blows his silver horn,  
And like a lavish prodigal he strews  
Red roses, thick as sands on amber shores  
Along heaven's eastern floor: for now the sun,  
The radiant conqueror of the night, steps forth  
Upon the gorgeous path, with dazzling shield,  
Greeted by pealing chants as he begins  
His grand triumphal march: hills, vales, and streams,  
Laugh glowing up to him; the heavy tears  
Wept through the night, now sparkle on the grass  
Like orient pearls, well knowing that the sun  
Will kiss them all away; the merry birds  
Shake out their plumage wet with drops, and flit  
In airy gambols twitt'ring to and fro;  
The flowers smile again, and shyly play  
With morning rays.  
But in the west, a white mist like a dream  
With languid rooks, floats o'er the winding stream,  
And wearied out, the wind, a phantom, strides  
On with the faded moon and flick'ring star,  
Towards the hazy stretch of western moors;  
His strong voice dying slowly as he goes.  
But by my side a radiant spirit stood,  
A sunbeam, whispering, with a smile, 'Behold!  
After the darkness still there falls a light;  
After the storm a trancèd calm there falls.  
There is a light; yea, and there is a rest!  
And all the weary and the restless gusts  
That had been shaking at my roots of being

Were lulled, a silence came, and dewy sleep  
Fell on my burning eyes and burning brain.

Mathilde Blind

# The Woods Shake In An Ague-Fit

The woods shake in an ague-fit,  
The mad wind rocks the pine,  
From sea to sea the white gulls flit  
Into the roaring brine.

The moon as if in panic grief  
Darts through the clouds on high,  
Blown like a wild autumnal leaf  
Across the wilder sky.

The gusty rain is driving fast,  
And through the rain we hear,  
Above the equinoctial blast,  
The thunder of the Weir.

The voices of the wind and rain  
Wail echoing through my heart--  
That love is ever dogged by pain  
And fondest souls must part.

You made heart's summer, O my friend,  
But now we bid adieu,  
There will be winter without end  
And tears for ever new.

Mathilde Blind

# Thou Walkest With Me

Thou walkest with me as the spirit-light  
Of the hushed moon, high o'er a snowy hill,  
Walks with the houseless traveller all the night,  
When trees are tongueless and when mute the rill.  
Moon of my soul, O phantasm of delight,  
Thou walkest with me still.

The vestal flame of quenchless memory burns  
In my soul's sanctuary. Yea, still for thee  
My bitter heart hath yearned, as moonward yearns  
Each separate wave-pulse of the clamorous sea:  
My Moon of love, to whom for ever turns  
The life that aches through me.

Mathilde Blind

# Time's Shadow

Thy life, O Man, in this brief moment lies:  
Time's narrow bridge whereon we darkling stand,  
With an infinitude on either hand  
Receding luminously from our eyes.  
Lo, there thy Past's forsaken Paradise  
Subsideth like some visionary strand,  
While glimmering faint, the Future's promised land,  
Illusive from the abyss, seems fain to rise.

This hour alone Hope's broken pledges mar,  
And joy now gleams before, now in our rear,  
Like mirage mocking in some waste afar,  
Dissolving into air as we draw near.  
Beyond our steps the path is sunny-clear,  
The shadow lying only where we are.

Mathilde Blind

# To A Friend

With a Volume of Verses.

TO you who dwell withdrawn, above  
The world's tumultuous strife,  
And, in an atmosphere of love,  
Have triumphed over life;

To you whose heart has kept so young  
Beneath the weight of years,  
I give these passion flowers of song,  
Still wet with undried tears.

You too have trod that stony path  
Which steeply winds afar,  
And seen, through nights of storm and wrath,  
The bright and Morning Star;

Where, shining o'er the Alps of time  
On valleys full of mist,  
It beckons us to peaks sublime,  
Oh, brave Idealist.

Mathilde Blind

# To Hope

OH come, thou power divine,  
Thou lovely spirit with the wings of light,  
And let thy dewy eyes  
Shed their sweet influences on my soul;  
Oh let me hear thy voice,  
Whose sound thrills with a keener, deeper bliss,  
Than the shrill jubilation the bird of joy  
Pours on the air!  
Or the child babblings of the gladsome rill  
When, issuing first from out its mossy couch  
In venturesome delight, it frisks in glee  
Adown the hoary mountain, silver-fraught.

Oh come!  
Where I do lie drenched in my bitter tears,  
And drowning in dejection: haunted by  
The pale gaunt fears that spectre-like rush forth  
In shadowy swarms from out the brains's black cells,  
Like glaring madmen in confusion 'scaped  
From out their dens, whirling with shambling limbs  
In whooping dances through the startled dusk,  
And pouncing wildly on my shiv'ring soul,  
Where in her hour of weakness prostrate she  
Doth palpitate in terror, like a deer,  
That hunted by the swift pursuing hounds,  
Wounded and bleeding, sinks upon the ground,  
While with hoarse croaks the ravening birds of prey  
Wheel close and closer, darkening all the air.  
But thou--  
Come breathe upon me with thy balmy breath,  
Like a young wind, born in the rosed east,  
That leapeth boy-like from the lap of morn,  
To blow the land all clear from crouching fogs:

Thus drive thou hence the phantoms; cleanse my soul!  
Thou sweet enchantress, with the magic spells!  
Wails there a heart, lone on the populous earth,--  
Like a weak infant lost within the night  
That crieth piteously in helplessness,

And pusheth its blind limbs with gestures scared  
Against the gloom,--  
Then with an airy footfall glidest thou  
Gently anigh, as softly as a cloud,  
When one alone in crimson glory slides  
Along the twilight sky: tak'st the bewildered thing  
Into thine arms, thy fair and downy arms,  
And rock'st it on thy bosom--singing low  
An old, old song, old as the flowers that bloom,  
And like them ever young; till dreams rise up,  
Like cool white mists from out the heart of hills,  
And lie dew-sweet upon it in its sleep!

Sits there an orphan girl with sunken cheeks,  
And red-rimmed eyes, high up beneath the leads,  
Stitching with aching fingers all the night  
Beside the meagre flame, to earn her bread,  
And feed with scanty fuel the low fire  
Of life, while the shrill blast  
Dashes the rain against the rattling panes,  
And down the chimney roars with smoke and wet;--  
Then comest thou, with memories all dim  
And faint, with beauty from the childish years,  
Transposing them into the time to come  
With a new lustre of the full-grown heart.  
Where the bare walls stood with a hungry stare,  
The golden cornfields, weighed down by their wealth,  
Sway to and fro; purling the brook flows on;  
And, like a bit of sky drawn down by love,  
Wilds of forget-me-nots run riot round;  
And meadows scent the air; and lowing kine  
Are driven home; and silver geese hiss loud  
Within the pools; and childhood's silver laughs  
Ring o'er the green like chimes of silver bells  
In the clear atmosphere; and through green boughs  
Curls up the smoke from many a thatched roof,  
Flushed all the land with roseate floods of eve,  
While large and full glows low the harvest moon,  
There as through homely fields she lightly walks,  
And one is by her side, and whispers low,  
And thine, oh hope! the future's kindling glow.

Rocks there a sailor on a reeling ship,  
That staggers blindly like a brain-struck man,  
Around the staring cliffs!  
While the wild blast, the fiddler of the deep,  
Wakes such mad music on his shrieking strings  
That the fierce elements in huge delight  
Vault from their torpor, rearing giant heights!  
Ha! The maned billows from abysmal deeps  
Leap like live Alps, and catch the tearing clouds  
That dizzy haste along the wilds of sky;  
Tossing them round in labyrinthic whirls  
To the witch light of lightning, and the roar  
Of thunder, in its crashing clattering fall.  
Yea, while the ocean yawneth for its prey,  
Yelling with starvèd jaws around the hull,  
Man's sole frail guardian from the fangs of death,--  
Thou softly float'st,  
Like to the dove that bore the olive branch  
Across the waste of waters, to his side. . . .  
No longer sees he then the wide wild sea,  
No longer hears he the tempestuous blast:  
But where the cottage leans against the cliff,  
The evening star shedding its peace adown,  
He lifts the latch, and with one bound of joy  
He stands in the low room, beside the hearth,  
Where sits his winsome wife, and rocks her babe  
With lullabies; and heaving one big sob  
He strains her to his breast, her whom he thought  
On this side of the grave to see no more!  
Then does she take him by the hand, and leads  
Him round from cot to cot, where with round cheeks  
His children lie, sleep-flushed, 'twixt snow-white sheets,  
And snatching up the youngest in his arms,  
With an untameable emotion, weeps  
His kisses on him, till it opens wide  
Large dream-dew'd eyes, and lips with cherry mouth,  
'Oh, Dada, Dada!'----That thou dost for him!

Wanders the patriot on a stranger shore,  
And exile from the land he loved too well:  
Within his heart  
The festering wound a thankless nation strikes,

When cloud-capp'd by its ignorance and fear,  
And goaded on by spurring king and priest,  
Like a mad dog it turns and bites the hand  
Stretched out to heal.  
He sees his friends fall off like rotten leaves  
That scrambling flee the tempest-girted oak;  
He sees the enemies he boldly braved,  
Forging the red-hot slanders wherewithal  
To scorch his writhing soul!  
Alone in the wide world, alone he stands;  
Alone, save where beyond the roaring seas  
His mother weeps, and weeps, oh God! through him.  
Then, blowing from dead deserts the simoom  
Of doubt breathes on him, with its killing breath,  
With'ring the flowers of faith, the groves of youth,  
And buffeting his heart on cruel waves  
Of wind, e'en like a quiv'ring autumn leaf.  
Oh, is it strange?  
That in the midnight, on the dark there grow  
Pale faces sweating blood, and wrapped in shrouds,  
Turning reproachful eyes upon his eyes,  
And asking dumbly, 'Wherefore did we die,  
And spill the wine-filled goblets of our youth  
On barren soil that will not teem with birth?'  
That brides, like broken lilies whirled along  
By arrowy streams, glide past and sadly sob,  
'Thou'st mowed us down, and mowed us down in vain!'  
That infants thrill the silence with their wail,  
'Why are we fatherless, if fatherland  
Is still denied?' And that his heartstrings quake  
With sobs of mothers' hearts that hopeless break?  
Strange that his purpose, that did seem so fair,  
With a white blaze of light around her head,  
Which fell like orient beams on nations' brows,  
Should wane before his terror-stricken eyes?  
And that in direst agony of soul  
His noble nature tott'ring on her base,  
Should question if his deeds were rightful deeds?  
Stirred up by God's own living breath, or pushed  
By hot ambition's ravenous desire?  
And if the aim that drew were but a dream  
By which his visionary youth was mocked,

As travellers in the desert by the shine  
Of fair false waters?--At that torturing thought  
Smells of cold graves struck damp upon his brow,  
Till his wilds eyes grew void, and limp his limbs,  
And he had dropped resistless in the jaws  
Of madness or of death!

Hadst thou not come, perennial presence! bright  
As Phosphorus in the dim morning skies!

And poured thy morning sunbeams on his heart,  
And blown thy morning breezes on his soul,  
Till freshly born the world, and on him smiled  
With eyes as tender as his mother's were,  
When sowing love upon his cradled self.

Then back plucked he his purpose, fixed it firm  
In iron steadfastness upon his soul,  
And called on faith, where with upturnèd eyes  
Above the clouds she treads the mountain peaks,  
And on that love, which boundless as the sky,  
Stretches o'er all mankind its azured vault.

Then rose he, set his trustful eyes on high,  
And set his heart among the lowly born:  
For in the vasty glimmerings of the dawn  
He saw such visions of the things to be,  
Such heights of being ascended, and such love  
And justice throning on the seats of men,  
That with unflagging steps he calmly trod  
The walks of martyrdom! Oh, crown his brows  
With buds of those full summers of the race!

Mourns there an aged mother, lying low  
Upon the lowly grave,  
Round which the autumn moans her mournful dirge,  
And shivering cadence of the shrunken leaves  
Keeps saddest measure with the wailing wind;  
While the pale glimm'rings of the waning moon  
Fall in cold tears upon the unknown tomb,  
Beneath whose sod, washed by the ghastly mists,  
Lies he, her one sole flower, that on the breast  
Of life bloomed for her all the days and nights;  
In the midsummer of his lusty life  
Devoured by that grim beast, whose reeking breath  
Is saturated with the blood of man--

The twin of pestilence--the foul firstborn  
Of her who spinneth in the nether gloom  
The phantasms that turn mad the brains of men,  
And him whose savage lusts and greedy soul  
Would make his footstool on the necks of men!  
Oh here, even here like a stray beam of light  
That glides unscared in sacred tenderness  
Across the heavy vapours, brooding blind  
In shapeless masses o'er a joyless tarn  
Deep sunk in mountains,--even here the gleam  
Of thy gold hair makes music in the dark,  
Cradlest the head of grief on thy warm breast,  
Whisperest in tones sweeter than honeycomb  
Of that new heaven where death shall be no more,  
Nor grief, nor crying, neither shall there be  
More pain; for former things have passed away.  
And with thy wings of light around her soul,  
And with thy dewy eyes upon her heart,  
Death takes her gently like a cherubim  
By the shrunk hand, and leads her to her rest.

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh Hope! thou consolation of the soul!  
Flash forth, and like a sun strike on the clouds  
Of dull despondency, that pour their rain  
In showers upon the sad heart's shivering soil;  
Flash forth, and force each drop e'en as it falls  
To glass thy loveliness, and on the cloud  
Frowning in dumb defiance, paint such bloom  
Ethereal, that its blackness but becomes  
A foil on which thy brightness brighter beams,  
Till spanned with rainbow-glory the sad soul  
Glistens in glimmering smiles through all her tears,  
And life shone through by white eternity,  
Circled with calm as by a covenant,  
Is born in beauty of the bitter tears,  
Like Aphrodite from the salt sea waves.

Mathilde Blind

# To Memory

Oh in this dearth and winter of the soul,  
When even Hope, still wont to soar and sing,  
Droopeth, a starveling bird whose downy wing  
Stiffens ere dead through the dank drift it fall--  
Yea, ere Hope perish utterly, I call  
On thee, fond Memory, that thou haste and bring  
One leaf, one blossom from that far-off spring  
When love's auroral light lay over all.

Bring but one pansy: haply so the thrill  
Of poignant yearning for those glad dead years  
May, like the gusty south, breathe o'er the chill  
Of frozen grief, dissolving it in tears,  
Till numb Hope, stirred by that warm dropping rain,  
Will deem, perchance, Love's springtide come again.

Mathilde Blind

# To The Obelisk

DURING THE GREAT FROST, 1881.

Thou sign-post of the Desert! Obelisk,  
Once fronting in thy monumental pride  
Egypt's fierce sun, that blazing far and wide,  
Sheared her of tree and herb, till like a disk  
Her waste stretched shadowless, and fraught with risk  
To those who with their beasts of burden hied  
Across the seas of sand until they spied  
Thy pillar, and their flagging hearts grew brisk:

Now reared beside out Thames so wintry grey,  
Where blocks of ice drift with the drifting stream,  
Thou risest o'er the alien prospect! Say,  
Yon dull, blear, rayless orb whose lurid gleam  
Tinges the snow-draped ships and writhing steam,  
Is this the sun which fired thine orient day?

Mathilde Blind

# Untimely Love

Peace, throbbing heart, nor let us shed one tear  
O'er this late love's unseasonable glow;  
Sweet as a violet blooming in the snow,  
The posthumous offspring of the widowed year  
That smells of March when all the world is sere,  
And, while around the hurtling sea-winds blow--  
Which twist the oak and lay the pine tree low--  
Stands childlike in the storm and has no fear.

Poor helpless blossom orphaned of the sun,  
How could it thus brave winter's rude estate?  
Oh love, more helpless, why bloom so late,  
Now that the flower-time of the year is done?  
Since thy dear course must end when scarce begun,  
Nipped by the cold touch of relentless fate.

Mathilde Blind

# We Met As Strangers

We met as strangers on life's lonely way,  
And yet it seemed we knew each other well;  
There was no end to what thou hadst to say,  
Or to the thousand things I found to tell.  
My heart, long silent, at thy voice that day  
Chimed in my breast like to a silver bell.

How much we spoke, and yet still left untold  
Some secret half revealed within our eyes:  
Didst thou not love me once in ages old?  
Had I not called thee with importunate cries,  
And, like a child left sobbing in the cold,  
Listened to catch from far thy fond replies?

We met as strangers, and as such we part;  
Yet all my life seems leaving me with thine;  
Ah, to be clasped once only heart to heart,  
If only once to feel that thou wert mine!  
These lips are locked, and yet I know thou art  
That all in all for which my soul did pine.

Mathilde Blind

# Welcome To Egypt

The Palms stood motionless as Pyramids  
Against the golden halo of the sky;  
Interminable crops of wheat and rye  
Mantled the plain with downy coverlids  
Of silken green, where little freckled kids  
Frolicked beneath the staid maternal eye;  
And babe-led buffaloes plashed trampling by,  
Sprinkling cool water on their dusty lids.

Spake the grave Arab, as his flashing glance  
Swept the large, luminous verdure's dewy sheen,  
Sedately, with a bronze-like countenance:  
"Nehârak Saîd! Lo, this happy day,  
My country decks herself in sumptuous green,  
And smiling welcome, Lady, bids you stay."

Mathilde Blind

# What Magic Is There

What magic is there in thy mien  
What sorcery in thy smile,  
Which charms away all cark and care,  
Which turns the foul days into fair,  
And for a little while  
Changes this disenchanted scene  
From the sere leaf into the green,  
Transmuting with love's golden wand  
This beggared life to fairyland?

My heart goes forth to thee, oh friend,  
As some poor pilgrim to a shrine,  
A pilgrim who has come from far  
To seek his spirit's folding star,  
And sees the taper shine;  
The goal to which his wanderings tend,  
Where want and weariness shall end,  
And kneels ecstatically blest  
Because his heart hath entered rest.

Mathilde Blind

# When You Wake

When you wake from troubled slumbers  
With a dream-bewildered brain,  
And old leaves which no man numbers  
Chattering tap against the pane;  
And the midnight wind is wailing  
Till you very life seems quailing  
As the long gusts shudder and sigh:  
Know you not that homeless cry  
Is my love's, which cannot die,  
Wailing through Eternity?

When beside the glowing embers,  
Sitting in the twilight lone,  
Drop on drop you hear November's  
Melancholy monotone,  
As the heavy rain comes sweeping,  
With a sound of weeping, weeping,  
Till your blood is chilled with fears;  
Know you not those falling tears,  
Flowing fast through years on years,  
For my sobs within your ears?

When with dolorous moan the billows  
Surge around where, far and wide,  
Leagues on leagues of sea-worn hollows  
Throb with thunders of the tide,  
And the weary waves in breaking  
Fill you, thrill you, as with aching  
Memories of our love of yore,  
Where you pace the sounding shore,  
Hear you not, through roll and roar,  
Soul call soul for evermore?

Mathilde Blind

# Why Will You Haunt Me

Why will you haunt me unawares,  
And walk into my sleep,  
Pacing its shadowy thoroughfares,  
Where long-dried perfume scents the airs,  
While ghosts of sorrow creep,  
Where on Hope's ruined altar-stairs,  
With ineffectual beams,  
The Moon of Memory coldly glares  
Upon the land of dreams?

My yearning eyes were fain to look  
Upon your hidden face;  
Their love, alas! you could not brook,  
But in your own you mutely took  
My hand, and for a space  
You wrung it till I throbbed and shook,  
And woke with wildest moan  
And wet face channeled like a brook  
With your tears or my own.

Mathilde Blind

# Winding All My Life About Thee

Winding all my life about thee,  
Let me lay my lips on thine;  
What is all the world without thee,  
Mine --oh mine!

Let me press my heart out on thee,  
Grape of life's most fiery vine,  
Spilling sacramental on thee  
Love's red wine.

Let thy strong eyes yearning o'er me  
Draw me with their force divine;  
All my soul has gone before me  
Clasping thine.

Irresistibly I follow,  
As whenever we may run  
Runs our shadow, as the swallow  
Seeks the sun.

Yea, I tremble, swoon, surrender  
All my spirit to thy sway,  
As a star is drowned in splendour  
Of the day.

Mathilde Blind

# Yea, The Roses Are Still On Fire

Yea, the roses are still on fire  
With the bygone heat of July,  
Though the least little wind drifting by  
Shake a rose-leaf or two from the brier,  
Be it never so soft a sigh.

Ember of love still glows and lingers  
Deep at the red heart's smouldering core;  
With the sudden passionate throb of yore  
We shook as our eyes and clinging fingers  
Met once only to meet no more.

Mathilde Blind

# You Make The Sunshine Of My Heart

You make the sunshine of my heart  
And its tempestuous shower;  
Sometimes the thought of you is like  
A lilac bush in flower,  
Yea, honey-sweet as hives in May.  
And then the pang of it will strike  
My bosom with a fiery smart,  
As though love's deeply planted dart  
Drained all its life away.

My thoughts hum round you, Dear, like bees  
About a bank of thyme,  
Or round the yellow blossoms of  
The heavy-scented lime.  
Ah, sweeter you than honeydew,  
Yet dark the ways of love,  
For it has robbed my soul of peace,  
And marred my life and turned heart's-ease  
Into funereal rue.

Mathilde Blind

# Your Looks Have Touched My Soul

Your looks have touched my soul with bright  
Ineffable emotion;  
As moonbeams on a stormy night  
Illumine with transitory light  
A seagull on her lonely flight  
Across the lonely ocean.

Fluttering from out the gloom and roar,  
On fitful wing she flies,  
Moon-white above the moon-washed shore;  
Then, drowned in darkness as before,  
She's lost, as I when lit no more  
By your beloved eyes.

Mathilde Blind