

Classic Poetry Series

**Arthur Henry Adams**  
**- poems -**

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# Arthur Henry Adams(6 December 1872 – 4 March 1936)

Arthur Henry Adams was a journalist and author. He started his career in New Zealand, though he spent most of it in Australia, and for a short time resided in China and London.

## <b>Biography</b>

Arthur Henry Adams was born in Lawrence, Otago, New Zealand, on 6 June 1872, the son of Eleanor Sarah Gillon and her husband, Charles William Adams, a surveyor and a talented astronomer.

Arthur attended Otago Boys' High School in Dunedin then onto the University of Otago, where he graduated BA in 1894. Although his major study was law, he was more interested in literature, and in 1893 supplied the composer Alfred Hill with a comic opera libretto, 'The whipping boy'. (This was never performed.) Another collaboration with Hill was the cantata Time's great monotone (1894).

In 1895 Adams abandoned law to become a journalist and joined the Wellington Evening Post , which was edited by his uncle E. T. Gillon. In the same year, he and Hill worked on a cantata, Hinemoa. Adams's text was an essential contribution to the work's popular success. In 1898, aged 26, he moved to Australia for the first time. For most of his life Sydney was to be his home. There he worked on the libretto of the comic opera Tapu , which - again with music by Hill - was a success on its production in Wellington in 1903 despite some inadequacies in the dialogue.

His first volume of poems, Maoriland, and other verses , was published in Sydney in 1899. It was welcomed by critics and some of its verses have been frequently anthologised. Adams went to China in 1900 to cover the Boxer rebellion for the Sydney Morning Herald. He took advantage of this experience to make a lecture tour of New Zealand in 1901. Like others before and since, he travelled to England hoping to make his name. The three years he spent there seem to have been unhappy, and the poems In London streets (1906) give a negative image of the metropolis.

In 1905 Adams returned to New Zealand to continue his journalistic career at the Evening Post and for a brief time, the New Zealand Times. Then in 1906 he replaced A. G. Stephens as editor of the Red Page in the Sydney Bulletin. This

appointment was a sign of literary success. Stephens had long been feared and respected as the arbiter of literary taste among Australian writers. The Red Page (named for the colour of the journal's cover, on the inside of which it appeared) was four long columns of literary gossip, criticism and comment. Adams was now established as a leading figure in Sydney life.

On 30 September 1908 at Neutral Bay, Sydney, he married Lilian Grace Paton. The same year the first of a series of his comedies for the theatre had been performed. The tame cat was set in London, where a New Zealander tries to persuade a friend to return to the antipodes. One critic complained of the lack of action in the play but praised its sparkling dialogue. This judgement is in keeping with later praise of Adams's skill with words rather than with larger structures. In 1909 Adams left the Bulletin to take over the editorship of the literary magazine the Lone Hand , which published many well-known Australian writers. In 1911 he became editor of the Sydney Sun and returned to the Bulletin six years later.

In 1913 Adams published his Collected verses , in which he announced his abandonment of poetry. In fact he had already published his most successful novel, Tussock Land , in London in 1904. It is the story of a young man who leaves his New Zealand home to seek artistic success in Australia but is constantly tortured by memories of the country and the young Maori woman he left behind. On returning to New Zealand he and Aroha are reconciled. This novel, with its powerful word-pictures of New Zealand landscapes and Sydney streets, is an important document of a man losing and recovering his sense of belonging to New Zealand.

Adams never forgot his origins and was always viewed by his Australian colleagues as a transplanted New Zealander. He continued to live in Australia, however, and published a number of other novels: Galahad Jones (1910) , A touch of fantasy (1912) , Grocer Greatheart (1915) , The Australians (1920) , and the autobiographical A man's life (1929) . These are marked by a lively sense of humour, an ironic view of the gap between sexual passion and romantic idealism, and of a similar gap between the creative urge and the banality of daily life. They are notable for their overall kind-heartedness of tone. Adams also published four novels under the pseudonym James James, light-heartedly ironic treatments of married life.

Adams himself was devoted to his wife and family. He was described as 'tall and thin, good-looking in a dark, sallow way', and evidently irritated people with his vanity while charming them with his natural talents and devotion to the literary life. He was an ardent advocate of Australian drama, and for over 20 years exerted considerable influence on Australian literature as journalist and critic. As

a poet, playwright and novelist, for a time he was 'a fashion and a force. Adams died in Sydney on 4 March 1936. He was survived by his wife, two daughters and a son.

# A Child

Little wisp of wonderment,  
All the world your doll!  
Hugging it in huge content,  
Little wisp of wonderment;  
Life has only laughter sent—  
Everything is droll:  
Little wisp of wonderment,  
All the world your doll.

Arthur Henry Adams

# A Pair Of Lovers In The Street

A PAIR of lovers in the street!  
I dare not mock: with reverence meet  
My unforgetting heart I cheat.

Ah, God, spare me—so soon again  
At the barred door to beat in vain,  
And find their dalliance such fierce pain!

I, yearning up from Hell's abyss,  
See, dreaming through their worlds of bliss,  
This Dante and his Beatrice!

For these the distant goal have won  
For which God made the plasm and sun;  
His patient labouring is done.

For these each Spring has been a bride,  
And lonely worlds were spawned and died.  
Chaos for them in birth-throes cried.

Far out in seas of Space forlorn  
This crescent wave was slowly born  
That thunders on the beach of morn.

Ah, they, so soon to be meshed in  
The web of splendour, silken-thin,  
The nebulae were set to spin!

Up the long path from joy to joy  
Love led the way. Can aught destroy  
The task that was the stars' employ?

Their ecstasy to God is more  
Than Lucifer at Heaven's door  
Entreating pardon for his war.

These two are gods, for, by love swayed,  
They have God's special task essayed,  
And new worlds for their gladness made.

This little hour so lightly given  
Makes earth too mean a place to live in,  
And broken toys His Hell and Heaven.

All Time, expectant of their bliss,  
Hangs fearful. Space through her abyss  
Shudders if they this hour should miss.

For if their kiss they went without,  
The stars would be a raining rout,  
And time in anguish flicker out.

About God's room from star to sun  
A stealthy slippered Thing would run,  
Quenching cold tapers one by one.

But they have kissed. Eternity,  
Like a great clock, beats steadily  
For these mazed fools—but not for me!

Of God's wide universe the strands  
They hold within their clinging hands;  
The stars march on at their commands.

So from this moment blossom free  
New universes tirelessly—  
Aeons of unguessed ecstasy!

But I can only bow and beat  
Vain hands about God's mercy-seat,  
And, still remembering, still entreat.

Surely my penance is complete!  
The rack turns grimly when I meet  
A pair of lovers on the street

Arthur Henry Adams

# A Portrait

HER glance is equable, serene;  
She looks at life with level brow;  
She strides through circumstance—a queen!  
To compromise she cannot bow—  
Even to love she will not lean!  
Not hers the head that, like a flower,  
Trembles upon a swaying stem;  
Her neck is firm-curved as a tower,  
And on her brow for diadem  
Shine steadfastness and peace and power.  
She wills no limits to her scope;  
Her head imperiously borne  
Above her gradual bosom's slope;  
Her chin a dainty-moulded scorn,  
Her eyes a deep, untarnished hope.  
By gusts of passion undistressed,  
She spurs not on a panting pulse;  
Throned in her womanhood, at rest,  
No ripples of her moods convulse  
The tidal swayings of her breast.  
She is no fevered Sex to flush—  
A woman-weakness that should yield,  
A fruit for love to clench and crush,  
A fragile warmth that arms should shield,  
A whisper that a kiss should hush!

Yet with the tears her soul has shed  
Her innocence is seared within;  
Her heart is not a white thing dead:  
She lifted dauntless eyes to Sin,  
And from her splendid frown he fled!  
But when love breathless to her trips  
And joy within her laughs elate,  
Her soul to no surrender slips—  
She meets the kiss that crowns her mate  
With vivid eyes and virile lips!

Arthur Henry Adams



# A Question

AND so in the death-darkened chamber they met,  
The woman that once he had loved and the one he loved yet—  
The wife who had warped his desire and the woman he could not forget.  
They stood by the bier where between them he slept,  
And the love he had lost in his wife to her swimming eyes leapt;  
But the woman his life had belonged to—his paramour—spoke not nor wept.  
It was only a story of sated desire—  
Of a love merely sensual burnt to an ash by its fire,  
And a husband who turned to a more luscious love that was his for the hire.  
All had sinned. For the husband had killed by his clutch,  
Rough-handed, the fruit of a love that had dropped at his touch.  
One woman's great sin was not loving, his wife's was in loving too much.

And so he had died; it was over at last;  
And across him the two women looked at each other aghast—  
Across his cold corse, and across the cold corse of the loathsome dead Past!  
Then the smouldering love of the wife leapt to flame,  
And she poured forth her kisses upon him, and called on his name.  
But the other said "No, he is nothing to you; soul and body I claim!"  
They looked at each other awhile. Said the wife wearily,  
"He is mine; for I loved him, and ever shall love him; let be!"  
But the other sneered, "No, he is mine, and mine only, because he loved me!"  
Then the two laid their hands on the body between;  
And fought for it, wife against paramour, fiercely, unseen—  
For the body diseased and polluted, as ever his spirit had been.  
And this is a question for answer in Hell:  
To which of the two did his spirit belong, can you tell?  
Think, was it the woman he loved, or the one who had loved him too well?

Arthur Henry Adams

# A Song Of Failure

HERE is my hand to you, brother,  
You of the ruck who have failed  
I, too, am only another  
Fighter who faltered and quailed.  
Now with my courage for token  
Here to grim Fate I give tithe;  
I, too, am beaten and broken,  
Lying, the swath of the scythe!  
We to the conquerors' seeming  
Crouch, an incongruous horde—  
Fighters, enmeshed in their dreaming,  
Dreamers who gird on the sword,  
Weaklings with splendid ambitions,  
Heroes who learnt to succumb,  
Poets a-swoon in their visions,  
Singers with ecstasy dumb.  
Failed! So we cast off our burden,  
Done with our doubts and our fears:  
These we have won for our guerdon—  
Pity and tears—women's tears!  
You with your conquests unending  
Dwell from a woman apart;  
Only the humble and bending  
Learn the low door to her heart.  
We that lie dumb in your scorning  
Made you the heroes you are,

Built you a road to the morning,  
Taught you to reach for a star:  
We have had sight of the glory,  
Pointed it clear to the blind;  
Yours is the conquerors' story,  
Ours is the vision you find.  
Here is no dread and no grieving;  
Over us hurtles the fray,  
Is yours a Heav'n worth achieving,  
If it be stormed in a day?  
Here is this world we must live in—  
Little to lose or to gain;

More is it worth to have striven  
Than in the end to attain.

Arthur Henry Adams

# A Spring Sonnet

Last night beneath the mockery of the moon  
I heard the sudden startled whisperings  
Of wakened birds settling their restless wings;  
The North-east brought his word of gladness, "Soon!"  
And all the night with wonder was a-swoon.  
A soul had breathed into long-dreaming things;  
Some unseen hand hovered above the strings:  
Some cosmic chord had set the earth in tune.  
And when I rose I saw the Bay arrayed  
In her grey robe against the coming heat.  
A pulse awoke within the stirring street--  
The wattle-gold upon the pavements thrown,  
And through the quiet of the colonnade  
The smoky perfume of boronia blown.

Arthur Henry Adams

# A Woman's Farewell

SO with this farewell kiss I taste at last  
The all of life; the Future and the Past  
Upon your dear lips dwell.  
Love will not come again, though I implore;  
And in my heart a twilight evermore—  
Farewell!

A man's heart is so wide that I was wrong  
To dream that I could fill it with the song  
A woman loves so well;  
A woman's heart is narrow, but I filled  
Mine brimming with your kisses—none was spilled—  
Farewell!

So fierce your love was, I was half-afraid.  
The roses blossom and the roses fade;  
The withered petals tell!  
So high into your heart you lifted me,  
So far I have to fall, since it must be  
Farewell!

Now all the world I fashioned round me falls;  
And from the past one memory calls and calls,  
Grieving, and like a knell;  
Now all the days like drear regrets shall seem,  
And all the nights—the nights! ..I dare not dream!  
Farewell!

But what if I can hold you, hold you yet  
Till all else but my lips you must forget:  
If love could but compel!  
But all the mystic hopes our hearts have heard  
Must droop and wither to this wistful word—  
Farewell!

My love was like a little child to me;  
Now in my heart 't is crying piteously—  
Hush, dear! all will be well!  
My lips on yours for ever! Say again  
You love me—though it be not true—and then—  
Farewell!

Arthur Henry Adams

## A.D. 19—?

AS in some quiet city bathed in sleep,  
Where like a kiss the twilight lingereth,  
When suddenly the earth stirs far beneath—  
Just moves, then pauses—and a silence deep  
Falls on all ere the second shock should sweep  
Spire, column, pinnacle to shapeless death!  
And white face peers at white face, and no breath  
Is drawn, and every heart forgets to leap!  
So now across this quiet, dreaming world  
The first faint shock has thrilled; and men, aghast,  
Wait for the second, whose blind forces pent  
Shall in one last convulsion find their vent;  
And all the builded fabrics of the past  
Shall be in ruins on their builders hurled.

Arthur Henry Adams

# After Long Years

"AND have I changed?" she asked, and as she spoke  
The old smile o'er her pale face bravely broke,  
And in her eyes dead worlds of pathos woke.

Changed? When I knew again the ghost of each  
Remembered trick of gesture, manner, speech,  
And felt the beauty that no years could reach!

"I will go back with you without regret,  
For not one word you spoke I dare forget,  
And with each kiss of yours I tremble yet!"

"No, you have taken your way; I took mine:  
A word may not our severed lives entwine,  
Nor will a kiss the shattered years combine!"

She put her arms around me, held me near;  
Then forward to her lonely path and drear  
She turned her sad, wan face, without a tear.

Arthur Henry Adams



## Afterwards

NOW that our pathways sever here,  
And mine slopes down across the night,  
Whence I shall see you burning clear  
A beacon on the mountain-height—  
Now that our pathways sever here,  
I have no kiss, I have no tear.

Your eyes my lonely world have lit  
With sunset peace that lingers yet,  
And on my gladdened heart is writ  
No shade of blame, and no regret.  
Your eyes my sombre world have lit,  
And made a new world out of it.

Your soul is woven, strand and strand,  
With mine across the woof of Time;  
Your fingers trickle from my hand—  
Yet where you go my soul shall climb.  
Our souls are woven, strand with strand;  
Think you the pattern was not planned?

Love finds a solace in regret—  
With the rich past I am content  
You dare not ask me to forget;  
With memories I am opulent.  
Love finds this solace in regret:  
What solace if we had not met?

The richest guerdon of this earth  
You gave me like a flower to wear;  
My heart is dowered beyond dearth,  
A treasure through the dark I bear—  
The richest guerdon of this earth,  
The knowledge of one woman's worth.

The flower of your dear love is dead;  
But Springs come ever with the years:  
I asked you for your heart: instead  
You gave me more, you gave your tears!  
The blossom of your love is dead;  
But all its fragrance is not fled.

Our ways lie solitary, long,  
And we have done with halt and rest;

On to the goal the others throng,  
No longer may we fare abreast.  
Our ways lie solitary, long,  
Yet through my sorrow laughs this song:—  
Our pathways only now begin  
To close the circle in, complete,  
Until our purpose we shall win,  
Until again, far off, we meet.  
Our pathways only now begin  
To narrow, narrow, narrow in!

The race is ready to be run,  
But clear and certain is our quest;  
Your heart the prize that will be won.  
This dallying was but a test  
To try us ere the race be run.  
Now—now the journey is begun!  
Chance is not chance—but very wise.  
I might have missed you blindly. Lo,  
The countersign! Without disguise,  
The soul I seek at last I know.  
Chance is not chance—but very wise.  
We part, that we may recognise.

Arthur Henry Adams

# And Yet

THEY drew him from the darkened room,  
Where, swooning in a peace profound,  
Beneath a heavy fragrance drowned  
Her grey form glimmered in the gloom.  
Death smoothed from her each sordid trace  
Of Life; at last he read the scroll;  
For all the meaning of her soul  
Flowered upon her perfect face.  
"In other worlds her soul finds scope;  
Her spirit lives; she is not dead,"  
In his dulled ear they said and said,  
Suave-murmuring the ancient Hope.  
"You loved her; she was worthy love.  
Think you her spheral soul can cease?  
Nay, she has ripened to release  
From this bare earth, and waits above."  
His brain their clamour heard aloof;  
He, too, had said the self-same thing;  
But now his heart was quivering  
For more than comfort—parched for proof.  
He put them from him. "Let me be;  
You proffer in my bitter need  
The coward comfort of a creed  
That tears her soul apart from me.

"She waits in no drear Heaven afar.  
Her woman's soul in all its worth,  
Yearning for me, for homely earth,  
No gates of beaten gold could bar.  
"No, she is near me, ever close;  
One with the world, but free again;  
One with the breezes and the rain;  
One with the mountain and the rose.  
"She knows me not; her voice is dumb;  
But aching through the twilight peers,  
And, unremembering, yet with tears,  
She strives to say she cannot come.  
"Yes, she is changed, but not destroyed;  
The words that were her soul are hushed;

The gem that was her heart is crushed—  
Its fragments white stars in the void.

“And I shall see her in disguise;  
In the grey vistas of the street  
A face that hints of her I meet;  
Whispers her soul from alien eyes.

“In Time's great garden, spring on spring,  
The blossoms glow; then at a breath  
Their petals flutter down to death—  
Ah love, how brief your blossoming!

“Death has but severed part from part.  
Borne on an ever-moving air  
The fragrance of her life somewhere  
Freshens some lonely wistful heart!

“No word of hers can God forget;  
Her laughter Time dare not disperse;  
It shakes the tense-strung universe,  
And with the chord it trembles yet.

“Each mood of hers, each fancy slight,  
In deep pulsations, ring on ring,  
Dilating, ever-widening,  
Ripples across the outer night.

“Her life with deathless charm was fraught,  
And God with smiles remembers now  
The puzzled pucker of her brow  
Ruffled with sudden gusts of thought.

“And in His cosmic memory wise  
Still live her subtle features thin,  
Her dear iconoclastic chin,  
The grave enigma of her eyes.

“And if beyond she might draw breath.  
And know that I was not with her,  
The wistful eyes of her despair  
Would be more desolate than death.

“But not to meet her in the wide  
Night-spaces I must wander through;  
To kiss the pretty pout I knew,  
And nevermore to hear her chide;

“To speak those childish words that were  
So foolish-sweet, so passionate-wise;

Her subtle fragrance recognise  
And hear the whispers of her hair! ...  
"Her sun has set; but still, sublime,  
She is a star, of God a part;  
She is a petal at the heart  
Of the eternal flower of Time.  
"I triumph so beyond regret,  
I win her immortality:  
Where, Death, your vaunted victory?  
Where, Grave, your sting? And yet—and yet—!"

Arthur Henry Adams

# Antagonists

WHAT though the neutral sea sever us twain?  
In the still night your soul in mine I take;  
Your eyes, hilarious with passion, wake,  
And love's delirium is mine again,  
When all your body's warmth swirled in my brain—  
Your face uplifted like a pallid lake  
Where in my eager lips their thirst could slake,  
With deep-sighed, langourous kisses, keener than pain.  
Then suddenly through passion's rosy mists  
A shudder trickled, like a stream of blood:  
In a grim pause we felt and understood.  
The everlasting war that was our fate—  
The pitiless struggle and primeval hate  
Of old implacable antagonists.

Arthur Henry Adams

## Bayswater.W.

About me leagues of houses lie,  
Above me, grim and straight and high,  
They climb; the terraces lean up  
Like long grey reefs against the sky.

Packed tier on tier the people dwell;  
Each narrow, hollow wall is full;  
And in that hive of honeycomb,  
Remote and high, I have one cell.

And when I turn into my street  
I hear in murmurous retreat  
A tide of noises flowing out --  
The city ebbing from my feet!

And lo! two long straight walls between,  
There dwells a little park serene,  
Where blackened trees and railings hem  
A little handkerchief of green!

Yet I can see across the roof  
The sun, the stars and . . . God! For proof --  
Between the twisting chimney-pots  
A pointing finger, old, aloof!

The traffic that the city rends  
Within my quiet haven ends  
In a deep murmur, or across  
My pool a gentle ripple sends.

A chime upon the silence drab  
Paints music; hooting motors stab  
The pleasant peace; and, far and faint,  
The jangling lyric of the cab!

And when I wander, proud and free,  
Through my domain, unceasingly  
The endless pageant of the shops  
Marches along the street with me.

About me ever blossoming  
Like rich parterres the hoardings fling  
An opulence of hue, and make  
Within my garden endless Spring.

The droning tram-cars spitting light:  
And like great bees in drunken flight  
Burly and laden deep with bloom,  
The 'busses lumbering home at night!

Sometimes an afternoon will fling  
New meaning on each sombre thing,  
And low upon the level roofs  
The sultry sun lies smouldering.

Sometimes the fog -- that faery girl --  
Her veil of wonder will unfurl,  
And crescent gaunt and looming flat  
Are sudden mysteries of pearl!

New miracles the wet streets show;  
On stems of flame the gas-lamps glow.  
I walk upon the wave and see  
Another London drowned below!

And when night comes strange jewels strew  
The winding streets I wander through:  
Like pearls upon a woman's throat  
The street-lamps' swerving avenue!

In every face that passes mine  
Unfathomed epics I divine:  
Each figure on the pavement is  
A vial of untasted wine!

Through lands enchanted wandering,  
To all a splendour seems to cling.  
Lo! from a window-beacon high  
Hope still the Night is questioning!

And so, ere sleep, I lie and mark



Romance's stealthy footsteps. Hark!  
The rhythm of the horse's hoof  
Bears some new drama through the dark!

So in this tall and narrow street  
I lie as in Death's lone retreat  
And hear, loud in the pulse of Life,  
Eternity upon me beat!

Arthur Henry Adams

# Bereft

FOR nine drear nights my darling has been dead;  
And ah, dear God! I cannot dream of her!

Now I shall see her always lying white—  
A frozen flower beneath a snow of flowers,  
Drowned in a sea of fragrance. I shall hear  
In every silence of the coming years  
Only the muffled horror from the room  
Where I had left my little child asleep—  
And found a nameless thing shut in and sealed...  
And I shall never feel her breath that kissed  
Me closer than her lips did; for the thick,  
Dead perfume of slow-drooping flowers has drawn  
A veil across my memory....She is dead;  
For nine drear nights I have not dreamed of her.

When, all a tangle of wee clambering limbs,  
And little gusts of laughter and of tears,  
Sun-flecked and shadow-stricken every hour,  
She played about me, I could lie all night  
And dream of her. She came in wondrous ways,  
Hiding behind the dark to startle me;  
Then leaping down the vistas of the night,  
And yielding all her wistful soul to me  
With kisses tenderer and words more sweet  
Than that mad, random vehemence of love  
She lavished on me through her laughing day.

And now she has been dead nine dreary nights,  
And ah, dear God! I cannot dream of her!

Her idle hoop is hung against the wall,  
And in the dusk her cherished garments seem  
As if still warmed with all her eager life.  
And here the childish story that she wrote  
Herself, and never finished;—how one day  
With puzzled pucker of her brow she stopped  
Mid-sentence! as if God had gravely held  
A finger up to hush her, and she knew  
She was to keep His secrets;—soon, so soon,  
Perhaps He whispered low, she would know all.

And now she has been dead nine long sad nights;

And ah, dear God! I cannot dream of her!  
So I shall see her always lying white—  
A frozen flower beneath a snow of flowers,  
Drowned in a sea of fragrance. Now it seems  
As if the memories I hold of her  
Have shrivelled with the lilies that she loved  
And lay with on her little narrow bed.  
And now she will not murmur through my dreams  
Those faint, strange words that mean so much in dreams,  
And wither with the morn. I lie awake  
And whisper to my hopes, "To-night I'll hear  
Her petulant hands knock at my dreams' shut gate;

And oh, the gladness when I let her in!  
Hush! what a patter of impatient feet  
Down the long staircase of the stars!" And then  
I sleep, and with an endless weariness  
I grope among the spaces of the dark  
For rhythm of her unresting feet, or touch  
Of her caressing fingers, or the kiss  
And whisper of her little self-willed curls;  
But never lifts her laugh across the dark,  
And never may I smooth her wilful curls,  
And when I wake again I see her yet,  
So pitifully thin and chill and straight,  
Who used to be all curves—a living flame!  
For nine drear nights my darling has been dead,  
And till I die I cannot dream of her.  
Perhaps she aches to come, shut in her grave—  
So deep to dig to hide that tender form!  
Dear God! she is too frail and weak to climb  
The horror of those walls that hedge her in;  
And when you call her to you let me be  
Close by her side to lift her little feet  
Up to the grass and sunshine of this world,  
That lacking her is now so desolate.  
So I have called and called...she does not come.  
And yet I know the way into my heart  
She has not quite forgotten...She does not come.  
And now for nine drear nights she has been dead;  
And ah, dear God! I cannot dream of her!

Arthur Henry Adams

# Blossom

A LONE rose in a garden burned—a quivering flame,  
But yesterday blindly from out the bud it came;  
And now an envious wind with itching fingers leant  
And touched its lingering beauty, and the petals went  
Upon the twilight tossing swift,  
Like little dusky boats adrift.

Then in the birth and doom of that brief rose I saw  
The long unrolling of creation's one vast law.  
All things were blossom, and God thrilled at that flower's birth  
As when from night-sheathed chaos broke this blossom-earth.  
For God no large or little knows—  
A universe slept in the rose.

The scattered star-mist, that dishevelled trails through Space,  
Hears the low whisper of the Spring, and to its place  
Whirls vastly, and its bulk with aching life is torn,  
And with a pang that shakes all Space a sun is born  
But God on it bestows the heed  
He gives to any wayside weed.

About it bloom the planets, like a pageantry  
Of rival blossoms in a garden-galaxy.  
They break and wane and wither, till upon some earth,

Faded and chill and shrunken, a pallid thing has birth;  
And on a world weary with strife  
Creeps forth the efflorescence Life.

Strange vegetations fiercely bloom and fall from sight;  
Monsters uncouth are spawned, and sink into the night;  
Huge mountains blossom white beneath the ocean spray;  
Vast tropics glow where once the glacier-ice held sway—  
Till, like a lichen on the stone,  
Comes Man, bearing a soul unknown.

The lichen spreads, and civilisations grow forlorn,  
Bloom once, and, dying, blight the place where they were born.  
Incomparable, unique, each in lone splendour burns;  
Each bears one perfect grace that nevermore returns.

Ah! gone is sculptured Egypt—gone  
The blossom that was Babylon!

The lotus of the East, the Grecian lily cold—  
Each blossoms only one new beauty to unfold.

And this rich rose, the West, that opens now so vast,  
Shall tell its message, then upon the night be cast.  
But still God scatters through the gloom  
New seeds whence nobler flowers shall bloom.

And æons rise and fade, and still the petal-years  
Fall from the trembling stem of Time, that proudly rears  
Space, like the last huge blossom of the far-thrown seed;  
And Space itself shall wither like a trampled weed.  
But in the void the Sower still  
Scatters new seed, until—until...

Arthur Henry Adams

# Blossom Of Life

SO now she lies silent and sweet  
With white flowers at her head and feet,  
And she, the fairest flower, between.  
The bud that with her bosom's swell  
In dear delight once rose and fell  
Now wafts her all it has to tell,  
And wonders why she sleeps serene.  
And yet in life how small a part,  
With pretty face and petty heart,  
She played! And in that form so fair  
There never dwelt a deep desire,  
Her bosom never thrilled a-fire:  
She loved too lightly e'en to tire—  
And all my heart was meant for her.  
Was there a soul within those eyes  
That seemed to speak my dear surmise,  
That with no tears were ever wet?  
Through life she laughed her careless way,  
She knew not sorrow or dismay—  
And I have sorrowed day by day,  
While those pale lips are smiling yet!  
And so she lies on her small bed,  
With white flowers at her feet and head,  
And she, the fairest flower between!

In life how false the little rôle —  
The peerless face, the paltry soul!  
But she is perfect now—the whole  
Pale blossom of the Might-Have-Been.

Arthur Henry Adams

## China 1899

She lies, a grave disdain all her defence,  
Too imperturbable for scorn. She hears  
Only the murmur of the flowing years  
That thunder slowly on her shores immense  
And ebb away in moaning impotence.  
Giants enduring, she and Time are peers--  
Her dream-hazed eyes knowing no hopes, no tears,  
Her glance a langour-lidded insolence.  
And though the rabble of the restless West  
In her deserted courts set their rash sway,  
She heeds them not; as when the sun, withdrawn  
From his untarnished sky, knows it distressed  
By storm of weakling stars, that he at dawn  
Will wither with one ruthless glance away.

Arthur Henry Adams



# Civilisation

One moment mankind rides the crested wave,  
A moment glorious, beyond recall;  
And then the wave, with slow and massive fall,  
Obliterates the beauty that it gave.  
When discrowned king and manumitted slave  
Are free and equal to be slaves of all,  
Democracies in their wide freedom brawl,  
And go down shouting to a common grave.  
So one by one the petals of the rose  
Shrivel and fade, and all its splendour goes  
Back to the earth; and in her arms embraced  
Through wintry centuries the dead seeds sleep  
Till spring comes troubling them, and they unleap,  
Once more their petals on the world to waste.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Dawn

Far in the Eastern passage-way a sudden light;  
The stone that blocked the sepulchre is backward rolled;  
And down into the fœtid, stifling vault of Night  
The naked corpse of Dawn is lowered, grey and cold.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Epitaph

The Earth Speaks:

HUSH! he drowns, drowns deep,  
While my quiet arms I keep  
Close about him in his sleep.  
Once he glanced at me aghast,  
Shuddered from my kiss, and passed—  
But I hold him here at last.  
He had frenzied thoughts of fame,  
Piteous strivings for a name—  
But I called him, and he came.  
Called him with the mother-call  
That shall on the weary fall,  
Whispering "Home" to all, to all.  
Fair white skin he looked upon;  
Eyes in his with passion shone;  
But my patient love has won.  
There was one he deemed to wed;  
But he faltered, came instead  
To my narrow bridal bed.  
Vehement his veins and wild—  
Now a dreaming, glad-eyed child  
To my kisses reconciled.  
Tender heart and turbulent,  
I and he together pent  
In an æon of content!

Heaven holds for him no prize:  
Stirless, nested here he lies  
In his narrow Paradise.  
When his trump God's Angel blows,  
When he shudders, wakens, knows,  
I shall hold him close, so close!  
He will feel life's aching pain,  
Turn his lips to me, and then  
Sink to dreamless sleep again.  
So for aye my love I keep  
Here upon my breast asleep—  
Hush!...he drowns...drowns...deep.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Fancies

From Wellington Terrace.

WHITE stars above, red stars beneath,  
And o'er the bay the brooding hills:  
No murmur, save a quiet breath  
That faintly through the darkness thrills,  
The bay with shadowed lights a-blur;  
On high a glow that waves and wanes;  
And through the city here and there  
The red-lit streets—like living veins!

Arthur Henry Adams

# Fleet Street

BENEATH this narrow jostling street,  
Unruffled by the noise of feet,  
Like a slow organ-note I hear  
The pulses of the great world beat.

Unseen beneath the city's show  
Through this aorta ever flow  
The currents of the universe—  
A thousand pulses throbbing low!

Unheard beneath the pavement's din  
Unknown magicians sit within  
Dim caves, and weave life into words  
On patient looms that spin and spin.

There, uninspired, yet with the dower  
Of mightier mechanic power,  
Some bent, obscure Euripides  
Builds the loud drama of the hour!

There, from the gaping presses hurled,  
A thousand voices, passion-whirled,  
With throats of steel vociferate  
The incessant story of the world!

So through this artery from age  
To age the tides of passion rage,  
The swift historians of each day  
Flinging a world upon a page!

And then I pause and gaze my fill  
Where cataracts of traffic spill  
Their foam into the Circus. Lo!  
Look up, the crown on Ludgate Hill!

Remote from all the city's moods,  
In high, untroubled solitudes,  
Like an old Buddha swathed in dream,  
St. Paul's above the city broods!

Arthur Henry Adams

# Grey Eyes

SHE glanced across the path to me,  
Grey eyes!  
Her looks were kisses plain to see.  
I gave her glances back to her—  
Glad eyes!  
She saw the lifting of despair.  
From memory a face looked out,  
Dim eyes!  
No years could sour that love to doubt.  
My soul would nevermore be lone—  
Bride's eyes!  
Hearts still were waiting for my own.  
Our souls uncurtained then, perchance—  
Deep eyes!  
Each built an epoch in a glance.  
Out of her fellowship so free  
Light eyes!  
She gave some gladness unto me.  
And I gave? As we turned apart—  
Dead eyes!  
I saw the shudder in her heart.

Arthur Henry Adams



# In Hyde Park

The white mist walks between the trees  
In silver gown;  
Her mystic floating draperies  
The branches drown;  
And lurking there with eager leer  
And wonder new,  
The lamps inquisitively peer  
Their fingers through.

The world sighs wearily, with pain  
Drawing tired breath;  
The stars are like a silver rain;  
And down beneath  
On Night's smooth garment running o'er  
In sullen flood,  
The city, like a festering sore,  
Oozes warm blood.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Just A Woman

YOU ask me why I love her;  
Not a charm can you discover!  
Would you see  
The heart that a shut rose is,  
And whose beauty ne'er uncloses  
Save for me?

She is not rich or clever,  
But her speeches thrill me ever,  
And with bliss  
My heart her whisper flutters,  
Though the wisest word she utters  
Is a kiss.

All evil things have shunned her,  
And with a wide-eyed wonder  
Is she tasked,  
What lavish god has given  
In her earth so much of heaven  
All unasked?

She has no gifts or graces,  
But the gladness in her face is  
Sought of kings;  
She cannot chant a measure,  
But her heart with a grave pleasure  
Ever sings.

Her gown is of the whitest  
But the hem is soiled the slightest:  
Little worth,  
She has no wings to fly with,  
And she prefers to hie with  
Me on earth.

There is no hint of heaven  
Or glimpse of deep thought even  
In her eyes;  
She is warm and she is human,  
Just a weak and wilful woman—  
Not too wise.

Her thousand beauties singing,  
I have not said how clinging

Are her arms;  
But, not loved and not the lover  
Dare you ever hope discover  
Half her charms?

Arthur Henry Adams

# King Street

A morn, a sallow lamp-lit morn,  
A dawn that never breaks to day!  
Old, old the faces, and forlorn;  
The hearts look out, so seared, so grey!  
It is as if some upturned stone  
Had flung to light a vermin rout—  
For things misfeatured, souls unknown,  
Stagger in blind amaze about.

Along their gleaming lines of light  
The charging trams go, head to ground;  
Out from the drifting pathways, white  
The faces flash—like faces drowned!  
And there with painted features drear,  
And eyes whose pathos still is sweet,  
The hunted hunters prowl and peer—  
Their lair the long, slow-surgin' street.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Lament

PEACE, your little child is dead:  
Peace, I cannot weep with you;  
I have no more tears to shed;  
I have mourned my baby too—  
I, that ne'er was wooed or wed.

Love has looked within your eyes,  
Love has filled your hungry heart;  
You have borne the babe, your prize;  
You have blossomed, done your part,  
Though the flower faded lies.

But to me was love denied—  
God had said it might not be;  
Still my hungry hopes abide;  
All the motherhood in me  
Aches—and starves, unsatisfied.

How my soul has yearned for thee,  
Sweet, sweet unborn child of mine!  
How thy life would tenderly  
Round thy mother's life entwine—  
Hope of hopes that may not be.

How thy hands would pluck my breast!  
I have felt them o'er and o'er,  
And thy soft, sweet skin caressed,  
Baby mine I never bore!  
Did I dream so?—dreams are best.

You have nothing now to fear,  
Mother; you have fondled him,  
Held his pretty face so near,  
Laid your lips to each soft limb—  
He is dead, but he was dear.

You have something you may mourn,  
Some sweet memory to kiss;  
I am lonelier, more forlorn;  
God has left me only this—  
My sweet babe that was not born.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Love And Life

I.

AS some faint wisp of fragrance, floating wide—  
A pennant-perfume on the evening air—  
From a walled garden, flower-filled and fair,  
To drape a sudden beauty long denied  
Upon life's highway desolate and dried—  
So come you to me, as I, unaware,  
Bend my strict eyes upon my pathway bare;  
But at your presence straight I turn aside,  
And passing in the garden see uncurled  
The heart of hidden beauty in the world,  
And love as life's one blossom is revealed.  
My backward glance your floating tresses blind,  
About my struggling hopes your white arms wind,  
And I have yielded—but how sweet to yield!

II.

Yet, in the prison of the garden bound,  
The sluggish perfumes o'er my spirit fall,  
And I lie languid in their sweetness' thrall,  
Beneath the fragrance of much beauty drowned:  
When through the fountain's murmur—lo, a sound  
Insistent and reproachful! O'er the wall  
Drops a faint echo of the Earth's deep call,  
And I leap upright from the rose-strewn ground.  
Outside the bracing wind sings, clean and chill;  
Outside are tasks to do, blows to be struck;  
And I must toil the dreary highway till  
It broadens to the fields of death. Yet, ere  
I leave for aye your perfumed close, I pluck  
A shrivelled blossom that I kiss and wear.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Love Motives

To You.

SO you have come at last!  
And we nestle, each in each,  
As leans the pliant sea in the clean-curved limbs of her lover the beach;  
Merged in each other quite,  
Clinging, as in the tresses of trees dallies the troubadour night;  
Faint as a perfume, soft as wine,  
Yielding as moonlight—mine, all mine—  
So I have found you at last!  
I dreamed; we dare not meet:  
The time is yet too soon;  
Swept with the tumult of perfect love, our souls from this life would swoon—  
For the fusion of our lives  
Is the sole great goal to which the vast creation vaguely drives;  
And only when I kiss your face  
Shall the last great trumpet shatter Space—  
I dreamed; we dare not meet!  
Yet somewhere, hungry-eyed,  
You lie and listen with tears,  
Clogged with the flesh, and dulled with the sodden heritage of the years.  
And I am alien, lone,

Hedged with the palisades of self, shut in—a soul unknown.  
You, fashioned for me from Time's first day,  
I, moulded for you ere that dawn was grey,  
Wait hidden, hungry-eyed!  
I lie in the lonely night;  
And you?—perhaps so near  
That if I should whisper your sweet soul-name you would joyously leap and hear!

And yet perhaps so far,  
Drowned in the cosmic mist beyond the swirl of the farthest star;  
But over the universe yawning between,  
With wistful eyes you listen and lean,  
Alone in the lonely night!  
Perhaps your thirsty arms  
Some stranger youth entwine,  
And you will yield him thin, faint kisses, thinking his lips are mine;  
He thinking that unawares

He has caught, as once in a dream he caught, that miracle-glance of hers.  
The pathos of the thing that seems!  
Each clasping memories, kissing dreams.  
In passionate-thirsty arms!

So you will yearn through life,  
Or maybe you did not wait:  
You married him, and his neutral smile you learnt to sullenly hate;  
Or you have lived a lie,  
And drank the mockery of his lips, believing that he was I.  
You dreamed, content that you loved him true,  
But the soul of your soul was dead to you—  
So I must yearn through life!  
Or, starving and passionate still,  
To your dreams you were bravely true;  
You told the Night your secrets drear, and he laughed back at you;  
And even when you dreamed  
You heard his merciless laughter ring, and you sprang awake and screamed;  
Till Age kissed you with a kiss that sears,  
And you faded and withered with the years,  
Starving and passionate still!  
But, hush! I had almost heard:  
Last night I dreamed your name;  
Like the soft, white tread of a faint, cool cloud to my desolate sky it came;  
Like a moth it drifted away,

And into the flame of the dawn it fluttered, dying into the day.  
Yet the wind in the whispering leaves  
The moan of your sobbing weaves—  
Hush! I had almost heard.  
Yet I should know your face!  
As mine, all mine, I claim  
That coil of hair that over your bosom smoulders— a yellow flame;  
And the cool, dim-curtained eyes,  
The crescent of your imperious chin, and the little moist mouth that cries.  
I have heard through the din of the years  
Your voice, with its tincture of tears—  
Yes, I remember your face!  
Once in the drifting crowd  
I thought I had found a clue—  
A pale face pealed like an organ-note, and yet— oh! my heart—not you!  
She had your look, the same



Ineffable sorrow of glad young eyes; but all the rest was shame.  
Perhaps she saw—for her eyes were wet—  
In me the soul she had one time met  
In eternity's drifting crowd!

Perhaps 't is the desert of years  
That severs each from each,  
And out of the cavernous centuries to each other we blindly reach.  
You blossomed so long ago  
That only the Dawn and the Spring remember, and little, so little, they know!  
You wait on the hill of the first white morn,  
Straining dead eyes to me, unborn,  
Across the desert of years.  
Or when I am dead at last,  
And my sovereignty have won,  
As merged in the dust of the gradual Past, unliving, I live on,  
You will rise with some far-off Spring,  
And back to the drear, dead days that were mine your piteous glance will fling.  
But, hush! I shall come in the rain-kissed night  
And whisper the words of our marriage-rite—  
So I shall find you at last!  
Yet if we met...  
I dreamed; we dare not meet.

Arthur Henry Adams

## Lovers

I thought, because we had been friends so long,  
That I knew all your dear lips dared intend  
Before they dawned to speech. Our thoughts would blend,  
I dreamed, like memories that faintly throng.  
Your voice dwelt in me like an olden song.  
Petal, I thought, from petal I could rend  
The blossom of your soul, and at the end  
Find still the same sweet fragrance. I was wrong.  
Last evening in our eyes love brimmed to birth;  
Our friendship faded, lost in passion's mist.  
We had been strangers only! Here, close-caught  
Against my heart the dim face I had sought  
So long! And now the only thing on earth--  
Your piteous mouth, a-tremble to be kissed!

Arthur Henry Adams

# Lullaby

DAY has fled to the west afar,  
Where no shadows or sorrows are;  
O'er earth's radiant western rim  
God has gathered the day to him.  
Hush! the river of night is here,  
Flowing silently, cool and clear,  
With its mystical thoughts that throng  
And its silences deep as song.

Babe of my bosom, sleep;  
Tender, sweet blossom, sleep!  
Hearts may ache  
While the long hours go creeping;  
Hearts may break  
While my baby is sleeping;  
Never wake,  
Though thy mother is weeping;  
Babe of my bosom, sleep!  
Sleep! the silence is all around,  
Save the sighings that are not sound,  
Where the wind in the branches weaves  
Mystic melodies through the leaves;  
Or the far-away murmurings  
Like the stir of an angel's wings.  
Only night is about us now—  
Child, the earth is as tired as thou.

Babe of my bosom, sleep;  
Tender, sweet blossom, sleep!  
Hearts may ache  
While the long hours go creeping,  
Hearts may break  
While my baby is sleeping:  
Never wake.  
Though thy mother is weeping;  
Babe of my bosom, sleep!

Arthur Henry Adams

# Man And Woman

[ According to Maori mythology, the god Tiki created Man by taking a piece of clay and moistening it with his own blood. Woman was the offspring of a sunbeam and a sylvan echo .]

THUS God made Man to cope with destiny:  
Taking the common clay, God moistened it  
With His red blood; and so for ever lit  
That sombre grossness with divinity.

So Man for ever finds him in the mesh  
Of clogging earth; and though divine hopes thrill  
And flush his leaping heart, it faints, for still  
His dreams are pinioned in the gyves of flesh.

Yet ever God's blood in him courses free,  
And, penetrated with eternal hope,  
Up Evolution's long, uneven slope  
Man lifts him from his sodden ancestry!  
And though his eyes the far goal cannot see,  
And half the terrors of the dark he knows,  
Yet with an inward fire his courage glows;  
He bears the torch of immortality.

But Woman from a memory had birth,  
Into the forest's dignity of shade  
A sudden sunbeam groped—a soft hand laid  
In silent benediction on the earth.

Then filtered through the green a song forlorn  
Of some forgotten bird. Lo! in a mist  
Of love the sunbeam and the echo kissed,  
And Woman—sunlit memory—was born.

So light and melody to her belong—  
The sunlight in the dying echo blurred!  
So Woman came—a vision and a word  
From the unknown—a sunbeam and a song!

So ever through the forest of the years  
Shall Man pursue and still pursue the gleam  
That wavers and is gone; and through his dream  
The fainting echo of a song he hears.

And when at last his weary feet are led  
Into the sacred glade, and she stands there,  
He takes her close—all song and sunlit hair:

The gleam has faded and the song has fled!  
And though with blinded eyes he cannot see,  
She haunts him like a word that he knows not—  
That is not quite remembered, nor forgot—  
Some thought that hovers near a memory.  
As out from Heaven she leans, on earth there falls  
The sunbeam of her hair, golden and fine;  
And drops an echo of a voice divine—  
A voice that ever vainly calls and calls!

And though she spill a splendour and a fire  
Upon the dark, her glory is unknown;  
Behind the screen of self she dwells alone  
She cannot come as close as her desire.  
So ever like a pale moon drowned in mist  
Her face is vague—a barrier intervenes;  
And ever from her loneliness she leans,  
With waiting eyes, all-wistful to be kissed!

Arthur Henry Adams

# Maoriland

MAORILAND, my mother!

Holds the earth so fair another?

O, my land of the moa and Maori ,  
Garlanded grand with your forests of kauri ,  
Lone you stand, only beauty your dowry ,  
Maoriland, my mother!

Older poets sing their frozen  
England in her mists enshrouded;  
Newer lands my Muse has chosen,  
'Neath a Southern sky unclouded;  
Set, a solitary gem,  
In Pacific's diadem.

Land of rugged white-clad ranges,  
Standing proud, impassive, lonely;  
Ice and snow, where never change is,  
Save the mighty motion only  
Where through valleys seared and deep  
Slow the serpent glaciers creep.

Land of silent lakes that nestle  
Deep as night, girt round with forest;  
Water never cut by vessel,  
In whose mirror evermore rest  
Green-wrapt mountain-side and peak,  
Reddened by the sunset's streak.

Land of forests richly sweeping,  
By the rata's red fire spangled;  
Where at noonday night is sleeping,  
Where, beneath the creepers tangled,  
Come the tui's liquid calls  
And the splash of waterfalls.

Land where fire from Earth's deep centre  
Fights for breath in anguish furied,  
Till she from the weight that pent her  
Flings her flames out fiercely lurid;  
Where the geysers hiss and seethe,  
And the rocks groan far beneath.

Land of tussocked plain extending  
In the distant blue to mingle,

Where wide rivers sigh unending  
Over weary wastes of shingle;  
Cold as moonlight is their flow  
From the glacier-ice and snow.  
Land where torrents pause to dally  
'Neath the toi's floating feather,  
Where the flax-blades in the valley  
Whisper stealthily together,  
And within the cabbage-trees  
Hides the dying evening breeze.

Land where all winds whisper one word,  
"Death!"—though skies are fair above her.  
Newer nations white press onward:  
Her brown warriors' fight is over—  
One by one they yield their place,  
Peace-slain chieftains of her race.  
Land where faces find no furrow,  
With the flush of life elated;  
Where no grief is, save the sorrow  
Of a pleasure that is sated;  
Land of children lithe and slim,  
Fresh of face and long of limb.  
Land of fair enwreathèd cities,  
Wide towns that the green bush merge in;  
Land whose history unwrit is—  
Memory hath no chaster virgin!  
Land that is a starting place  
For a newer, nobler race.  
Maoriland, my mother!  
Holds the Earth so fair another?  
O, my land of the moa and Maori ,  
Garlanded grand with your rata and kauri ,  
Lone you stand, only beauty your dowry ,  
Maoriland, my mother!

Arthur Henry Adams

## Morning Peace

THE sudden sunbeams slant between the trees  
Like solid bars of silver. moonlight kissed,  
And strike the supine shadows where they rest  
Stretched sleeping; while a timid, new-born Breeze  
Stirs through the grasses, petulant—her eyes  
Half-blinded by the clinging scarves of mist:  
Her robes, that tangled through the grasses twist,  
Weave as she moves sweet whispered melodies.

O may it be a morn like this, when slow  
From a dark world beneath my soul shall go  
Through the wet grasses of a purple plain,  
Still stretching broader in the cool, grey glow  
Of morning twllight: then my soul shall know  
That life and love are lost—and found again!

Arthur Henry Adams



# My Land

A NEW land, like a stainless flower set  
In the green foliage of the waving sea;  
Or like a maiden whose fair heart is free,  
Whose honest eyes with no sad tears are wet,  
Whose bosom has no passion to forget,  
But thrills and lifts exuberant, as she  
Voices some sudden-flooding melody!  
A land of strength, life, vigour, youth—and yet  
An old land, grey as I, her child, am grey;  
Filled with the whispers of old thoughts that stir  
And wake, like shadows of the past that play  
Deep in the beauty of a child's grave eyes,  
And show beneath life's gladness glancing there  
The pathos of a hundred histories.

Arthur Henry Adams

# My Love

SHE has tender eyes that tell  
All her prim, set lips suppress—  
Daring thoughts that ever dwell  
Prisoned in her bashfulness;  
Hints of sudden tenderness  
That within her breast rebel.  
Till her bosom's fall and swell  
Tell her meaning all too well,  
To her heart's demure distress.  
She has soft, smooth cheeks that flame  
As she nestles close, so close,  
With the new half-joy, half-shame,  
That within her bosom glows,  
And each fevered feature shows.  
Her hot pulses beat acclaim  
Of the hopes she dare not tame,  
Fervid thoughts she cannot name—  
Till I kiss her, and she knows.  
She has clinging arms of white,  
Little hands and fingers fine,  
And she holds me tight, so tight;  
While her eager arms entwine  
Deep I drink her kisses' wine.  
Hush! I feel through all her slight,  
Trembling figure love's delight,  
And she knows that all is right,  
And her bosom beats with mine.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Nemesis

All things must fade. There is for cities tall  
The same tomorrow as for daffodils:  
Time's wind, that casts the seed, the petal spills.  
Grim London's ruined arches yet shall fall  
Back to the arms of Earth. A quiet pall  
The mother draws over those she loves--and kills;  
And though brief nations vaunt their upstart wills,  
The nemesis of grass shall cover all.  
So--from a caravan to Mecca bound  
Getting no more than one incurious glance--  
Tremendous Babylon, thrice-girt with walls,  
Sick of her thousand years of arrogance,  
With a few tamarisks upon a mound  
Her epigraph upon the desert scrawls.

Arthur Henry Adams

# On The Plains

ALONE with the silence, the sun and sky,  
Full length on the tussocky plain I lie:  
An ocean of yellow from east to west  
Still rolling and sweeping, far crest on crest;  
And billow on billow the tussocks bend  
Until in one shimmering haze they blend;  
Where, under the distance, the heat and noon,  
The plains in an ecstasy thrilling, swoon  
And melt in the yellow-tinged, sombre air,  
Like perfume from roses on evenings rare.  
Where the sky and the misty horizon meet  
The flax-bushes float, like a far-off fleet;  
As slowly they swim, with no spray nor splash,  
Their green sails swell, and their brown oars flash;  
So, lost in two oceans—of plain and sky—  
Full length on the tussocks alone I lie.

Arthur Henry Adams

# On The Sands

ALL the air was tranced and the sea was stilled,  
And we stood and dreamed of a world to be.  
When it seemed to me that our souls were thrilled  
With a sudden sympathy.

My life's long riddle at last I read,  
And the spirit-face I had sought I knew;  
All the Past's far years to this hour had led  
On the sands alone with you!

And you—you thought that the skies were fair.  
And such twilight peace you had seldom known;  
And you never guessed that a soul was there  
That hungered for your own!

You never knew—there was just the lack  
Of a passioned look that would thrill me through,  
But the night swept down, with its shroud of black,  
And you never, never knew!

Arthur Henry Adams

## Other Verses

Myself—My Song.

HERE, aloof, I take my stand—

Alien, iconoclast—

Poet of a newer land,

Confident, aggressive, lonely,

Product of the present only,

Thinking nothing of the past.

If some word of mine abide,

Yet no immortality

Looks my soul for; satisfied,

Though my voice be evanescent,

If it sing the pregnant present

And the birth that is to be.

All the beauty that has been,

All of wisdom's overplus,

Has been given me to glean;

In Earth's story clear one page is—

This—the widest of the ages—

Virile, vast, tumultuous.

I shall croon no love-song old,

Dream no memory of wrong,

Build no mighty epic bold;

From my forge I send them flying—

Fragments glowing once and dying—

Scattered sparks of molten song.

If I bring no gospel bright,

Still my little stream of song

Quavers thinly through the night,

Burdened with a broken yearning,

Still persistent, though discerning

Life has shadows, sorrow, wrong.

So my life shall be my verse.

Here's my record, stand or fall I

Failure may be mine, or worse,

In the twilight land of living—

With no doubt and no misgiving,

Here's my life-blood, breath and all!

Arthur Henry Adams

## Pansy: Song-Words

IN a crooked angle  
Of a garden bower,  
'Neath a weedy tangle  
Grew a modest flower;  
Unpretending, unoffending,  
Gifted but with fancy,  
Unassuming in his blooming  
Grew that modest pansy.

Ah! pansy, pansy,  
Hope springs anew;  
But fancy, fancy,  
Never comes true.  
Comes a maiden bashful,  
Wandering here and there,  
With her silken sash full  
Of roses rich and rare;  
Slow she takes them, dewless shakes them  
In her shapely fingers,  
While to choose some for her bosom  
Lazily she lingers.

Ah! pansy, pansy,  
Modest in hue;  
Sweet fancy, fancy,  
Never comes true.

With a lover's anguish  
For her glance he sought,  
On her breast to languish  
Was his daring thought;  
If he perished by her cherished,  
Life was worth the leaving;  
But she passes 'midst the grasses,  
And she leaves him grieving!

Ah! pansy, pansy,  
Sorrow for you;  
But fancy, fancy,  
Never comes true.



Arthur Henry Adams

## Rain In The Bush

The steady soaking of the rain,  
The bush all sad and sombre;  
The trees are weeping in their pain,  
Dank leaves the ground encumber.

A dismal ghost of silence strays  
From shade to dusky daylight;  
O'er all a whispered horror weighs,  
Like mist athwart the grey light.

A frightened robin in the ferns  
Peeks fearfully and lonely,  
But back to comfort him returns  
The drip of rain-drops only.

The fern-fronds shiver when they feel  
Cold foot-prints press like mist, as  
Dim forms beneath the creepers steal  
And vanish in the vistas.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Reminiscence

I STAND in old Earth's presence; over all  
The warm, pervading sunshine seems to print  
Life and the Present; and there is no glint  
Of white bones from the Past's decaying pall;  
When, lo! some subtle scent holds me in thrall;  
Or an uncertain, evanescent tint,  
That of a fuller summer seems to hint,  
Wakes long-imprisoned yearnings that recall  
Half-memories of strange unthought-of things,  
That seem were once a vital part of me—  
Unmeasured, mystic, vague imaginings!  
And all Life's presence and the sunshine flee,  
The listless æons of my life I see,  
And in my face the dead Past flaps its wings.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Satana

SHE draws all men to serve her, and her lure  
Is her pulsating human loveliness—  
The beauty of her bosom's rippling lines,  
The passion pleading in her eyes, the pure  
Soft contour of her cheek, her dainty dress,  
With all the rich aroma of her warm  
Glad womanhood perfumed, her supple form  
Curving and swaying like a living flower,  
Aflush with life and youth. These are the signs  
By which she queens the hearts of men, the power  
By which she makes her sovereignty secure!  
But though her red lips mock me of their wine,  
And that low laugh of hers fills me with fire,  
As, spent with loving, in her scorn I lie;  
Yet some day she will come to me and twine  
Her slender arms about me; and desire  
Will plead in those eyes that were all disdain,  
And break her bosom with a sob of pain,  
And her hot lips will lavish all their store  
Of hungry kisses on me—then shall I  
Remember all her queenly coldness, or  
With kisses make her breathing beauty mine?

Arthur Henry Adams

# Song

TO a woman's wistful heart  
In a startled wave of feeling,  
Swift and sudden,  
Sweeps love's flood in,  
Joy with fear in rapture reeling;  
Scathe and sorrow, fret and smart,  
In one flush of gladness healing;  
Life beclouded,  
Sorrow shrouded,  
As a sunlit world revealing  
To a woman's wistful heart!  
To a woman's wistful heart,  
Warm with hopes that almost frighten.  
Love comes singing,  
Gladly bringing  
To her loneliness a light in.  
Pain and shadowed grief depart,  
Every hour life's glories heighten;  
Earth's wide wonder  
That has shunned her  
Like a flower blooms to brighten  
In a woman's wistful heart!

Arthur Henry Adams

# Sunset

WHAT horror lurked within the First Man's brain  
As downward to the West the Sun-god stepped,  
And paused upon the hill-ridge, ere he leapt  
Headlong into the night! What cold, dumb pain  
He felt, as still he marked the twilight wane,  
And on the dragon Darkness crept and crept,  
While beating in his mind the question kept,  
"Is this Earth's all? Can Day e'er come again?"  
And yet, last night, one watched with listless eyes  
The stricken Sun-god struggling in his gore,  
With wasting red bedabbled, unto whom  
Life's joyous sun shall nevermore uprise:  
His dream of light has faded, gloried o'er;  
His night has come—a night of endless gloom.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Sydney

In her grey majesty of ancient stone  
She queens it proudly, though the sun's caress  
Her piteous cheeks, ravished of bloom, confess,  
And her dark eyes his bridegroom glance have know.  
Robed in her flowing parks, serene, alone,  
She fronts the east; and with the tropic stress  
Her smooth brow ripples into weariness;  
Yet hers the sea for footstool, and for throne  
A continent predestined. Round her trails  
The turbid squalor of her streets, and dim  
Into the dark heat-haze her domes flow up;  
Her long lean fingers, with their grey-old nails,  
Giving her thirsty lips to the cool brim  
Of the bronze beauty of her harbour's cup.

Arthur Henry Adams

# Sydney Nocturnes

From The North Shore.

TO Day she would not show her charms;  
But now the Night beseeches,  
A white reproach of wistful arms  
Over the bay she reaches.  
Upon her gleaming bosom, wet  
With tears and quivering,  
In ropes of golden beauty set  
Her vivid jewels swing.

Upon the pathway of the night  
She, pausing often, paces;  
About her body waves gleam white  
Like froth of filmy laces;  
And to her pleasure hurrying,  
Their torches holding high,  
On molten waters smouldering  
The ferry-boats flame by.

Arthur Henry Adams



# The Anarchist

THE dawn hangs heavy on the distant hill,  
The darkness shudders slowly into light;  
And from the weary bosom of the night  
The pent winds sigh, then sink with horror still.

Naked and grey, the guillotine stands square  
Upon the hill, while from its base the crowd  
Surges out far, and waits, to silence cowed,  
Impatient for the thing to happen there.

Listen! The bells within the tower toll  
Five naked notes; and down within his cell  
The prisoner hears and mutters, "It is well,"  
Though like that other knife each cuts his soul.

His sick nerves from the probing echoes shrink,  
"This is the end," he says; "let me be strong;  
Let me be brave till then—'t is not for long:  
I must not think of it—I must not think!"

See, through the courtyard, guarded, comes the slight  
Thin figure of the anarchist. Amazed,  
He sees the thousand faces swiftly raised—  
The billows of the crowd break into white!

One narrow, alien glance below, and then  
The scene fades dimly from his film-glazed eyes;  
And shuddering he sees his past arise—  
The cycle of his life begins again.

And as misshapen memories crowd fast  
Upon him, jostling in a sudden strife,  
Athwart the dull, drab level of his life  
Stand sharply out the blood-stains of his past:  
His youth, before he knew he had it, lost;  
His father's body by an accident  
'Neath the rich man's remorseless mill-wheels pent—  
A corpse; and sister, mother, brother tossed  
Out to the mercy of the merciless.

His mother stricken next; her humble niche  
Was needed by the reckless and the rich,  
And death was easier than life's loneliness.

His sister, she had fortune in her face,  
And won it, too, till Vice's fingers tore

The freshness from her figure, and no more  
In idleness she flaunted her disgrace.  
He lost her, stifled in the world's wide smother,  
For years; till one night on the street they met.  
She seized him—he can feel that hot thrill yet!—  
She spoke him—knowing not he was her brother!  
Wrong reeking of the rich incessantly!  
Oppression and oppression o'er again!  
Till from the smouldering hate within his brain  
Mad fever fired the fuse of Anarchy.

Then plot and cunning, weak, futile and mean,  
The maddened one against the many; thus  
He strove to strangle Order's octopus—  
And gained the goal at last—the guillotine!  
It waits him grim and grey; he sees it not,  
Nor hears the rising murmur ripple out  
To the crowd's edge, and, turning, die in doubt.  
The vague, uncertain future threatens—what?  
So...shall he speak, fling out his last reply  
Why waste the time in trivialities?  
One throbbing thought now holds him; and there is  
No room for sign or speech—he has to die.  
Only a murmur wavers up and shakes  
The sullen air, then hesitates and dies;  
And the grim hush of horror stifled lies,  
Suspended like a billow ere it breaks.  
One bitter prayer, half-curse, he mutters when  
The knife hangs high above, and the world waits.  
But ere it swoops an age it hesitates:  
The word is given, breaths are drawn, and then...  
With eyes and soul close shut—be swift, relief!—  
The prisoner waits the end that does not come.  
For hark! that heavy, low, tumultuous hum  
That surges, surges till it shouts " Reprieve! "

" Reprieved and pardoned! " All his senses swim  
In a rose-mist! As Sleep's soft hand that soothes  
The terse, strained limbs of fevered Day and smooths  
Life's knotted nerves—so comes relief to him.  
And when he woke again his soul, set free,  
Had wandered far, within a moment's space,

And seen the sadness of God's silent face—  
The mighty calm of immortality.

How like a triumph his home-coming! Then  
The glorious news that met him, how that Right  
Had routed Wrong, for ever faction's fight  
Was finished, and the world was one again.

Then swiftly through his swimming, mist-dimmed eyes  
He sees the good and great upright again;  
And Reason rings the knell of grief and pain;  
The gladdened new world lapped in sunlight lies.

Long life was his with honour. On Fame's breath  
His name was borne, until in perfect peace—  
Glad like a mellow fruit to fall and cease—  
His long life ripened richly into death.

Yet none knew this but he . The crowd still waits;  
Shoots swift the lightning of the knife, and loud  
Roars the hoarse thunder from the sated crowd  
And justice has been done. God compensates.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Australian

ONCE more this Autumn-earth is ripe,  
Parturient of another type.

While with the Past old nations merge  
His foot is on the Future's verge.

They watch him, as they huddle, pent,  
Striding a spacious continent,

Above the level desert's marge  
Looming in his aloofness large.

No flower with fragile sweetness graced—  
A lank weed wrestling with the waste;

Pallid of face and gaunt of limb,  
The sweetness withered out of him;

Sombre, indomitable, wan,  
The juices dried, the glad youth gone.

A little weary from his birth,  
His laugh the spectre of a mirth,

Bitter beneath a bitter sky,  
To Nature he has no reply.

Wanton, perhaps, and cruel. Yes,  
Is not his sun more merciless?

So drab and neutral is his day,  
He finds a splendour in the grey,

And from his life's monotony  
He draws a dreary melody.

When earth so poor a banquet makes  
His pleasures at a gulp he takes;

The feast is his to the last crumb:  
Drink while he can...the drought will come.

His heart a sudden tropic flower,  
He loves and loathes within an hour.

Yet you who by the pools abide,  
Judge not the man who swerves aside;

He sees beyond your hazy fears;  
He roams the desert of the years;

Rearing his cities in the sand,  
He builds where even God has banned;

With green a continent he crowns,  
And stars a wilderness with towns;

With paths the distances he snares;  
His gyves of steel the great plain wears.

A child who takes a world for toy,  
To build a nation or destroy,

His childish features frozen stern,  
His manhood's task he has to learn—

From feeble tribes to federate  
One white and peace-encompassed State.

But if there be no goal to reach?...  
The track lies open, dawns beseech!

Enough that he lay down his load  
A little farther on the road.

So, toward undreamt-of destinies  
He slouches down the centuries.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Coming Of The Rauparaha

BLUE, the wreaths of smoke, like drooping banners  
From the flaming battlements of sunset  
Hung suspended; and within his whare  
Hipe, last of Ngatiraukawa's chieftains,  
Lay a-dying! Ringed about his death-bed,  
Like a palisade of carven figures,  
Stood the silent people of the village—  
Warriors and women of his hapu—  
Waiting. Then a sudden spilth of sunlight  
Splashed upon the mountain-peak above them,  
And it blossomed redly like a rata.

With his people and the twilight pausing;  
Withering to death in regal patience,  
Taciturn and grim, lay Hipe dying.  
Shuddering and green, a little lizard  
Made a ripple through the whare's darkness,  
Writhing close to Hipe! Then a whisper  
On the women's dry lips hesitated  
As the ring of figures fluttered backwards;  
“ 'T is the Spirit-Thing that comes to carry  
Hipe's tardy soul across the waters  
To the world of stars!” And Hipe, grimly,  
Felt its hungry eyes a-glitter on him;  
Then he knew the spirit-world had called him;  
Knew the lizard-messenger must hasten,  
And would carry back a soul for answer.

Twenty days in silence he had listened,  
Dumb with thoughts of death, and sorely troubled  
For his tribe left leaderless and lonely.  
Now like sullen thunder from the blackness  
Of the whare swept a voice untinctured  
With a stain of sickness; and the women,  
Breaking backwards, shrieked in sudden terror,  
“ 'T is the weird Thing's voice, the greenish lizard,  
All-impatient for the soul of Hipe!”  
But the warriors in the shadow straightened  
Drooping shoulders, gripped their greenstone meres,  
And the rhythmic tumult of the war-dance

Swept the great pah with its throbbing thunder:  
While their glad throats chanted, "E, 't is Hipe!  
Hipe's voice that led us in the battle;  
Hipe, young, come back to lead us ever!"  
"Warriors and women of my hapu,"  
Whirled the voice of Hipe from the darkness,  
"I have had communion with the spirits;  
Listen while I chant the song they taught me!  
"I have seen the coming end of all things,  
Seen the Maori shattered 'neath the onrush  
Of the white-faced strangers. Like the flashing  
Of the Sun-God through the ranks of darkness,  
Like the Fire-God rippling through the forest,  
Like the winter's silent blight of snowflakes—  
Lo, the strange outbreak of pallid blossoms!—

Sweeps this surging wave of stranger-faces,  
Frothing irresistibly upon us.

"Lo, the Pakeha shall come and conquer;  
We have failed; the Gods are angry with us.  
See, the withered autumn of our greatness!  
"Old ancestral myths and sacred legends  
That we deemed immortal—(priest and wizard  
Died, and yet their stories, like a river,  
Through the long years ran on, ever changeless!)—  
Shall be buried; and the names long given  
To each hill, and stream, and path and gully,  
Shall be like a yesterday forgotten,  
Blown like trembling froth before the sea-breeze.

"And the gods that people all our islands—  
This great sea of presences immortal,  
Living, real, alert for charm or evil,  
Hurrying in every breeze, and haunting,  
Heavy-winged, the vistas of the forest,  
Deluging the daylight with their presence,  
Teeming, flooding, brimming in the shadows—  
Shall be banished to their spirit-regions,  
And the world be lorn of gods and lonely.

"And the Maori shall no long time linger  
Ere, a tardy exile, he shall journey  
To the under-world. Yet he shall never  
Break before this influx, but shall fight on

Till, a mangled thing, the tide o'erwhelm him.  
And my tribe, the mighty Ngatiraukawa,  
Had they left one worthy chieftain only  
Who could lead my people on to victory,  
Who could follow where my feet have trodden,  
Might yet rear their name into a pillar  
Carved with fame, until their stubborn story  
From the mists of legend broke tremendous.  
Flaming through the chilly years to follow  
With a sunset-splendour, huge, heroic!  
"Yes, the time is yours to rear a nation  
From one conquering tribe, the Ngatiraukawa;  
But my pah is leaderless and lonely;  
I am left, the last of Maori chieftains;  
And the gods have called me now to lead them  
In their mighty battles! There is no one  
Worthy now to wield my dying mana!"  
So he ceased, and tremulous the silence  
Sighed to voice in one long wail of sorrow.  
So; it was the truth that Hipe taught them:  
None was left to lead them on to victory;  
None could follow where his feet had trodden.  
Then by name old Hipe called the chieftains—  
Weakling sons of that gaunt wrinkled giant,  
Stunted saplings blanching in the shadow  
Of the old tree's overarching greatness.  
One by one he called them, and they shivered,

For they knew no answer to his question,  
"Can you lead my people on to victory?  
Can you follow where my feet have trodden?"  
One by one a great hope burned within them,  
And their feeble hearts beat fast and proudly;  
One by one a chill of terror took them,  
And the challenge on their lips was frozen.  
Then the old chief in his anger chaunted  
Frenziedly a song of scorn of all things,  
And the frightened people of the village—  
Warriors and women of his hapu—  
Quavered into murmurs 'neath the whirlwind  
Of his lashing words; and then he fretted



Into gusts of anger; and the lizard  
Made a greenish ripple in the darkness,  
Shuddering closer to him. And the people  
Bending heard a whisper pass above them,  
"Is there none to lead you on to victory,  
None to follow where my feet have trodden?"

Lo, a sudden rumour from the edges  
Of the silent concourse, where the humblest  
Of the village crouched in utter baseness—  
There among the outcasts one leapt upright,  
Clean-limbed, straight and comely as a sunbeam.  
Eager muscles clad in tawny velvet,  
Eyes aflash with prescience of his power,  
Yet a boy, untried in warriors' warfare,

Virgin to the battle! And untroubled  
Rang a daring voice across the darkness,  
"Yes, my people, one there is to lead you;  
I dare point you on to fame and victory,  
I dare tread where Hipe's feet have trodden.  
Yea," and prouder sang the voice above them,  
"I can promise mightier fame unending;  
I shall lead where Hipe dared not tempt you;  
I shall make new footprints through the future—  
I, the youth Te Rauparaha, have spoken!"

On the boy who braved them stormed the people,  
Swept with fear and anger, and they clamoured,  
"Who so proudly speaks, though not a chieftain?  
Rank and name and fame he has none; how then  
Dare he lead when sons of chieftains falter?"

But the boy leapt forward to the whare,  
Clean-limbed, straight and comely as a sunbeam,  
Eager muscles clad in tawny velvet,  
Eyes aflash with prescience of his power,  
Swinging high the mere he had fashioned  
Out of wood, and carven like a chieftain's—  
Aye, and with the toy had slain a foeman!  
Flinging fiery speech out like a hailstorm,  
"If ye choose me chieftain I shall lead you  
Down to meet the white one on the sea-coast,  
Where his hordes shall break like scattered billows  
From our wall of meres. Him o'erwhelming,

I shall wrest his flaming weapons from him,  
Fortify for pah the rugged island  
Kapiti; then like a black-hawk swooping  
I shall whirl upon the Southern Island,  
Sweep it with my name as with a tempest,  
Overrun it like the play of sunlight,  
Sigh across it like a flame, till Terror  
Runs before me shrieking! And our pathway  
Shall be sullen red with flames and bloodshed,  
And shall moan with massacre and battle!  
"Quenching every foe, beneath my mana  
Tribe shall stand with tribe, till all my nation  
Like a harsh impassive wall of forest  
Imperturbably shall front the strangers;  
And with frown inscrutable shall wither  
All this buzz and stir of stinging insects  
That persist about us; then our islands  
Garlanded with peace are ours for ever!  
"Then the name of me, Te Rauparaha,  
And the tribe I lead, the Ngatitooa,  
Shall be shrined in sacred myth and legend  
With the glamour of our oft-told prowess  
Wreathed about them! Think, we shall be saviours  
Of a race, a nation! And this island  
We have sown so thick with names—each hillock,  
Glen and gully, stream and tribal limit—  
Shall for ever blossom like a garden

With the liquid softness of their music!  
And the flute shall still across the evening  
Lilt and waver, brimming with love's yearning!  
And the exiled gods and banished spirits  
Shall steal back to people all our islands  
With their sea of presences immortal,  
Living, real, alert for charm or evil,  
Hurrying in every breeze and haunting,  
Heavy-winged, the vistas of the forest,  
Deluging the daylight with their presence,  
Teeming, flooding, brimming in the shadows,  
Till the world, a tawny world of gladness,  
Shall no more of gods be lorn and lonely!

I, the youth Te Rauparaha, have spoken!"  
Hipe heard, and, dying, cried in triumph,  
"Warriors and women of my hapu,  
He shall lead you, he, Te Rauparaha!  
He shall do the things that he has promised.  
He may fail; but think how grand his failure!  
He alone can lift against the tempest  
That proud head of his, and hugely daring,  
God-like, hugely fail, or hugely conquer!"  
Still he spoke, but suddenly the lizard  
Made a greenish ripple through the darkness,  
And was gone! Upon the long lone journey  
To Te Reinga and the world of spirits  
It had started with the soul of Hipe!

Then the plaintive wailing of the women  
Quavered through the darkness, and a shudder  
Took the slaves that in a horror waited  
For the mercy of the blow to send them—  
Ah! the sombre, slowly-stepping phalanx—  
To the twilight world with Hipe's spirit.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Dwellings Of Our Dead

They lie unwatched, in waste and vacant places,  
In sombre bush or wind-swept tussock spaces,  
Where seldom human tread  
And never human trace is—  
The dwellings of our dead!

No insolence of stone is o'er them builded;  
By mockery of monuments unshielded,  
Far on the unfenced plain  
Forgotten graves have yielded  
Earth to free earth again.

Above their crypts no air with incense reeling,  
No chant of choir or sob of organ pealing;  
But ever over them  
The evening breezes kneeling  
Whisper a requiem.

For some the margeless plain where no one passes,  
Save when at morning far in misty masses  
The drifting flock appears.  
Lo, here the greener grasses  
Glint like a stain of tears!

For some the quiet bush, shade-strewn and saddened,  
Whereo'er the herald tui, morning-gladdened,  
Lone on his chosen tree,  
With his new rapture maddened,  
Shouts incoherently.

For some the gully where, in whispers tender,  
The flax-blades mourn and murmur, and the slender  
White ranks of toi go,  
With drooping plumes of splendour,  
In pageantry of woe.

For some the common trench where, not all fameless,  
They fighting fell who thought to tame the tameless,  
And won their barren crown;  
Where one grave holds them nameless—  
Brave white and braver brown.

But in their sleep, like troubled children turning,  
A dream of mother-country in them burning,  
They whisper their despair,

And one vague, voiceless yearning  
Burdens the pausing air ...

“ Unchanging here the drab year onward presses;  
No Spring comes trysting here with new-loosed tresses ,  
And never may the years  
Win Autumn's sweet caresses —  
Her leaves that fall like tears .  
And we would lie 'neath old-remembered beeches ,  
Where we could hear the voice of him who preaches  
And the deep organ's call ,  
While close about us reaches  
The cool, grey, lichen'd wall .”  
But they are ours, and jealously we hold them;  
Within our children's ranks we have enrolled them,  
And till all Time shall cease  
Our brooding bush shall fold them  
In her broad-bosomed peace.  
They came as lovers come, all else forsaking,  
The bonds of home and kindred proudly breaking;  
They lie in splendour lone—  
The nation of their making  
Their everlasting throne!

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Ebb Of Day

The ebb of day has now begun;  
The waters to the low west crowd;  
But one forgotten wisp of cloud  
Glow like a fragment of the sun,  
And stranded on the shores of Night,  
Where 'gainst the sky the telegraph  
Stretching his dim, audacious path  
Defiantly to heaven aspires,  
There lies a maiden, drowned and white—  
The torn Moon tangled in the wires!

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Four Queens (Maoriland)

Wellington.

HERE, where the surges of a world of sea  
Break on our bastioned walls with league-long sweep,  
Four fair young queens their lonely splendour keep,  
Each in a city throned. The first is she  
Whose face is arrogant with empery;  
Her throne from out the wounded hill-side steep  
Is rudely fashioned, and beneath her creep  
The narrow streets; and, stretching broad and free,  
Like a green-waving meadow, lies the bay,  
With blossom-sails and flower-wavelots flecked.  
Elate she stands; her brown and windblown hair  
Haloes a face with virgin freshness fair,  
As she receives, exuberant, erect,  
The stubborn homage that her sisters pay.

Dunedin.

And one is fair and winsome, and her face  
Is strung with winter's kisses, and is yet  
With winter's tears of parting sorrow wet;  
And all her figure speaks of bonny grace.  
High on the circling hills her seat has place,  
Within a bower of the green bush set;  
And 'neath her feet the city slopes—a net  
Of broad-büilt streets and green-girt garden space.

Above her high the suburbs climb to crown  
Her city's battlements; and in her thrall  
Lie sleeping fiords, and forests call her queen.  
About her waist she winds a belt of green,  
And on her gleaming city looking down,  
She hears the Siren South for ever call.

Christchurch.

And one within a level city lies;  
To whose tree-shaded streets and squares succeed;  
A vista of white roads and bordering meads,  
Until each suburb in the great plain dies.

The clustering spires to crown her fair head rise,  
And for a girdle round her form she leads  
The Avon, green with waving river-weeds  
And swept with swaying willows. And her eyes  
Are quiet with a student's reverie;  
And in the hair that clouds her dreaming face  
There lurks the fragrance of some older place,  
And memories awake to die again,  
As, confident and careless, glad and sorrow-free  
She waits, queen of the margeless golden plain.

Auckland.

Set all about with walls, the last fair queen  
Over a tropic city holds her sway;  
Her throne on sleeping Eden, whence through grey  
And red-strewn roads and gleaming gardens green  
The city wanders on, and seems to lean  
To bathe her beauty in the cool, clear bay,  
That out past isle and islet winds its way  
To the wide ocean. In her hair a sheen  
Of sunlight lives; her face is sweetly pale—  
A queen who seems too young and maidenly,  
Her beauty all too delicate and frail,  
To hold a sway imperious. But forth  
From deep, dark eyes, that dreaming seem to be,  
There shine the strength and passion of the North.

Arthur Henry Adams



# The Garden Of The Sea

THE infinite garden of the sea is His  
To play in. Gravely smiling He resigns  
To man his choice—this rugged plot of earth,  
Watches man tear it with his deep canals,  
Wound it with iron rails, scar it with roads,  
And spot its pleasant freshness with the sore  
Of festering cities, oozing heavy smoke.

He sees and He forgives. Then gently takes  
His pliant sea into His yearning hands—  
As an old mother might caress a doll  
When all her sons are dead—and wistfully  
He moulds it. O, that He might so thrust man—  
That interloping soul of stubbornness—  
The solitary irreconcilable  
Of His subservient Universe—within  
The grim, unalterable grooves of law!

But, ah! the sea, the fecund woman-sea,  
Is His to fashion as He wills! He girds  
It round with whitely gleaming paths of beach;  
Then, at His word, the blossoms of the spray  
Rise on their swaying wave-stalks, bloom and break,  
And scatter desolate petals on the foam.

League-long His flower-bordered avenues  
In bending sward of blossom run. Lo, now  
A winter comes unwonted, heaping high

His garden world with snow of wasted blooms.  
Or Spring sweeps in resistless, and the sea  
Shimmers—an orchard in her nuptial white!

And sometimes He will smooth His garden plot,  
And cover with trim tapestry of grass  
Its restless beauty, till there shyly break  
The daisies through, like pale hands timorous  
And fragile, groping blindly to the sun.

Sometimes he plans great curving pathways, where  
'Neath sullen shoulders of cool greenery  
The shadows crouch, and high above the sun  
Whispers his sunny secrets to the boughs  
That sway and ripple everlastingly.

And sometimes, hidden by a moving ridge  
From ships that flit like furtive white moths by,  
The Master of the garden gravely walks  
The cool green paths in reverie along:  
Ah, what if I could turn into that lane  
Of pulsing wave, and see Him pacing there,  
As once of old they saw Him, with that look  
Of wistful sadness on His old kind face!

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Girl At The Harp

LIKE Clotho, at her harp she sits and weaves  
With mystic fingers from the swaying strings  
A melody that ever louder sings  
And my charmed heart in vibrant rapture leaves  
All hers! And all her quiet life receives  
The peaceful melody which round her clings;  
She walks amid suave strains and murmurings  
That never doubt or strident discord cleaves.  
And from her singing harp she bends to grant  
My dear desire; and the poor monotone,  
That is my life, in her glad heart she takes,  
And, twining its dull phrases with her own  
Full-flowing theme of life, of both she makes  
The pæan of one love reverberant.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Goal

ON the grey levels of the plain of life  
When, slowly swirled,  
The moving hills of morning mist  
Hedged in the world—  
While yet undared the path of toil and strife,  
I found a friend  
Whose faith I pictured would persist  
Until the end.

Then peered the stooping sun across the plain—  
The world he kissed;  
In sudden glory shimmering  
Flamed all the mist!  
The sullen Darkness carried off his slain,  
And straight away,  
Like a forefinger beckoning,  
The white road lay.

Her hand in mine, upon the path we pressed;  
Together shared  
The flowers we plucked—to find them pain;  
And forward fared  
Till we stood radiant on the mountain crest;  
And still ahead,  
Dipping to pleasant depths of plain,  
The white road led.

But when I urged her onward to the end  
Her heart peered out

Upon the road's unswerving leap  
In dizzy doubt.

“Nay, we have reached the highest, why descend?”  
Her lips demurred—  
And with us, gazing at the steep,  
There stood a third.

Her eyes clasped his in an embrace of love.  
Said they: “No more;  
Here on the crest is our abode,  
Our journey o'er;  
The goal for you!” So, leaving them above,  
I went alone—

And still the arrow of the road  
Sped on, straight on!  
But darker and more desolate the way,  
Until I turned—  
Lo, in the halo of the sun  
The lovers burned,  
High on the mountain-top! Ah, what if they,  
By passion kissed,  
The goal of life and love have won,  
And I have missed?

Arthur Henry Adams

# The New Woman

THE stone that all the sullen centuries,  
With sluggish hands and massive fingers rude,  
Against the sepulchre of womanhood  
Had sternly held, she has thrust back with ease,  
And stands, superbly arrogant, the keys  
Of knowledge in her hand, won by a mood  
Of daring, in her beauty flaunting nude,  
Eager to drain life's wine unto the lees.

So she shall tempt and touch and try and taste,  
And in the wrestle of the world shall lose  
Her dimpled prettiness, her petals bruise;  
But moulding ever to a truer type  
She shall return to man, no more abased—  
His counterpart, a woman, rounded, ripe.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Parade

Along the lamp-lit streets they glide and go:  
Here Nature in her brutishness is nude:  
See, thinly trickling from the age-old wound,  
The steady stream of squandered womanhood!

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Perfect Present

SO I have kissed you! And this hour is mine.  
Its light along the level future lasts,  
It crowns a drab eternity of Pasts!  
Here soul and soul have crossed the border-line  
Of self, and merged. No years can e'er untwine  
This hour from us! What though to-morrow casts  
The memory out, and your cold glance contrasts  
With this day's rich red lips, need I repine?  
No. I have kissed you! And the brief warm flower  
Born of our lips perfumes eternity.  
From the long loneliness that silently  
Stretches behind, before, I am content  
To cull this blossom of one perfect hour—  
To snatch one star from Time's deep firmament!

Arthur Henry Adams



# The Pleiades

LAST night I saw the Pleiades again,  
Faint as a drift of steam  
    From some tall chimney-stack;  
And I remembered you as you were then:  
Awoke dead worlds of dream,  
    And Time turned slowly back.

I saw the Pleiades through branches bare,  
And close to mine your face  
    Soft glowing in the dark;  
For Youth and Hope and Love and You were there  
At our dear trysting-place  
    In that bleak London park.

And as we kissed the Pleiades looked down  
From their immeasurable  
    Aloofness in cold Space.  
Do you remember how a last leaf brown  
Between us flickering fell  
    Soft on your upturned face?

Last night I saw the Pleiades again,  
Here in the alien South,  
    Where no leaves fade at all;  
And I remembered you as you were then,  
And felt upon my mouth  
    Your leaf-light kisses fall!

The Pleiades remember and look down  
On me made old with grief,  
    Who then a young god stood,  
When you—now lost and trampled by the Town,  
A lone wind-driven leaf,—  
    Were young and sweet and good!

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Poet To Be Yet

NOT he who sings smooth songs that soothe—  
Sweet opiates that lull asleep  
The sorrow that would only weep;  
There are some spirit-stains so deep  
That only tears may wash away.

Not he whose lays thrill fiercely till  
The soul is sick with surfeiting,  
Such passion flies, and leaves its sting,  
Till through the body quivering  
The wearied dull pain throbs again.

Not he whose glad voice says "Rejoice!"  
For whom no clouds o'ercast the sky;  
Whose god is in his heaven so high  
That this dull world he come not nigh:  
Life is no sun-kissed optimist!

But he who Sorrow's presence knows,  
Who hears the minor chords beneath  
The song of life, and feels the breath  
Upon his cheek of quiet death,  
Yet stirs and sings of life and love.

Who in his suffering yet can sing;  
With that calm pathos in his face—  
The hopeless yearning of the race—  
Can chant the faith that holds its place,  
Upsurging through each sore heart's speech;

Who, though his heart bleed, onward leads;  
Who knows eternal is our quest,  
Yet bids us toil and strive—not rest—  
Who looks life o'er and takes its best—  
This is the poet to be yet!

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Reaper

The world is drowsy, the winds asleep,  
On the sward of the sky the star-blossoms peep,  
And the grey Moon moves with his silver scythe  
The pallid flowers of light to reap.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Sculptor

O'er the Eastern hills of light  
While the dim world slept  
Dawn the sculptor stepped,  
And the shapeless block of Night  
Chiselled into form  
Morning-lit and warm.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Stars

THE terrible tranquillity of space!  
My soul shrinks back in sudden doubt. I fear  
The myriad eyes that through the ether peer,  
And chill the arrogance that dared to trace  
The grave enigma of the cosmic face.  
Yet through the soundless night a voice austere—  
“We that you deem afar are small and near;  
With lowly things and humble we have place;  
We are but smoke that from a burnt Past rears;  
The idle spray God's prow flings in its sweep  
Through wider waters; the mere dust that curls  
From his vast chariot-wheels as on He whirls;  
The futile sparks that from His anvil leap;  
Or drifting seeds, pregnant of larger spheres.”

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Storm And The Bush

There are only two things in the world—  
The storm in the air and the stretch of green leaves;  
The flesh of the forest that quivers and heaves  
As the blast on its bosom is hurled.

Above is the whip of the wind  
That scourges the cowering forest beneath:  
The Storm spits the hiss of the hail from his teeth,  
And leaves the world writhing behind!

Like a beast that is bound in a cage  
When the keeper's lash lights and the keeper's goad stings,  
Each tree his great limbs to his torturer flings  
In a groaning and impotent rage.

As the leaves to a fiercer gust lean  
The wind throws their undersides upward to sight,  
And the foam of the forest-sea flashes to white  
Out over full fathoms of green.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Tui

Alchemist of melody,  
dropp by dropp distilling!  
Hidden high on some tall tree,  
Alchemist of melody;  
With your liquid minstrelsy  
All the forest filling:  
Alchemist of melody,  
dropp by dropp distilling!

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Weakling

I AM a weakling. God, who made  
The still, strong man, made also me.

The God who could the tiger plan,  
In his lithe splendour unafraid—  
A thing of flame and poetry—  
That Puissance made of me—a Man!

The One who reared His vast design—  
Star, atom, system, germ, and soul—  
Could fashion forth this tremulous  
And paltry little heart of mine!  
The God who could conceive the Whole,  
Himself blasphemed in building thus.

When I dare look the glass within,  
The 'Mene Tekel' mark I see.  
God made this slinking, stunted thing,  
This narrowed face, this futile chin,  
Prisoned a soul deliberately  
'Neath these blunt nerves unanswering?

I see my fellows strong and proud,  
Lustful and splendid with desires,  
Secure and strenuous within,  
God opulently them endowed,  
And lit in them immortal fires;  
And left me scarcely strength to sin.

I watch them triumph by, afar,  
Crashing through life with crude disdain.  
Theirs is a universe so wide,  
So keen and rich the colours are  
That reach each fine responsive brain.  
They are the bridegrooms, Life the bride!

They carry in their veins their fate;  
Foredoomed are they to victory.  
Their broad brows are a diadem  
Of mastery; they but await



Their long determined destiny,  
For at their birth Life laurelled them.

They have their chance to win, to fall—  
The fighting chance, the deathless hope;  
Their fate they venture to assail;  
They chafe for ever at their thrall;  
They dare with their despair to cope,  
Superbly strive, superbly fail.

But I starve with a stunted brain:  
My vision is so mean and scant  
That every hue it blurs and dulls.  
God branded me—this brow of Cain!—  
Put in me this heart hesitant,  
And lamed me with a limping pulse.

I watch them striding on; they flout  
Death even; then my path I see:  
The narrow path—the narrow curse.  
Ah, wonder, if I dare to doubt  
If sin of mine prescribed for me  
This mean and niggard universe?

The end that is upon my face  
And in my wizened soul I wait—  
The end that I shall count for good.  
Yet they who pass me in the race  
Left me to falter to my fate:  
They did not slay me when they should.

But yet He found 'that it was good'.  
Ah! surely in the soul of God  
For me some kindly pity is?  
Or else I wonder how He could  
Raise me—a soul—up from the sod,  
Lift me from Nothingness—to this!

Yet—thin weak lips and woman-chin—  
Some unknown debt to me is paid,  
Some sacrifice I may not see.  
I expiate some other's sin.

I am God's weakling. He who made  
The still, strong man, made also me.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The Wonderful Aussie Waler

When Allenby's Army smashed the Turk  
Who was the bloke who did all the work  
The Aussie knows and he'll tell you straight  
That most of the job was done by his mate  
The wonderful Aussie Waler  
It was umpty-nine in the shade each day  
And the wells were spoiled in the Turkish way  
But with nothing to eat and plenty to do  
The heart of the Waler carried him through  
The wonderful, wonderful Waler

For ten long weeks through the desert hot  
He plugged along and all that he got  
Was a drink, or not a drink a day  
But did the stamina once give way  
Of the wonderful Aussie Waler?  
Was he the one to desert his mate?  
Just watch him coming up the straight  
With twenty stone of harness and man  
No wonder the Turk was an also ran  
With the wonderful, wonderful Waler

When drinks were not and feeds were few  
There still was his harness that he could chew  
With a nibble or two at another's mane  
He plucked up heart to march again  
The wonderful Aussie Waler  
And when everything edible seemed to be stale  
A hair or two from a neighbour's tail  
Makes a pleasant meal and there's no doubt  
They took it turn and turn about  
The wonderful, wonderful Waler

A great Australian through and through  
There's a good time coming old horse for you  
There's a paddock green with grass to your knees  
And there you shall roll at your lordly ease  
My wonderful Aussie Waler  
With a gallop or two to keep you fit

And won't it bring back the thrill of it!  
There 're no more hardships and little work  
For the cobber who broke the heathen Turk  
My wonderful, wonderful Waler

But what is that the orders tell?  
This mate of mine they're going to sell  
To the old home paddock you'll never come back  
They are selling you as a local's hack  
My wonderful, wonderful Waler  
The times together that we've been through  
When all that I had in the world was you  
Out there! Out there in a world of men  
You were more than wife or sweetheart then  
My wonderful, wonderful Waler

There was trust and mateship in your eyes  
A horse has no soul - All lies I All lies!  
And more than a kiss or soft eyes that speak  
Was your muzzling nose against my cheek  
You wonderful Aussie Waler  
A life long slavery is your fate  
Not while a mate can still shoot straight  
Your eyes - I need a steady hand -  
Good bye old chap - you understand  
You wonderful, wonderful Waler.

Arthur Henry Adams

# The World Has Grown So Grey

THE world has grown so grey, love,  
The weary world so wide;  
And autumn seems to stay, love—  
'T was autumn when you died.  
And everything is strange and new,  
For all my world has died with you—  
It lacks the light you gave.  
And sad-eyed dusk awaits alway,  
And the nights wedge in the narrow day  
Like the walls of an open grave!  
It was so cruel to go, love,  
To leave me at your grave;  
For Death can never know, love,  
How hard 't is to be brave.  
Sometimes I smile, my tears between,  
For I see the still-born Might-Have-Been  
That to your breast you've ta'en.  
But memory wakes with a sudden start,  
And the naked truth knells at my heart—  
And the world grows grey again!

Arthur Henry Adams

## To My Love

"PAINT me," you said, "a poem; give to me  
A breathing thought that I may keep to kiss!"  
While that low laugh that aye a mandate is  
Nestled upon your lips. Call memory  
To that fair moment when you heard my plea,  
And in the tumult of my arms' warm bliss,  
Like a frail floweret that is crushed amiss.  
You thrilled to frenzied life exultantly,  
And all your body pulsed with love's desire!  
Can I in words that perfect hour rehearse,  
Or write the vehemence of veins on fire?  
My lips would only kiss—and you require  
From my heart's royal hoard one pallid verse—  
The grey, cold ashes left on passion's pyre!

Arthur Henry Adams

## To One Slain In Absence

AND so we parted, love, oblivious  
That we were parting! With our laughter light,  
Flouting the future, on the morrow bright  
At our old tryst we would once more discuss  
The wonder of our love miraculous:  
While even then Fate waited, swift to smite.  
So you have gone, large-eyed, across the Night,  
And I stand straining widowed arms! Yet thus  
I want your memory—no tears, no pain,  
No presage of chill death, nor any fears;  
Your wide glance bridging all eternity  
With one calm faith. Is't not an augury  
That somewhere in the tangle of the years  
Your laughter and your lips I'll find again?

Arthur Henry Adams

## Written In Australia

THE WIDE sun stares without a cloud:  
Whipped by his glances truculent  
The earth lies quivering and cowed.  
My heart is hot with discontent:  
I hate this haggard continent.

But over the loping leagues of sea  
A lone land calls to her children free:  
My own land holding her arms to me—  
But oh, the long loping leagues of sea.

The grey old city is dumb with heat;  
No breeze comes leaping, naked, rude,  
Adown the narrow, high-walled street;  
Upon the night thick perfumes brood:  
The evening oozes lassitude.

But over the edges of my town,  
Swept in a tide that ne'er abates,  
The riotous breezes tumble down;  
My heart looks home, looks home where waits  
The Windy City of the Straits!

The land lies desolate and stripped;  
Across its waste has thinly strayed  
A tattered host of eucalypt  
From whose gaunt uniform is made  
A ragged penury of shade.

But over my isles the forest drew  
A mantle thick—save where a peak  
Shows his grim teeth a-snarl—and through  
The filtered coolness creek and creek,  
Tangled in ferns, in whispers speak.

And there the placid great lakes are;  
And brimming rivers proudly force  
Their ice-cold tides. Here, like a scar,  
Dry-lipped, a withered water-course



Crawls from a long-forgotten source.

My glance, home-gazing, scarce discerns  
This listless girl, in whose dark hair  
A starry red hibiscus burns;  
Her pallid cheeks are like a pair  
Of nuns, bloom-ravished, yet so fair.

And like a sin her warm lips flame  
In her wan face; swift passions brim  
In those brown eyes too soft for blame;  
Her form is sinuous and slim—  
That lyric line of breast and limb!

But one there waits whose brown face glows,  
Whose cheeks with Winter's kisses smart—  
The flushing petals of a rose.  
Of earth and sun she is a part;  
Her brow is Greek and Greek her heart.

At love she laughs a faint disdain;  
Her heart no weakly one to charm;  
Robust and fragrant as the rain,  
The dark bush soothed her with his balm,  
The mountains gave her of their calm.

Her fresh young figure, lithe and tall,  
Her radiant eyes, her brow benign,  
She is the peerless queen of all—  
The maid, the country, that I shrine  
In this far-banished heart of mine!

And over the loping leagues of green  
A lone land waits with a hope serene—  
My own land calls like a prisoner queen—  
But oh, the long loping leagues between!

Arthur Henry Adams