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PRELUDE.

Felt the winds round him shake and shower
The rose-red and the blood-red leaf,
Delight whose germ grew never grain,
And passion dyed in its own pain.

Then he stood up, and trod to dust
Fear and desire, mistrust and trust,
And dreams of bitter sleep and sweet,
And bound for sandals on his feet
Knowledge and patience of what must
And what things may be, in the heat
And cold of years that rot and rust
And alter; and his spirit's meat
Was freedom, and his staff was wrought
Of strength, and his cloak woven of thought.

For what has he whose will sees clear
To do with doubt and faith and fear,
Swift hopes and slow despondencies?
His heart is equal with the sea's
And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
Is level to the speech of these,
And his soul communes and takes cheer
With the actual earth's equalities,
Air, light, and night, ~~his~~ winds, and streams,
And seeks not strength from strengthless dreams.

PRELUDE.

His soul is even with the sun
Whose spirit and whose eye are one,
 Who seeks not stars by day, nor light
 And heavy heat of day by night.
Him can no God cast down, whom none
 Can lift in hope beyond the height
Of fate and nature and things done
 By the calm rule of might and right
That bids men be and bear and do,
And die beneath blind skies or blue.

To him the lights of even and morn
Speak no vain things of love or scorn,
 Fancies and passions miscreate
 By man in things dispassionate.
Nor holds he fellowship forlorn
 With souls that pray and hope and hate,
And doubt they had better not been born,
 And fain would lure or scare off fate
And charm their doomsman from their doom
And make fear dig its own false tomb.

He builds not half of doubts and half
Of dreams his own soul's cenotaph
 Whence hopes and fears with helpless eyes,
 Wrapt loose in cast-off cerecloths, rise

PRELUDE.

And dance and wring their hands and laugh,
 And weep thin tears and sigh light sighs,
 And without living lips would quaff
 The living spring in man that lies,
 And drain his soul of faith and strength
 It might have lived on a life's length.

He hath given himself and hath not sold
 To God for heaven or man for gold,
 Or grief for comfort that it gives,
 Or joy for grief's restoratives.
 He hath given himself to time, whose fold
 Shuts in the mortal flock that lives
 On its plain pasture's heat and cold
 And the equal year's alternatives.
 Earth, heaven, and time, death, life, and he,
 Endure while they shall be to be.

“Yet between death and life are hours
 To flush with love and hide in flowers ;
 What profit save in these ?” men cry :
 “ Ah, see, between soft earth and sky,
 What only good things here are ours !”
 They say, “ what better wouldst thou try,
 What sweeter sing of ? or what powers
 Serve, that will give thee ere thou die

PRELUDE.

More joy to sing and be less sad,
 More heart to play and grow more glad?"

Play then and sing; we too have played,
 We likewise, in that subtle shade.

 have twisted through our hair
 as the wild Loves wear,
 what mirth the Mænads made,
~~The~~ wind blew our garlands bare
~~let~~ their roses disarrayed,
~~smote~~ the summer with strange air,
 and discrowned
~~locks~~ that vine-wreaths bound.

 by star-proof trees
 the Thyiades
 loud night on hills that hid
 blood-feasts of the Bassarid,
 their song's iron cadences
 Fright the wolf hungering from the kid,
 Outroar the lion-throated seas,
 Outchide the north-wind if it chid,
 And hush the torrent-tongued ravines
 With thunders of their tambourines.

But the fierce flute whose notes acclaim
 Dim goddesses of fiery fame,