

PROLOGUE

I

There is an active
Principle in them;
Which is not giving,
Is not receiving;
Is not the forcive
Nor the passive lust;
Which forgives tolerance
And indignation;
Is river and bed:
It is the needle
Point and thread, piercing
All receiving all;
Is identical
Imagination.

Light-leaper where leaves
Burn in the hedgerow,
Ripple of animal
Small under the moon
Delicate as fern—
What do they call you?
In a moment sadly,
Grieved in heart and mind,
Seeing you, I called;
But you, not unkind,
Leapt into shadow,
Wise, anonymous;
My heart grieves for a
Name I cannot find.

2

When you walk by me
Friend, I long to ask
Your heart's news of you;
But you walk as one
Seeking a signal
Over the crowd's head.
I sense that retreat;
I mask too, and fear
That like a child you
Peer at a door-slit,
Too timid to meet:
Come in child! I call.
But, startled, you run
Away down the street.

3

The house door is closed.
Welcome has an end.
The lion stares dumbly
With his mask of bronze.
No post will call there,
No business hold us.
What held us? Friendship;
And what parts us, us.
Now the door closes,
Now wood suffices
For doors, for coffins;
Feels nothing. You ask,
Is it death in there?
No, it is a friend.

4

Thoughts are a flock
Of floating gulls,
Grey motes that flash
As they take wing —
Now one and now
Another each
As exquisite
And out of reach.
So are my thoughts
Alight and winged
That fly to her,
And in their flight
Outsoar the salt
Waves' bitterness.

5

And now I know the
Dangers about us:
That friendship cannot
Endure love; that the
Motives of my heart
Are self-desirous;
That absence apart
Would draw us with net
Of words we have said;
That this song may be
Lyric for the dead,
Only for the dead.
But I may not be
Songless where you are.

6

In this love of ours,
Which is always Spring,
And has no Autumn
Rain, nor harvesting,
Air is that cool flowing
Which once in Summer
Comes, under the branch
To mowers who sleep;
As you watch they turn
Their face in welcome,
Still quiet, still sleeping;
But it comes no more,
And we my darling,
In this love of ours?

7

The street-lamp shows
Invisible glass
As light and shade
Flecked on the wall:
They mould a frame
Antique and strange
For summer in
A porcelain bowl.
At dusk my love,
Of light's garden
The fairest rose
Walks there: dusk glows,
Flowers where she moves
Light in dew fall.

8

Here in my room
The rain has made
Pale pattern ghosts
With ceiling damp.
I lie abed,
Put out the lamp:
The pale ghosts come
Alive, and weep.
But one there holds
A world and moon
And all ideal
Creation
Poised in her hands,
Here in my room.

9

The Autumn night
Descends and light
Shrinks to a star.
The evening is
An empty street;
Steps pass, doors shut
Out night; the first
Hearth's silver-bright;
Frost and firelight.
Thoughts of her fill
This narrow room;
Thoughts of her are
Huge on the wall,
As shadows are.

10

Someone must have passed,
I heard grass and air;
My love lay looking
Where June drifted by;
A cloud harboured there
Windlessly, and I
Watched over my love.
Faraway she seemed,
Cloud faraway I,
Yet were we nearer
Than dream and dreamer.
Watching perfection
She, in the harbouring
Stream; and in her, I.

11

So comes perfection,
Drifting on water,
Holding the lovely
Image's form as
From a ship waves flow,
Extend its passing
To our horizon;
Or as a high cloud
Looks downward on
The journeys of men,
Restless to and fro;
Merges again with
Immaculate air.