

## *The Faint Flash of a Fickle Fate*

### *Rediscovering Dowson with Translation of his Verses*

Goethe asserts that poetry is a treasure shared among human beings. To better share and enjoy this treasure, literary pursuers have developed devices for analysis through the past centuries. Critical approaches have found their way into literary texts; poets inevitably fall into separate categories of literary trend their coming generations set for them. The good thing is that a quick though rough idea of a literary trend and its works can be easily grasped, but on the other hand, a poet and his works might easily be associated with a certain label, and their specificity, ignored. If one fails to discern this possibility, he will further attempt arbitrary judgment to confine the significance of a poet and the life of his works. If such judgments are accepted without a second thought, it is all too easy to serve as seemingly convincing standards for other literary devotees. When categorizing devices like literary trends and poet schools are taken for granted for long, stock associations toward a certain poet or a certain work will prevail over any objective observation. Poets are only valued in comparison with each other; poems are appreciated in pair. What follows such judgment or standards is usually a conclusion that favors one poet or work and rule out the other. Again, if this conclusion is unconditionally accepted, it will exclude more potential readers before they try their hands on the poet and his works. However, poetry is a treasure open to everyone. There should not be any means to dwindle the hoard.

A poet is an individual, who leads a different life as ours different from each other, who has a personal lifestyle to deal with the surroundings; a poet is a thinker, who reflects in his mind's eye what befalls his life, who tries diverse viewpoints to realize the world; a poet is a composer, who expresses his life with measures, who goes beyond his life with thoughts.

A poet is any possibility himself, but never a phenomenon in a literary trend or a mere component fitted only in comparison or grouping. A poet can never be placed upon the procrustean bed of autopsy, with their specificity amputated, for expected similarity with others; nor should poets be placed side by side to make sense as any experiment in the laboratory. One does not have to take pains realizing this point; neither does one have to be very perceptive to tell that the stereotype of categorizing or standard-setting somehow domineers and blinds our minds. It is when the world understands otherwise, that the followings deserve our serious concern.

“Standards” might be adopted discriminatorily to find out the “mainstream” and to rule out the “marginal”; poets are labeled as “major,” “minor,” or even “one-poem.” Mentality nourished by such research approaches has been “earthquaking” the poetry land, and numerous poets have been stifled under the debris of oblivion from seeing the light. Once buried, the poet and his works would have less chances than the archeological relics to be unearthed. For how long will a T. S. Eliot be allotted to the world, to discover another John Donne? For how long do we have to wait for a power shovel, to dig out a well-wrought urn? That is the question, a question long neglected.

It is in such an earthquake that Ernest Dowson are trapped among bitter prejudice, as a “minor,” or “one-poem” poet. What is worse is that, the Decadent Movement, a category that Dowson is believed to fall into with his contemporaries, is itself sometimes taken as a “minor” period in the history of English literature, along with the poets and poetic works it breeds.<sup>1</sup> The time, its poets, and its poetic achievements all suffer discrimination:

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Lang, “Decadence,” *Critic*, XXXVII (1990), 171-73. “By kicking holes in his boots, crushing in his hat, and avoiding soap, any young man may achieve a comfortable degree of sordidness, and

the prime of the Victorian era claims a stance in English literature which the late nineties cannot compete; the philosophical Yeats chants in a more pronounced voice than the other Rhymers; the supreme principle “to teach and delight” can hardly be described in the languid, weary spirit which inspires the works in *The Yellow Book*, *The Saturday Review*, or *The Savoy*.

A poet is interpreted as a phenomenon. It takes at least two to make a certain sense, serving as an antithesis to each other, presenting a contrast to satiate the desire of cross analysis; it takes at least two to be significant, by eliminating the significance of the other in each pair through biased comparisons. An autocratic barrier is laid down by the “standards” imposed by the critics to keep the poet silent from the reader. The taste of the few determines the right to verse of the many.

Pity is that the introduction of foreign literatures also follows such standards. In 2000, another *fin de siècle*, most anthologies of the Victorian poetry available in Taipei include few works by Dowson or his contemporaries; some even completely exclude them. The only edition stands all alone on the shelf, eking out a scanty scope of the poetic works of the nineties, is *Poetry of the 1890s*.<sup>2</sup> Still more meager is some representative poems which students of English literature might easily skip in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*. It is therefore understandable that Dowson still remains a stranger to most Chinese readers. Poems by Dowson which indeed elbowed their way into the Chinese world and can still be somehow obtained are the following two only<sup>3</sup>: *Vitae Summa Brevis*

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then, if his verse is immaterial, and his life suicidal, he may regard himself as a decadent indeed.”

<sup>2</sup> Thornton, R. K. R. & Thain, Marion, ed. *Poetry of the 1890s*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1997.

<sup>3</sup> According to Yu Kwang-chung, in his *Poems in English Annotated* 112, there was once another poem translated by Yu-huai (余懷), “Spleen,” which is now no longer available.

*Spem Nos Vetat Incohare Longam* (*Envoy: They Are Not Long*) translated by Yu Kwang-chung<sup>4</sup> and by Zhang Zhen-yu<sup>5</sup>, respectively; *Cynara*, by Liu Ren-xiang.<sup>6</sup> Among the three anthologies containing the said translated works, the one by Zhang has long been out of print.

It is necessary to point out that this thesis does not aim at changing the “standardized” literary world single-handedly. Its main purpose is to draw near the long distance between Dowson’s poetry and its potential readers, to offer one more access to Dowson, as a poet, as a person, not just an antithesis in any sort of comparison, and to leave the judgment open to the Chinese readership. Meanwhile, it is not less crucial to know that the following translated works present only the first verse volume by Dowson. It is still barely enough to cast a comprehensive spectrum of his works. In addition, nuances between the source language and the target language can also, to a certain extent, render the access somewhat winding. Literary translation is always a challenge, verse translation, especially, a challenge daring everyone engaged in literary pursuits for over centuries. It is, nevertheless, at the same time a necessary evil. The original poem has to be “decoded” and then “encoded” in another language, again in a poetic form—in one word, “re-verse.” So, when this “evil” is reversed, the original poem is reborn in another language, and is to “live”—“the continued life of literary works.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Yu, Kwang-chung. *Poems in English Annotated*. Taipei: Buffalo Publishing Ltd., 1991. (余光中.《英詩譯註》. 台北, 水牛出版社, 一九九一)

<sup>5</sup> Zhang, Zhen-yu. *Poetic Script: Lyrical Poems in English Translated*. Taipei: the Bilingual Weekly, 1993. (張振玉.《漢譯英美抒情詩稿》. 台北, 中英文週刊雜誌社, 一九九三)

<sup>6</sup> Liu, Ren-xiang. *A Synopsis of English Literature*. Taipei: Buffalo Publishing Ltd., 1990. (劉仁祥.《泛論英國文學》. 台北, 水牛出版社, 一九九〇)

<sup>7</sup> Benjamin, Walter. “The Task of the Translator.” *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York:

This thesis, titled “rediscovering Dowson through translation,” looks to translating Ernest Christopher Dowson literally and etymologically<sup>8</sup>—to put his works in the Chinese language and to carry this poet across the language barrier as well as the aforementioned literary barrier, introducing him to the Chinese readers that every poet deserves. The former part is a representation through mimesis which lends itself to the inevitable subjectivity of the translator,<sup>9</sup> while the latter is the ultimate goal, the redemption for the innate insufficiency of the former.

The word “mimesis” reveals the fact that there is a difference. It attempts to be similar, it could be much the same, but it can never be the same. It is not genuine. On the other hand, the same word implies the “intended effect”<sup>10</sup> the translator tries to convey in the target language. Since it purports to imitate, it must try to maintain the most distinguished, if not valued, part of its archetype. Therefore the spirit or the essence of the archetype stands a chance to be bequeathed to a foreign readership. To use the word “bequeath” here is to admit the decomposition and reconstruction of the original and to

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Scholcken, 1969. 76.

<sup>8</sup> Etymology of “translate”: Middle English, from Latin *translatus* (pp. of *transfere* to transfer, translate), from *trans-* across + *latus*, past participle of *ferre* to carry

<sup>9</sup> It is to be noted that here both the representation and mimesis refer to the poetic work itself, not the poet, for the distance between what the poet has in mind and what he later puts onto the paper might be a gap which denies to be bridged in any languages, let alone being imitated. Si Kong-tu once mentioned in his *Twenty-four Verses on Poetics* that “Even if there is a form to imitate, once at hand, it is deformed.”(司空圖 . 二十四詩品 . 二 : 「脫有形似 , 握手已違。 」 ) Here he is expounding such a challenge in versification. Yet, it is surprisingly appropriate to take this line intact into the translation theory today, 1091 years after his time, when “imitate” is interpreted as “translate” in its expending definition.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin, Walter. “The Task of the Translator.” *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Scholcken, 1969. 76: “The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original.”

recognize the afterlife arising from this process.

A translating is a funeral of words. The indispensable death has to be invoked to fulfill the promised resurrection. While witnessing the process of a translating, the translator cannot but be conscious of the death and rebirth of the phoenix myth: An old life is consumed, like the original, and then a new life, like the translated work, uprises from the ashes. The furnace of linguistic refinement wherein a newborn work is forged emulates the pyre of fire on which the phoenix immolates itself for immortality. Hence, for the translator, “The phoenix riddle hath more wit by us.”<sup>11</sup>

Discrepancies lie not only in between the work translated and the translated work, but also in between the task of the poet and that of the translator. Discrepancies between the texts can be redeemed, as stated above, but in addition to the “specific linguistic contextual aspects”<sup>12</sup> the translator is directed at, what is left beyond the words is also necessary to be introduced to the reader to bridge the gap of time, culture, and language. For that matter, such an introduction is presented in this article to “etymologically” translate Dowson, along with the translated works which “literally” translate him.

### **Dowson and His Time**

Mark Longaker once gave an compressed précis of the public’s vague, foredoomed impression of Dowson’s life:

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<sup>11</sup> Donne, John. “The Canonization” ll. 23-24.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin, Walter. 76: “The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original. This is a feature of translation which basically differentiates it from the poet’s work, because the effort of the latter is never directed at the language as such, at its totality, but solely and immediately at specific linguistic contextual aspects.”

“...the talented child of neurotic parents, the maladjusted boy at Oxford, the discontented young man in London, his curious infatuation for the child Adelaide, the brief association with prominent literary leaders in the Rhymers’ Club and the short short-lived *Savoy*, and then—his mother’s suicide, his homelessness, poverty, aimless wandering abroad, the escape in drinking finally death...”<sup>13</sup>

This précis indeed cuts an immediate silhouette for those who try their first peep into Dowson’s life. Only silhouette.

To further realize how Dowson’s life journey and emotional experiences, directly or indirectly, influenced his point of view toward the world, a reconstruction of his biography is offered in the appendix of the thesis. In the view that few publications related to Dowson are known to the public here, there is a sore need for such a reconstruction. Moreover, it is also helpful to present Dowson to those who are formerly unaware of him. This demands to be done, in a broader sense of the word, “translation.” On the other hand, in case that the biography might be proportionally advantageous in the first part of the thesis and accordingly influences the interpretation approaches, a rearrangement has rendered this biography as the appendix.

A life span of 32 years is certainly short, but to sum up Dowson’s life in a few pages is hardly comprehensive. A thorough account of his life, however, is not the aim of the appendix. It attempts merely to assist the reader to understand more the connection between his works and his life. Not all his works can, or should, fall into an autobiographical interpretation, nor can we deny literary creation reflects oftentimes the life of the creator. As a matter of fact, the word “life” is used as a generic term when we such

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<sup>13</sup> Longaker, Mark. *Ernest Dowson*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944.

a expression like “the life of the poet.” It integrates at least three elements related to a literary figure: his time, or to be more specific, his lifetime; his culture, not the whole literary environment which is allegedly generalized, but the influences operate upon him under his own favor and choices, and then contribute to what he appear to be in the world of letters; the life the poet reflected—with his works, in his language. Life, again to use the word generically, of an author is essential, if not indispensable, in understanding his works. While the theory of “death of the author” flooded in the realm of literary analysis for long, it is fairly obvious for people to tell the deliberate exclusion of an autobiographic interpretation from the complete illiteracy of the author’ s life. Any critical or analytical theory is to grant the reader a different angle to look at the work from, not to grant the ignorant an pedantic excuse to defense their benightedness and personal arbitrariness. Besides, knowing the life of the author is also one of many ways to understand the text, no one approach should ever rule out another.

The lifetime, the first element of “life,” as pointed out in the preceding paragraph, has been presented. What follows to be adverted to is the culture. It is always wiser and safer to be aware that every poet is an individual, never one of many uniform literary devotees who follow one single traceable literary creed. This, unfortunately, is often neglected. A poet, or any artist, will certainly choose his favorite material, model, technique, and other essentials from among the many his environment provides him with, for his creation. It does not need any academic quotations to bring out the fact that everyone is diverse in their tastes, so is it unfair to label poets or periods of literary history with literary trends and to blur their personal characteristics procrustean for arbitrary generalization.



## The Cultural Characteristics as a Context

Poets in the nineties lend themselves to procrustean labeling even more often, because of their known gatherings (“organization,” which more or less connotes a mutual goal to reach, and a single creed to follow, certainly does not fit in the context), such as “The Rhymers’ Club.” Their gatherings can oftentimes encourage some to make the aforementioned generalization more pronounced. Northrop Frye, who attacks the vague generalization of the term “Pre-Raphaelite,” was quoted by Ian Fletcher when he referred to the term “decadence.”<sup>14</sup> Actually, the two critics named generalization of this kind “danger.” It is a danger for the only thing that brought the Rhymers together might be their mutual interest in poetry, and—nothing else. It is a danger for the Rhymers believed all theories were vulgar, and that was their own theory.<sup>15</sup> This unquestionably makes it impossible to define them in any concrete way.

While some would like to disparage them for the foreign influence accepted by some of the nineties poets, the arbitrariness can only grow more strikingly obvious.<sup>16</sup> This disparagement is more than a mere danger—it is a disaster. Although it is by far unbelievable for a critic of English literature to be ignorant of the world-known bard, this one who waged this attack here did succeed in “forgetting the condition of his estate, but not to

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<sup>14</sup> Fletcher, Ian. *Decadence and the 1890s*. London: E. Arnold, 1979. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Hough, Graham Goulden. *The Last Romantics*. New York: AMS Press, 1978. 205: “since their principal theory was that all theories were vulgar, we can only attempt to describe an atmosphere, a vague community of sentiment, to be perceived only in hints and snatches.”

<sup>16</sup> Jackson, Holbrook. *The Eighteen Nineties*. New York, Knopf; London, Grant Richards, 1913. 58: “But the chief influences came from France, and partially for that reason the English decadents always remained spiritual foreigners in our midst; they were not a product of England but of cosmopolitan London.” And the following sentence is poets labeled as “decadents” “certainly would each have felt more at home in Paris or Dieppe. . .” places that Dowson went for self-exile to shun saddening scenes

rejoice in Shakespeare's." <sup>17</sup> When the Renaissance England witnessed the achievements of the bard, it did not reject him as a "product of Italian influence, or of "a cosmopolitan London." It would be questionable to say the Italian influences in the bard were less than the French ones in Dowson when we tell over all the Italian names, stories, and even literary forms and techniques conveyed into the works of the Sweet Swan of Avon, who is credited to enrich the English language with borrowed elements.

Hardly any few would have Shakespeare in mind without being reminded of these two lines: "Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show / To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe." <sup>18</sup> The quality and quantity of the two authors are not to be compared, but this discrimination tells that the attack focused on foreign influences in an author is absolutely ill-founded. No possible means will be available to take intact foreign influences to or from two different languages. The language barrier forbids. Such influences are to be internalized by the author first, and then in a sense be translated to find its proper embodiment in another language, and to enjoy their "continued life." It was, is, and will be done by any author who try to introduce a revivifying energy to his language. One would not have to bother Walter Benjamin to tell that the one single pure language has long been lost so such a transference process between two language is necessary and is a redemption. It is again questionable to say what Shakespeare did for a merit should be referred to Dowson as a fault.

Every author is unique, but never isolated as an Donne's island. Shakespeare

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back home.

<sup>17</sup> Originally from *As You Like It*, Act I, Scene II, "Rosalind. Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours."

<sup>18</sup> Ben Jonson. "To the Memory of My Beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare" ll. 41-42.

received border-crossing learning of the Renaissance, so did Dowson his own. What makes the author unique or memorable is not and cannot be what he learned, but how he interpreted it in his own language. For they, like Pater points out, “breathe a common air, and catch light and heat from each other’s thoughts.”<sup>19</sup> Their friends, encounters are their living bookshelves. They create from more than what they read. In spite of same source for creation, the perception, the viewpoints, along with the life experiences and the reaction afterwards are quite personal. So is their creation. It is definitely their specificity that dominates their works, not the materials their works were wrought from.

The nineties poets, with their life spans and literary interests overlapped, certainly might share something in common—just like everyone in his own circle of friends, where there are times to agree and disagree. Exclusion or complete ignorance of their similarities or interactive influences are not to be encouraged. What asserts here is the notion of the “nuances” between poets of the same “school” should rather be replaced by the recognition of the “differences” among the individual poets who happened to share their time and space together. It is only partial to focus on their similarities, and to file them under the same category. This point has been shared by critics dedicated in the field of the nineties poetic works,<sup>20</sup> though, iteration is needed before the “culture” is introduced.

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<sup>19</sup> Walter Pater’s words can surely do Dowson justice in the debate of his French influences. Pater, when talked about the Italian influences prevailing the Renaissance, he said, “Here, artists and philosophers and those whom the action of the world has elevated and made keen, do not live in isolation, but breathe a common air, and catch light and heat from each other’s thoughts. There is a spirit of general elevation and enlightenment in which all alike communicate.” (Pater, Walter. *The Renaissance*. Preface.)

<sup>20</sup> Dowling, Linda. *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986. 175: “. [poets in the nineties] are to be described only partially or punitively with the term “Decadent.”; also Thornton, Robert Kelsey Rought. *The Decadent Dilemma*.

The culture to be treated of here is what the poet chose from his own surrounding literary atmosphere for himself and later grew synergistic with his own poetic talents, a kind of culture that found its axis in him, not the kind which devoured his specificity or he went after with anyone else. The influences simultaneously accepted in his circle with him, nevertheless, would not be radically excluded, for even if artists given the same material for artistic piece, they are still to turn in diverse works under the same theme. The approach adapted here is an initiating introduction of what was once most accessible to poets in his circle, followed by discussion of Dowson's characteristics in his poems—his interpretation of these influences.

Being a disciple of Pater in aesthetics, the concept of art Dowson had in mind should not fall into any moral judgment.<sup>21</sup> It should be interpreted for its own sake. In addition, this interpretation should not find its root in nature, but in deliberately artificial maneuvering.<sup>22</sup> The subject of nature was only taken as an initiative which inspired the work, not as the theme itself. Through the subject, the work retraced to the creator, the mind of the poet.<sup>23</sup> The idea about art is also the most outstanding characteristics that Dowson's time was

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London: E. Arnold, 1983. 188: "Only partial and necessarily flawed definitions can be made of a movement which was so amorphous that some would question whether it was a movement at all."

<sup>21</sup> This concept was once emphasized by Wilde in the Preface of his *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Although Dowson chose to dedicate his Preface of *Verses* to Adelaide, not to the concept of art, it did not have less impact in Dowson. Havelock Ellis, the critic, also hailed this aesthetics as a devotion of the time to art and asserted that in their aesthetics, "there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral work of art." (Fletcher. 27)

<sup>22</sup> Longaker once commented that the senses the nineties poets tried to resort to was "dulled by the commonplace, had to be stimulated, even agitated, by a deliberate search for subtle, unusual effects." (Longaker Mark. *Contemporary English Literature*.)

<sup>23</sup> As Lionel Johnson explicitly stated, "to catch the precise aspect of a thing, as you see or feel it; to express, not the obvious and barren fact, but the inner [surely through the poet's mental projection]

famous for.<sup>24</sup> Artistic creation aims not in didactic or any utilitarian purposes. Nor has it to convey any message.<sup>25</sup> Using Archibald MacLeish's expression, art should not mean, but be.<sup>26</sup> This aesthetics leads to extreme and definite philosophy towards art. Under which, art or the beauty derived from art should be projected into the work with concrete terminology<sup>27</sup> as to resort to the senses. Although the terminology or the things described in the work has to be concrete, yet the atmosphere brought forth must remain in a certain distance from this mundane world, and thus denies any worldly interpretation, sometimes misty and amorphous.<sup>28</sup>

Another pair of antitheses of this attitude were also detected by Lionel Johnson, one of Dowson's most intimate friends among his contemporary poets, and referred to as "one virtue and one vice." He defined the attitude of the creation of his time, when "passion, or romance, or tragedy, or sorrow, or any other form of activity or of emotion, must be refined upon, and curiously considered, for literary treatment: an age of afterthought, or reflection. Hence come one great virtue, and one great vice: the virtue of much and careful meditation upon life, its emotions and its incidents; the vice of over-subtlety and of affectation, when

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and fruitful force of it."

<sup>24</sup> It was referred to by Longaker as "the outgrowth of a definite aesthetic philosophy" that distinguish the nineties from other times in the concept of what art is. ( Longaker Mark. *Contemporary English Literature*. 25)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 25, "he [Dowson] was unconcerned with conveying a message."

<sup>26</sup> *Ars Poetics*. Ll. 23-24, "A poem should not mean / But be."

<sup>27</sup> Pater in his Preface to *The Renaissance* asserts that, "To define beauty, not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible." (Pater, Walter. *The Renaissance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.)

<sup>28</sup> Arthur Symons, recorded by Dr. Longaker, said about the works of the nineties, "to fix the last fine shade, the quintessence of things; to fix it fleetingly; to be a disembodied voice, and yet the voice of a human soul."

thought thinks upon itself, and when emotions become entangled with the consciousness of them.”<sup>29</sup> Of course, the words “virtue” and “vice” he mentioned here do not contain any moral connotations, and the “vice” is employed with hyperbole which emphasizes the comparatively introverted ways of thinking of this time. But for the entanglement of the outward and the inward, Dowson would have never been able to take his readers to his realm far away from the real world. In this art-for-art’s sake sense, both are “virtues” that contribute to the significance of the nineties poetry.

The deliberate elaborateness given birth by the nineties poets into their works was considered essential part of art.<sup>30</sup> The two reasons are self-evident. First, their aesthetics leads them to believe that the art begets the supreme beauty, and the beauty lies in the perception of the most subtle responses of the senses which goes far beyond the senses “dulled by the commonplace of the worldly.” Therefore, the more subtle, namely artificial, their artifice is, the more beauty they can bring forth to honor art. Second, accordingly, since what they were after was never believed available in the mundane world, or worse, kept unseen from it, they would not hesitate to run away from nature for their own dreamland.<sup>31</sup> Nature, with a double sense, “the natural” and “the worldly”, was to them a

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<sup>29</sup> The Century Guild Hobby Horse VI. 65.

<sup>30</sup> Instead of using the word “deliberate,” Fletcher asserts likewise that the style which the nineties poets forged was “consciously artificial, disciplined, formal.”

<sup>31</sup> “Oscar Wilde,..indicated that nature was an unproductive field in which to find poetic content.” (Longaker Mark. *Contemporary English Literature*. 23); “. indicated that he [Dowson] had reached through his reading or experience the belief that Nature was an abhorrent harpy, who was a false mother to her children. he denounced Nature, and vowed that no song of his should ever celebrate the shameful triumphs of her laws. He was completely aware, he stated, of all of Nature’s treachery and vileness; and he would never again be betrayed into believing her beauty other than a mask behind which lurked a malign force.” Before 20, Dowson had explicitly exposed his disbelief in nature. (Longaker, Mark. *Ernest Dowson*. 36.)

place full of either crude unrefined scenes or intolerable bourgeoisie; art should always be independent from nature, and always attached to the hand of man. To turn themselves away from the world for art, only elaborateness deliberate enough can assure the distance required by which they feel artistically comfortable and achieved.<sup>32</sup>

This distance from the reality, or discarding of it, claims, if not persists, its intelligible presence in Dowson's works. In the air of life-weariness in his work, such a distance is sometimes achieved through death wish. This technique, or say penchant, lacks no abundant tracks through the history of literature. This death wish is not to be taken literally. It reveals the poet's disappointment in the world and meanwhile he still entertains a certain hope in the world beyond, spiritually. Besides, as stated above, what they pursue does not dwell in the real world. A spiritual journey that goes beyond this life is quite understandable. This touch of work is certainly not to be associated with the dissipated life some of the nineties poets, including Dowson, had led. To say they tried to convert the death wish from their works into their real life, or say suicidal drive made them, in the sense of their time, die heroic, seems far from well-grounded.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Fletcher also remarked alike: "Art and artifice become the one way of going beyond the world while remaining in some way of it." (Fletcher. 29)

<sup>33</sup> John Stoke, in his *In the Nineties*, takes up a whole chapter discussing the death wish and suicidal drive in 1890s. He alleged, "the suicidal individual was exceptionally sensitive to the world around him, as a hero might be; that he possessed the kind of 'swift, disastrous and suicidal energy of genius' that Symons attributed, typically, to the poet Ernest Dowson" and then "Death wishes were something that nineties' writers .professed to know well..To the creative artist, suicides were sympathetic and arguably, rational.:" (respectively in the said book 118, 131) Although his voice is not loud to lead or mislead people to the belief that Dowson was ever possessed by such a suicidal drive, it is still important to make sense that Dowson, though hardly paying attention to his own health and under the shadow of his parents' suicide, was never detected displaying such a tendency, no matter through his correspondences with friends or accounts by his friends. There was only own time he mentioned the

To take a closer look at this weariness which is especially pronounced in Dowson's works, we have to further this discussion into the another phase—the third element—the poet's language, with which he wove his poems. Whatever the reason might be<sup>34</sup>, life-weariness does prevail over Dowson's poetry as to oftentimes dominate the work as a theme than just usual allusions. In the poems of Dowson, the mental tiredness, if not literally explicit, often mounts its height in a forlorn scene. The setting is, most of the time, either the evening or the night, with a retrospection of the days long past. Ruminating his experiences of life in the memory, the poet always ended up with heavy mood "far too tired to laugh or weep." The various expressions of the fatigue is usually accompanied by those of labor in life. In this, "Beata Solitudo," "Sapientia Luae," and "Vesperal" are the most explicit. Among other poems in *Verses*, other causes of such fatigue also include the predoomed fate of mankind, the failure in love, and some more "idle tears" that denies definitive explanations. The statement that Dowson's "predominant sentiment is weariness"<sup>35</sup> unquestionably is an consensus that readers of Dowson will easily reach.

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idea of suicide. That was when he found out that Adelaide was going to marry a waiter and afterwards he wrote to his friend, Samuel Smith in April 1897: "I know that you must think me a fool, but I am suffering the torture of the damned. I ought to have drown myself at Pont Aven.:" (Flower, Desmond, and Henry Maas, eds. *The Letters of Ernest Dowson*. 382) This single line "I ought to have drown myself" will never serve as a solid proof of a death wish brought to life. Any tongue in the pangs of a lost love can easily utter likewise.

<sup>34</sup> Although Dr. Longaker proposed that, "When both of his parents committed suicide, the life-weariness which was part of his birthright became more pronounced," (Longaker Mark. *Comtemporary English Literature*. 24)there is no way to tell whether his later failure in love and otherwise was outweighed by the what he suggested. It would be more likely that all these had contributed to the ultimate weariness.

<sup>35</sup> Hough, Graham Goulden. *The Last Romantics*. 214-15, "His [Dowson] predominant sentiment is weariness, and the sense of exile from a consolation long desired and no longer hoped for.:" Among his many disparaging criticism to Dowson, he at last hold one pertinent opinion.



A tangible sense of regret is what mostly precedes the life-weariness theme, and his reaction, if there is any, will no doubt be resignation, the flinching from the futile world. The recurrent sighs towards the vain labor, vain hope, and wasted time and attempts in his poems accumulate to a striking amount. Terms like “past days,” “old days,” “days long ago”, among which he tells over the transient delights in life and is soon drawn back to the cruel world by the present pains he suffers from, only add more remorse to the suffocating despair. The result is usually a vain hope for an imaginary realm “that may not be.” The fatigued poet seems too weak to fight for anything worthwhile in life, for it can at best last for a while, and then nothing. Poems like “Villanelle of His Lady’s Treasures” and “Soli Cantare Periti Arcades” are the rarest among the rare jolly poems Dowson has ever tried his hand at. Except for these two works, there are hardly any perceptible incongruent themes in his works, and certainly not any in *Verses*. Conclusions like “regret and resignation are his distinctive notes”<sup>36</sup> thus claim a well-grounded foundation beyond controversy.

The dreamland where the poet often cringed to from the real world was never given any detailed descriptions. Instead, it takes on different embodiment in the poems. The most recurrent one is a garden, either in the dark or under the faint moonlight; the shadows as such an embodiment is also a common scene; the less frequent, but usually the most impressive is the lips of a girl, Cynara or anonymous, which surmount all the other and bring forth the insight of the antithesis of the real world, and intensify the longing for such a dreamland which shelters the poet from the weary reality.<sup>37</sup> However, it would be

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<sup>36</sup> Dowling, Linda. *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*. 204.

<sup>37</sup> Fletcher has cited the poem “Cynara” in detail to suggest the contrast in between these two worlds:

misleading to say such a dreamland, in any way embodied forth, could provide the poet eternal mental stability or sense of security. He was always aware of the impossibility of his promised land to come true. His despair was never directed solely to the secular society he was born in, but also to the unattained he longed for. What draws a distinction in between is his attitude: to the former he always tackle with a unhesitating cowering, to the latter he always remain a faithful votary, however transient the comfort whereof may be. The synergistic frustration remains mostly dormant. It was not until he put down the last two lines of the poem "Vain Hope," "I know these things are dreams / And may not be." that the despair both ways reached its climax.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Language of Dowson**

To arouse the feeling of this dreamland, and without giving it a realistic description, a language that expresses the forlornness detached from the worldly and the remorse derived from it comes under Dowson's pen. With Pater's teachings in mind, Dowson hardly dealt with amorphous subject. It is always a delicate hand, a bright face, pure eyes, or dark hair

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"the real world of the 'bought red mouth' is made tasteless by the siren call of Cynara."

<sup>38</sup> To the modern readers or critics, this touch of artistic creation can be well accepted and understood. It was not, at least to some critic or critics five years after Dowson's death. In *Saturday Review* (June 17, 1905. 808), there was a shocking and ill-founded slander: "Ernest Dowson's poetry could never have become very popular. To most people it must mean so little, must seem so shadowy, so remote from the world in which they live. It comes from a distance, and with a strange hush about it, as though borne on some quiet wind of death." Such a criticism should have been left unmentioned, for it denies any reasonable consideration, as reason itself denies it. We do not have to bother citing how even farther the worlds presented in some fairy tales or science fictions appear to prove the logical fallacy in it. However it is in a sense worthwhile mentioning here to present another example in which the critics' irrational ignorance forced Dowson's underneath the oblivion of the public by posthumous disparagement.

of a girl that first come into sight. Alongside his depiction of these subjects, he gradually draw in his application of sensuous responses. This language, absolutely, is not strong, and must not be strong. It is not to serve the outburst of outrageous emotions. It is to shed a thin, faint ray of the serene melancholy against the antipodes of the hustle of the world and the praise of the innocent. It has to be delicate, beautiful, and at the same time silent and haunting. It is to be more artistic than informative; it is to be expressive than narrative. It is a language of the moonlit night.

The moonlit night not only forges the imaginary world of the poet but also tint the color of the poet's language. The language of Dowson, just like such a night, is darkly pale. Our feeling of the color of the poet is aroused mostly from between the line, not some scientific statistics, though, the striking repeated terminology like "pale," "dark," "gray" and so forth does tell a lot about the color of his language. In *Verses*, composed of 44 poems, besides the implicitly alluded scenario of the darkly pale vision, the word "pale" or "pallid" claims its presence for 14 times; "white," 7; "fair," 8; "dark," 17; and "gray," 8. Even at the very first sight of his works, "the first faint flush" of his language is not to be ignored. Both recognizing the brief span of life, the Cavalier poets respond with their jolly *carpe diem* reveries, while Dowson retreats to a gloomy, tranquil, chilly land. His forlornness afar this world his faithfulness in his own one is intensified by both the setting of night and the color of the night in his language.

The way Dowson conveys the unique atmosphere into his works is altogether his own. There might be stock expressions for his scenes, there might be something others once tried to express, but he is the one who achieves the construction of the land of the moon that resorts to the most subtle responses of the senses to get across his life-weariness.

However, some, failing to see this point, once tried to charge him with “conventional vocabulary.”<sup>39</sup> Again the slander, like others related to Dowson, proved nothing but its own vulnerability. The evolution of written language is known slower and meanwhile exerts a stabilizing force to language and literature,<sup>40</sup> and there are also times to draw near the reader to the world the poet creates with wordings more acquainted to the reader. About this, Eliot had already taken pains explaining in his “The Music of Poetry.”<sup>41</sup> Slanders towards Dowson included in this article are actually limited. Although they easily lay down their vulnerabilities before us, it is still far from understandable why there were so many to make the silent poet even more silent.

In addition to the visual effect of his language, the striking effect of its musicality will not slip off the mind who by any chance “hear” Dowson’s poems with a slight glimpse. Except for his drama and prose poems, there are none of his works which have been discovered so far without rhyme. Musicality is no doubt the vital sap circulating in any of his poems, and one of the distinguishing notes of Dowson as well. Dowson himself, while writing to his friend, also revealed that he had been experimenting different forms with different rhyme schemes to produce his haunting melodious music in the poems.<sup>42</sup> His

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<sup>39</sup> Hough. 212. Hough here uses the term “Pre-Raphaelite,” which was severely attacked by Northrop Frye for the arbitrary literary classification and asserted, “Dowson’s languid rhythms and conventional vocabulary represent only the final etiolation of the pre-Raphaelite-Swinburnian diction, not without a pathetic charm, but utterly without the germ of new poetic life.”

<sup>40</sup> Pei. 265.

<sup>41</sup> Eliot. 35: “I do not believe that the task of the poet is primarily and always to effect a revolution in language. It would not be desirable, even if it were possible, to live in a state of perpetual revolution: the craving for continual novelty of diction and metric is as unwholesome as an obstinate adherence to the idiom of our grandfathers. There are times for exploration and times for the development of the territory acquired.”

<sup>42</sup> Flower. *The Letters of Ernest Dowson*. 184. In a letter to Arthur Moore, when Dowson talked about

diversified rhyme schemes and various forms of prosody had found him considerable presence in reviews. He wrote sonnets, rondeaux (not in *Verses*, but in his second collections of works, *Decorations*) along with other forms. Among which, his villanelles are probably the most prominent. He was especially fond of the form in which five tercets are followed by a quatrain with only two rhymes through the whole poems. The required refrain in villanelle fits to arouse the lingering melody Dowson tries to achieve in his verse. Though his rhyming devices are numerous, villanelle is the one the poet often associated with.

Dowson's poetry, as stated above, resort to responses to the senses. It provides not only a visual feast but also a feast to the ear. The intended repetitions, the neatly wrought rhymes, and the tempo between the lines make his life-weariness, solitude, and the moonlit dreamland not only visual but also audible. The color of his language and the musicality of it together weave his poetic themes into a uniquely resounding delicacy. Such a musical technique in prosody often reminded us of the considerable influences the poet received from Pater and Verlaine. While Pater asserts that "all art constantly aspired towards the condition of music,"<sup>43</sup> Verlaine's teaching to this disciple lingers as well in his mind: "Music above everything."<sup>44</sup> In a letter to his friend, Dowson even went so far to revealed that "I have been writing verses. .verses made for mere sound, & music, with just a

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the creation of his most famous poem, "Cynara," he referred to it as an "experiment."

<sup>43</sup> Murphy, 30.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Verlaine in his *Art Poétique*, wrote: "Music above everything / And odd music at that—/ Vaguer and more soluble than air, / Without anything in it that burdens or is set." Dowson, long being an admirer of Verlaine, did consciously engage himself in this practice of musicality. In fact, he concluded his poetry was wrought alike right after he first received this inspiration.

suggestion of sense, or hardly that; a vague Verlainesque emotion.”<sup>45</sup> Yet, Dowson’s conclusion about his versification drawn from his influences is not to be taken literally. It only contribute to expound the emphasis of musicality laid down in his poetic works. Like Eliot once said, “the music of poetry is not something which exists apart from the meaning . Otherwise, we could have poetry of great musical beauty which made no sense, and I have never come across such poetry.”<sup>46</sup> The musicality in Dowson’s poetry is to be well recognized as one of the most pronounced refined poetic traits, but never a device independent from the meanings of his poetry.

One fascinating effect of his musicality is that his poems, though full of sounds, do not come to achieve a bustling stimulus to the ear, for this effect parallels his “persistent thematic emphasis on silence and inefficacy of words.”<sup>47</sup> His music, rather than contradictory, is constructive to the his language of the moonlit night. Along with the space he exquisitely leaves between his depicted subject matters, a sense of serenity never fail to soothe, or suppress, the pains in life into silent sufferings and penitence. With musical refrains and stripped down dramatic situations, it is not exaggerated to point out that Dowson’s works bear some similarity of the popular ballads, but the depth of mood and emotion he deals with are certainly modern.<sup>48</sup>

To further explore the musicality and repetitive use of exclamatory lines and

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<sup>45</sup> Flower. *The Collected Letters of Ernest Dowson*. 189. In a letter to Arthur Moore on March 20, 1891.

<sup>46</sup> Eliot. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Dowling. 204.

<sup>48</sup> Although Jackson failed to spot the possible association, he also pointed out that “Ernest Dowson linked an eternal and bitter anguish of the soul with modern emotion.” (Jackson. 91.)

apostrophes in Dowson's verse with Lyotard's viewpoint,<sup>49</sup> one may find another possibility to bring closer the relation between the music and the emotion of his poems. When Lyotard cites popular sayings, proverbs, and maxims for examples, he inspires us that the repetitive recountings of them have achieved a never-forget oblivion. That is, this particular form of narrative with "lexical and syntactic anomalies" (poetry) obscures the meaning of what is inside the work. The impressiveness of the rhythms and art-wrought lines outlives the seemingly emphasis of the emotion conveyed by the content. Through the intended recurrent music in verse which fits for memorization, the origin and meaning of the poetic work will instead be worn away from the memory while the resounding poetic meters linger on.

If we can say the sorrows and sometimes remorse of the poet are the emotions which weave most of the verse of Dowson, and his emphasis on the employment of poetic musicality is his hypnotic device to ease the pain, we might understand more his point when he wrote his poems were "made for mere sound, & music." What are to be left behind the sorrowful contents of his verse will thus be the metrical wordings which give sighs that forget what they mean and how they are engendered. This philosophical assertion also provides more space for the poetic text. When the poem, "Cynara," is mostly remembered by its "I'm tired of an old passion," and "I've been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion," the story behind the poem and the autobiographical interpretation will no longer impose themselves on the reader. Thus, Cynara does not have to be Cynara, passion does not have to be passion, what appears on the surface of the text can be extricated from its relation with the personal emotion of its author and the work itself gains a further sublimed

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<sup>49</sup> Lyotard, Jean-François. Chap. 6. The Pragmatics of Narrative Knowledge.

life. Through this process, Dowson's works achieve their immortality—to be remembered for their musical prosody, and achieve their negligence—to be ignored for the emotions wrought in them. The oxymoronical “never-forget oblivion” offers another new dimension of Dowson's belief in music.

Reviews attempt to conclude aspects projecting from Dowson's poetry are certainly not few. While some suggest “idealism among distractions of the world is the central axis around which Dowson's poetry revolves,” and still some claims “The contrast of ‘vanity and mortality of the dull world’ and his ‘star-crowned solitude’ restate the other poems’ subject,”<sup>50</sup> Harold Bloom is still the one who provides a more comprehensive outline of the poetry of Ernest Dowson. In his quick grip of Dowson's poetics, Bloom advocates that his poetry is to “photograph sensitively the effect of a scene, an incident, upon the emotions, and reproduce it in verse with all its delicate transience, without comment, without reflection. an effect. transferred from the sensibilities of the poet to those of the reader.”<sup>51</sup>

Which, reminds us of Ruan Ji (阮籍). Although we cannot jump to the conclusion that he is Dowson's counterpart in the Chinese literature, he does share something emotionally in common with the poet in the nineties. Here is one critical review of Ruan Ji that rectifies this association: “Through a comprehensive survey of Ruan Ji's lyrics, [we perceive that] the profound gist does not and should not lend itself to concrete interpretation. Yet the poetic values lie exactly in the denial of specific interpretation. Generally speaking, a good poem does not rely on such an interpretation of its gist to assert its value. The denial of Ruan Ji's lyrics against such an interpretation contributes all the more to its prevailing

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<sup>50</sup> Thornton. *The Decadent Dilemma*. Respectively 96, 98.

<sup>51</sup> Bloom. 6042.



resonance in the reader: the infinite sorrow in life, the plentiful anguish in this world. the eager relief from them is converted into anxiety and grief. Resigning himself into to adversity, he has never given up the love he harbored inside. The fear and restlessness towards the evil, the brief span of the mortal life...<sup>52</sup>

Poetic creation is personal, so is the appreciation of it. Therefore, there is no scientific standard to judge what a good poem should be like. Nevertheless, there are some criticisms to shed us a light of what a good poem is. “In truth, a good poem,” a desirably agreeable criticism discloses, “should consist of the blood and tear of the poet.”<sup>53</sup> The “blood and tear” surely finds its echo in the third elements among the four of a canon: originality, thoroughness, authenticity, and power. To such a definition of good poetry, Dowson’s poetry surely wins its trophy of good poetry. As good poetry composed of genuine feelings, Dowson’s works should be accessible to more readers; as good poetry composed, Dowson’s works are therefore translated here to meet the said purpose.

To translate Dowson’s poetry is a considerable challenge. The original is an lyrical text with faint frail phrasings. This means the translated text should present much more than the verbal meanings of the original. The color of the language, the delicacy hidden, and most challenging of all, the musicality. The color and the delicacy, somehow, may find their equivalents in the target language, or even stock expressions, if lucky. However, crowned

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<sup>52</sup> Li Fu-xuan (李富軒). 25. The original : “縱觀阮籍的詠懷詩,雖然其旨遙深,難以篇篇實指,也不必篇篇實指,但其價值也恰恰就在這個不能篇篇實指.一般地說,一首好詩往往就在它的題旨不能實指.正因為阮籍的詠懷詩不能實指,所以它們的藝術感染力也更加地大:人生無限的感傷,生活中充滿悲痛..欲求解脫而不可能的焦急與憂慮,逆來順受而又不願喪失自己愛,惡的惶恐與不安,人生短促 ”

<sup>53</sup> 羅青. 《詩人之燈》14. The original: “真正的好詩,必含有詩人的血和淚.因為無論詩如何變化,最終總是要以人為中心。”

with the faith to the original meanings, and in the fetters of the rhyme schemes, if the translator is not stifled inactive, he can hardly dance elegantly either. Moreover, the dilemma of the conversion of such musicality lies in that most of the rhyme schemes adopted by Dowson, English or French, cannot find their precedents in the Chinese language. Even the most common abab scheme, once achieved, it will fray the rhyme less perceivable. The only exception seems to be the couplet form, which survives the traditional rhyme scheme in most Chinese poems—one fixed rhyme through one stanza, or one rhyme for the juxtaposed two lines.

For musicality is one of Dowson's noted characteristics in his poetry, and is what he consciously conveys into it, there can never be justification convincing enough to put all this collection into prose fragments cut in a seemingly verse format. Although some cases exercise compelling denial for us to give up the original rhymes, most of the works in *Verses* are rendered with rhyme otherwise.<sup>54</sup> What this translation mainly focuses on is the rhyme at the end of sentences. Other audio effects, like alliteration, may fail to appear in the target language. The "first faint flush," for example, would hardly from the poor compass of the translator find their way into the Chinese language. Under alike circumstances, the sound will be jettisoned to secure the meanings of the verbal text, or mostly replaced by other possible rhyming. Among the forty four poems in *Verses*, the rare unrhymed exceptions are only two (No. 1 & 5); twenty two are forced to rhyme otherwise. Luckily, there are still twenty poems, with a few exceptional lines, stick to their original rhyming patterns. (No. 2, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 36, 37, 39, 40)

Translation is actually representation and reproduction. There are no terms like

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<sup>54</sup> Namely the "one fixed rhyme through stanza, or one rhyme for the juxtaposed two lines."

“definitive” or “standardized” to address any translated works. Not only Dowson’s works can be referred to as experiment, even their translation, or all kinds of translations fit for the word. According to Heidegger, “the one single poetic statement” out of which great poets create their poems is remained silent till the end.<sup>55</sup> The translation, or “echo,” in Benjamin’s term, of the statement unspoken, therefore has to face a farther distance from the core of the statement. While translation draws near the foreign readers to the author, the according distance occur during translating can hardly be ruled out. As what is said in the beginning of this article, translation is a necessary evil. It in a sense does good to the original and yet in another does damage. When the good finally outpaces the damage coming along, then this translation deserves its due. While facing a poet like Dowson, whose rare delicate touch of verse take into being an atmosphere estranged in the Chinese language, people might easily ignore the unnecessary concerns of the translating damage and do not hesitate to bring him into the world of another language.

With conceivable endeavors and rumination on language in it, this translated collection of Dowson’s works hopes to let known the literary figure once left in oblivion of the public and looks up to add to the familiar choices of the readers in the Chinese world. In this another period of *fin de siècle*, may this poetic resounding of this *fin de siècle* almost one century ago be heard again. To once again remind us of the language of the night, and to once again echo the silent outcry of life, the paragraph is found fit to end this article and to recall the poet:

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<sup>55</sup> Heidegger. *On the Way to Language*. 160: “Every great poet creates his poetry out of one single poetic statement only. The measure of his greatness is the extent to which he becomes so committed to that singleness that he is able to keep his poetic Saying wholly within it. The poet’s statement remains unspoken. None of his individual poems, nor their totality, says it all. Nonetheless, every

“It is night: ah, that I must be light! And thirst for the things of night! And solitude!

It is night: now my longing breaks from me like a wellspring—I long for speech.

It is night: now do all leaping fountains speak louder. And my soul too is a leaping fountain.

It is night: only now do all songs of lovers awaken. And my soul too is the song of a lover.”<sup>56</sup>

### A Word Before the Work

In the translated text, whether words rhyme with each other or not is decided according to the rules and categorizations set in *Classification of Rhymes* (詩韻新編), while the interchangeable rhymes of “i” and “ü” are also adopted in addition. However, for the translator, rhyming should be considered in response to the ear, not only to the rules, especially rules set at a distance of time which allows changes of pronunciation to happen. For that matter, the common rhyming rule in which “zhi,” “chi,” “shi,” “ri,” are all considered to rhyme with “er” is not employed in this text, though Bian Zhi-lin did include it in his approach.<sup>57</sup> As for the form, the translated text remains the same number of lines and stanzas as they were in the original. Thus, couplets, tercets, quatrains, and in the end

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poem speaks from the whole of the one single statement, and in each instance says that statement.”

<sup>56</sup> Nietzsche’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Part II, The Night Song. The original:

“Nacht ist es: ach dass ich Licht sein muss! Und Durst nach Nächtigem! Und Einsamkeit!

Nacht ist es: nun bricht wie ein Born aus mir mein Verlangen, - nach Rede verlangt mich.

Nacht ist es: nun reden lauter alle springenden Brunnen. Und auch meine Seele ist ein springender Brunnen.

Nacht ist es: nun erst erwachen alle Lieder der Liebenden. Und auch meine Seele ist das Lied eines Liebenden.”

Presented here is the translation from Nietzsche. 130.

the basic form through the whole translated work will be the same. Nevertheless, challenges like the number of syllables, iambic or trochaic, are not attempted.

Theoretically, each piece of verse will be translated through three procedures. Here the procedures are explained with an example, 29: *Villanelle of His Lady's Treasures*, as follows:

*Villanelle of His Lady's Treasures*

I took her dainty eyes, as well

As silken tendrils of her hair:

And so I made a Villanelle!

I took he voice, a silver bell,

As clear as song, as soft as prayer;

I took her dainty eyes as well.

It may be, said I, who can tell,

These things shall be my less despair?

And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her whiteness virginal

And from her cheek two roses rare:

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<sup>57</sup> Bian Zhi-lin (卞之琳) found his basis in the Thirteen Rhymes in Chinese Opera (京劇十三仄).

I took her dainty eyes as well.

I said: “It may be possible

Her image from my heart to tear!”

And so I made a Villanelle.

I stole her laugh, most musical:

I wrought it in with artful care;

I took her dainty eyes as well;

And so I made a Villanelle.

In the following version of the first procedure, the syntactic version, it is perceivable that the Chinese rendition of the verse is faithful to a terrible degree. Almost all words in the original are conveyed into Chinese with its basic meaning and original syntax.

Characters needed but not in the original are placed within parentheses. However, words like “villanelle,” “musical” in the original can hardly be recognized as already translated, for the Chinese wording does not convey the same feeling that the English wording does.

Even more, in the English version, the word “so” is actually employed with its two different meanings, but the syntactic version employs two different expressions in Chinese. Even putting all these aside, any readers can have difficulties finding this is a rendition of a poem.

薇拉娜：寫一位夫人的美貌

我用她優美的雙眼  
也用地絲綢般鬢曲的髮絲（入詩）  
以這種方式，我寫下一首薇拉娜

我用她的聲音，（如）一只銀鈴  
清脆如歌曲，輕柔如禱告  
我也用地優美的雙眼（入詩）

我說，誰會知曉，也許  
這些入詩的題材可減少我的絕望  
如此，我寫下一首薇拉娜

我用地處子般的潔白  
以及她臉頰上兩朵珍稀的玫瑰：  
我也用地優美的雙眼（入詩）

我說：“有可能，  
她的容貌會被從我的心中移除！”  
於是我寫下一首薇拉娜

我偷來她的笑，最最有音樂性：  
我小心地把它寫成作品  
我也用地優美的雙眼（入詩）

### 如此我寫下一首薇拉娜

Going through the second procedure, the first is revised as the semantic version, in which more readable or acceptable Chinese expressions are adopted. The conflict of different wordings for “so” caused by its two different meanings are also solved by reconsidering the lady as an inspirer rather than the poet as an observer. The problem is thus settled by taking the lady as the poet’s Muse in this poem and “於是” is used for “so” all through it. In the semantic version, terms or literary techniques which are not fully recognized in the target language are to be reduced or paraphrased. “Villanelle,” for example, can be translated by the way it sounds, coupled with a footnote which will surely stop the reading flow and considerably reduces the joy of verse reading. Therefore, in this version, the word “villanelle” is reduced into “詩.” Likewise, the literary technique synecdoche in “cheek” for the visage of the lady can also be found unusual in the Chinese text. The Chinese phrase “雙頰” will be more appropriate for the word “cheek,” even if it seems grammatically mistaken at the first sight. While the semantic version has already dealt with several problems between the source and the target language, this version is still at a distance from fitting the concept of a poem, and there is still the problem of rhyming to be solved.

### 寫詩贈佳人

看著她一雙優雅的眼睛  
以及她絲綢般的鬢髮



於是我寫下一首詩

聽著她如銀鈴的聲音

如歌唱般清脆，如禱告般輕柔

她還有著一雙優雅的眼睛

我說，誰會知曉，也許

她的美好會讓我的絕望減少

於是我寫下一首詩

看著她聖潔無瑕的白皙

雙頰如兩朵世間少有的玫瑰

她還有著一雙優雅的眼睛

我說：“可能，

她的容貌會被我忘記！”

於是我寫下一首詩

我偷走她樂聲般的笑

精心地化為詩句

看見她一雙優雅眼睛

於是我寫下一首詩

In the third version, called the pragmatic version, the translation of the word “villanelle” is replaced by the Chinese verb “詠,” which means to praise in music or verse, and which serves as a better translation of the specially rhymed verse form. There is never any obvious distinction between poetic wording and non-poetic wording, but whether the translated verse follows the original rhyme scheme can be made known at a quick glimpse. To completely follow the rhyme scheme means to use only two rhymes throughout the whole translated verse which also comprises five tercets and one quatrain. It too means that paraphrasing, changing of word order, and other makeshifts would come in use. It would not be unusual to find out after all conceivable means, the translation still denies its original rhyme scheme, and if this occurs, the translation will mostly take on a different rhyme scheme.

### 詠她的好

看著她一雙優雅的眼眸

以及她鬢髮如絲綢般柔細

於是我寫下歌詠的詩一首

聽著她一如銀鈴的聲喉

祈禱似地溫柔，歌唱般地清晰

還有著一雙優雅的眼眸

也許，這些美好可為我解憂

我說，但有誰能會意？

於是我寫下歌詠的詩一首

看著她雙頰如玫瑰般紅透

以及聖潔無瑕的白皙

還有著一雙優雅的眼眸

她的容貌也許會從我心頭溜走

我說，可能會被忘記！

於是我寫下歌詠的詩一首

我把她最曼妙的笑聲偷走

靈巧而仔細地融入詩筆

看著她一雙優雅的眼眸

於是我寫下歌詠的詩一首

*Verses*<sup>58</sup>

[Envoy]

*Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam.*<sup>59</sup>

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,

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<sup>58</sup> The text is based on the authentic version of Dr. Longaker's *The Poems of Ernest Dowson*. Any translation in the following annotations by Dr. Longaker are presented with quotation marks without further explicit indication. Numbers and word in [ ] are added by the translator.

<sup>59</sup> "Life's brief span forbids long enduring hope." From Horace, *Odes*, Book I: iv, line 15.

Love and desire and hate:

I think they have no portion in us after

We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:

Out of a misty dream

Our path emerges for a while, then closes

Within a dream.

### 終不長久

終不長久，不管哭泣或笑聲

不論是愛慾或憎恨

我想，都不再屬於我們

一旦過了那扇門

終不長久，任歲月中美酒玫瑰與共：

就從迷濛的夢幻中

我們的旅程展開，而匆匆

到了盡頭，還是一場夢

## IN PREFACE: FOR ADELAIDE<sup>60</sup>

To you, who are my verses, as on some very future day, if you ever care to read them, you will understand, would it not be somewhat trivial to dedicate any one verse, as I may do, in all humility, to my friends?<sup>61</sup> Trivial, too, perhaps, only to name you even here? Trivial, presumptuous? For I need not write your name for you at least to know that this and all my work is made for you in the first place, and I need not to be reminded by my critics that I have no silver tongue such as were fit to praise you. So for once you shall go indedicate, if not quite anonymous; and I will only commend my little book to you in sentences far beyond my poor compass which will help you perhaps to be kind to it:

*“Votre personne, vos moindres mouvements me semblaient avoir dans le monde une importance extra-humaine. Mon cœur comme de la poussière se soulevait derrière vos pas. Vous me faisiez l’effet d’un clair-de-lune par une nuit d’été, quand tout est parfums, ombres douces, blancheurs, infini; et les délices de la chair et de l’âme étaient contenues pour moi dans votre nom que je me répétais en tachant de le baiser sur mes lèvres.”*

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<sup>60</sup> Adelaide Foltinowicz, to whom Dowson paid his unrequited love.

<sup>61</sup> “A considerable number of the poem in *Verses* bore dedications to the poet’s friends, a practice more in favor at the time than later, and for which in his case he probably had the precedent of Verlaine. The inscriptions range from names of those whom Dowson had known for many years to those who were little more than passing acquaintances. In only a very few instances were the poems written directly to and for the persons to whom they were inscribed; and the relationship of the poem to the person seems at times quite remote. Even to one who has studied Dowson’s life and letters carefully there are names among the motley list which cannot be identified.” Here, all dedications under the titles have been omitted to avoid confusion.

*“Quelquefois vos paroles me reviennent comme un écho lointain, comme le son d'une cloche apporté par le vent; et il me semble que vous êtes là quand je lis des passages de l'amour dans les livres... Tout ce qu'on y blâme d'exagéré, vous me l'avez fait ressentir.”*<sup>62</sup>

Pont-Aven, Finistère, 1896

### 序言：寫給雅得蕾

我可以謙卑地把詩獻給朋友，然而，如果在往後的日子，你想讀讀我的詩集，你便會發現，你本是我的詩句，那麼，獻上任何詩給你，豈非多餘？。或許，僅是在此提起你的名字也就太多餘了，冒昧而多餘。因為我不須寫下你的名字，你就能知道，我所有的作品一開始就是為你提筆。而我也不須讓評論來告訴我，我沒有華麗的言語足以讚美你。所以，即使我提起你，也不該在這次把作品獻給你。我只能在這本集子裡，引用遠勝於我文思拙劣的字句，向你致意。或許，如此一來，你會更加珍惜：

「你的人，你的一舉一動，在我心目中，凌駕人世間的一切。我心揚起，

---

<sup>62</sup> From Gustave Flaubert's *L'Education Sentimentale* can be translated into: Your person, your slightest movements seemed to me to have an above-human importance in this world. My heart was lifted up like dirt in the wake of your steps. You gave me the impression of a moonshine by a summer night, when everything is fragrance, sweet shadows, whiteness, infinity; and, for me, the carnal and spiritual delights were embodied by your name which I kept repeating to myself, trying to kiss it on my lips. / Sometimes, your words come back to me like a distant echo, like the ring of a bell brought by the wind, and it seems to me that you are there when I read passages on love in some books... All that is

如塵埃應隨你的步履。憶起你，便憶起月色下的夏夜 - 充盈著芬芳、皎潔、月影柔美，無垠無際。你的名字，孕育著肉體與精神上的歡愉。你的名字，我一遍又一遍喚著，試圖在唇間吻著。

有時，你的話語似遠方的迴音，傳來我的耳邊；又像是風中的鈴聲，飄向我的身旁。而當我讀到愛的篇章，你好像就在咫尺一樣 書中被嫌為誇張的種種，你卻讓我感受到了」

—寫於菲霓思特，邦達芳

## [1] A CORONAL

*With His songs and Her days to His Lady and to Love*

Violets and leaves of vine,  
 Into a frail, fair wreath  
 We gather and entwine:  
 A wreath for Love to wear,  
 Fragrant as his own breath,  
 To crown his brow divine,  
 All day till night is near.  
 Violets and leaves of vine  
 We gather and entwine.

---

decried as overdone, you made me feel it.



Violets and leaves of vine

For Love that lives a day,

We gather and entwine.

All day till Love is dead,

Till eve falls, cold and gray,

These blossoms, yours and mine,

Love wears upon his head.

Violets and leaves of vine

We gather and entwine.

Violets and leaves of vine,

For Love when poor Love dies

We gather and entwine.

This wreath that lives a day

Over his pale, cold eyes,

Kissed shut by Proserpine,

At set of sun we lay:

Violets and leaves of vine

We gather and entwine.

## 一、花冠

用他的歌聲，她的年華

寫給心上人，寫給愛

紫羅蘭，蔓藤葉

編成纖柔美麗的花環

我們採擷，我們編織

給愛一頂花環

芬芳如愛的氣息一般

戴在愛聖潔的額際

終日直到夜幕低垂

紫羅蘭，蔓藤葉

我們採擷，我們編織

紫羅蘭，蔓藤葉

給朝生暮死的愛

我們採擷，我們編織

終日直到愛已死

直到昏幕垂，寒冷而灰暗

一簇簇的花朵屬於你我

愛戴在頭上

紫羅蘭，蔓藤葉

我們採擷，我們編織

紫羅蘭，蔓藤葉

給愛在可憐的愛垂死時  
 我們採擷，我們編織  
 這頂花環明天也會謝  
 謝在他蒼白冷峻雙眼的上方  
 在冥間女神一吻後闔上  
 當夕陽西下，我們放下  
 紫羅蘭，蔓藤葉  
 我們採擷，我們編織

## [2] NUNS OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION

Calm, sad, secure; behind high convent walls,  
 These watch the sacred lamp, these watch and pray:  
 And it is one with them when evening falls,  
 And one with them the cold return of day.  
  
 These heed not time; their nights and days they make  
 Into a long, returning rosary,  
 Whereon their lives are threaded for Christ' s sake:  
 Meekness and vigilance and chastity.  
  
 A vowed patrol, in silent companies,  
 Life-long they keep before the living Christ:

In the dim church, their prayers and penances

Are fragrant incense to the Sacrificed.

Outside, the world is wild and passionate;

Man's weary laughter and his sick despair

Entreat at their impenetrable gate:

They heed no voices in their dream of prayer.

They saw the glory of the world displayed;

They saw the bitter of it, and the sweet;

They knew the roses of the world should fade,

And be trod under by the hurrying feet.

Therefore they rather put away desire,

And crossed their hands and came to sanctuary;

And veiled their heads and put on coarse attire:

Because their comeliness was vanity.

And there they rest; they have serene insight

Of the illuminating dawn to be:

Mary's sweet Star dispels for them the night,

The proper darkness of humanity.

Calm, sad, secure; with faces worn and mild:

Surely their choice of vigil is the best?

Yea! For our roses fade, the world is wild;

But there, beside the altar, there, is rest.

## 二、寫修女，永恆的祈禱

靜謐，悲傷，阻絕擾攘；四壁是修道院的高牆

修女們守著聖燈，修女們守候禱告

昏暮降臨，對她們始終一樣

始終一樣，白晝已盡，寒冷來到

她們無視歲月；多少個日出夜幕

她們編成了一長串的念珠，反覆撥轉

顆顆都是獻給基督的生命，繫成這串念珠

服從，敬慎，貞婉

信誓旦旦，以沉默相依相伴

她們修持日復一日，虔待著基督

在陰鬱的教堂，她們的禱告：苦修不斷

散逸芬芳，飄向獻身的基督

外面，是狂放的情慾世界

世人強顏的歡笑及懨懨的絕望  
叩著牢不可破的大門，懇求殷切  
修女們不聞呼喊，在禱告的夢土上

她們見過這世界煥發的光明  
她們見識了這世間的苦楚與甜美  
她們知道世上的玫瑰終將凋零  
在愴惶的步履下任人踐踏

因此，她們把慾望拋開  
雙手抱成十字遁入聖地  
頭上是披巾，身上是粗布剪裁  
外貌在她們眼中已然虛榮無疑

而她們在此棲身，她們瞭悟  
未來會有燦爛的晨曦  
聖母的星光楚楚，將為她們驅散夜幕  
這黑暗祇適合凡胎肉體

靜謐，悲傷，阻絕擾攘，滄桑與溫和寫在臉上  
她們守候著神，難道這真是最好的抉擇？  
是的，因為我們這世上的玫瑰會凋萎，我們的世界，很狂放  
但是，在這地方，在聖壇旁，心得以安詳不再忐忑

## [3] VILLANELLE OF SUNSET

Come hither, Child! and rest:

This is the end of day,

Behold the weary West!

Sleep rounds with equal zest

Man' s toil and children' s play:

Come hither, Child! And rest.

My white bird, seek thy nest,

Thy drooping head down lay:

Behold the weary West!

Now are the flowers confest

Of slumber: sleep, as they!

Come hither, Child! and rest.

Now eve is manifest,

And homeward lies our way:

Behold the weary West!

Tired flower! upon my breast,

I would wear thee always:

Come hither, Child! and rest;

Behold, the weary West!

### 三、落日之歌

來，孩子！來這裡歇憩

已是白晝的盡頭

看那西方疲憊的天際！

睡意從四周升起

圍繞勞動的人們及嬉戲的孩童

來，孩子！來這裡歇憩

我的白鳥，尋你的歸巢

你的頭垂得好低好低

看那西方疲憊的天際

現在朵朵花兒用酣睡告解

如花兒般入睡吧！

來，孩子！來這裡歇憩



現在暮色已泛開  
 歸途就在眼前  
 看那西方疲憊的天際

花兒倦了！我會  
 一直戴在胸前：  
 來，孩子！來這裡歇憩  
 看那西方疲憊的天際

[4] MY LADY APRIL

Dew on her robe and on her tangled hair;  
 Twin dewdrops for her eyes; behold her pass,  
 With dainty step brushing the young, green grass,  
 The while she trills some high, fantastic air,  
 Full of all feathered sweetness: she is fair,  
 And all her flower-like beauty, as a glass,  
 Mirrors out hope and love: and still, alas!  
 Traces of tears her languid lashes wear.

Say, doth she weep for very wantonness?  
 Or is it that she dimly doth foresee  
 Across her youth the joys grow less and less,

The burden of the days that are to be:  
Autumn and withered leaves and vanity,  
And winter bringing end in barrenness.

#### 四、我的四月仙子

露滴沁潤她的長袍及糾結的長髮  
而露珠併落便成了她一雙汪汪的眼神  
目送著她，輕拂嫩翠的草茵，以優雅的步伐  
彼時，她高聲歌唱，空中泛開曼妙的樂章  
樂聲楚楚，如千百鳴禽群集一方：她美  
美如爭妍之百花，如鏡  
映著愛與希望：唉！卻依舊  
她嬌柔無力的眼睫沾染淚痕  
  
是否？她總不免在歡恣中潸然  
亦或，冥冥中她已預見  
年華的對岸，一再遞減的欣歡  
及加諸未來的負擔  
秋，落葉及虛無  
而冬終止一切於荒蕪

[5] TO ONE IN BEDLAM

With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars,  
 Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;  
 Those scentless wisps of straw, that miserably line  
 His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares,

Pedant and pitiful. O, how his rapt gaze wars  
 With their stupidity! Know they what dreams divine  
 Lift his long, laughing reveries like enchanted wine,  
 And make his melancholy germane to the stars' ?

O lamentable brother! if those pity thee,  
 Am I not fain of all thy lone eyes promise me;  
 Half a fool' s kingdom, far from men who sow and reap,  
 All their days, vanity? Better than mortal flowers,  
 Thy moon-kissed roses seem: better than love or sleep,  
 The star-crowned solitude of thine oblivious hours!

## 五、致一位精神病患

以纖弱，瘋狂的雙手，在不潔的牢欄中  
 是的，他握著成束的花朵，被拉扯纏扭的花朵  
 那縷縷的花莖已芬芳孑然，縷縷淒然織就了

他狹窄、樊籠中的宇宙 凝望著，是這乏味的世界

賣弄著可憐的模樣 啊！如此劇烈，他貫注的目光  
與他們的愚蠢交戰！他們可懂？這朵朵聖潔的夢  
使他長遠、解頤的狂想扶搖而上，如魔酒醉人  
使他的憂傷挨近星辰的憂傷

啊！令人哀慟的手足！倘使他人憐憫你  
我更是鐘情你孤寂雙眼所承諾的一切  
一個若智若愚的國度，迥異於汲汲營營的人世  
世人的歲月，一場雲煙？勝過開謝有期的花朵  
你那月光吻過的玫瑰，看似勝過一場愛或睡夢  
你孑然獨立，星光為冕，在光陰中逝去

[6] AD DOMNULAM SUAM<sup>63</sup>

Little lady of my heart!

Just a little longer,

Love me: we will pass and part,

Ere this love grow stronger.

I have loved thee, Child! too well,

To do aught but leave thee:  
 Nay! my lips should never tell  
 Any tale, to grieve thee.

Little lady of my heart!  
 Just a little longer,  
 I may love thee: we will part,  
 Ere my love grow stronger.

Soon thou leavest fairy-land;  
 Darker grow thy tresses:  
 Soon no more of hand in hand;  
 Soon no more caresses!

Little lady of my heart!  
 Just a little longer,  
 Be a child: then, we will part,  
 Ere this love grow stronger.

## 六、親愛的小情人

嬌柔的你，我情之所繫

---

<sup>63</sup> To His Dear Little Mistress.

愛我的時刻，可再多幾許？

在愛轉濃的前夕

我倆將交錯而別離

孩子！我曾深深愛著你

不辭一切，為愛而離去

不該！我的雙唇不該開啟

拿故事害你悲戚

嬌柔的你，我情之所繫

愛你的時刻，會再多幾許

在愛轉濃的前夕

我倆將交錯而別離

不久，你會離開快樂的園地

晦暗漸漸染上你的髮際

不久，再也不能手牽著手

不久，再也沒有溫柔的撫摸

嬌柔的你，我情之所繫

童稚的時刻，請再多幾許

在愛轉濃的前夕

我倆將分手離去

[7] AMOR UMBRATILIS<sup>64</sup>

A gift of Silence, sweet!

Who may not ever hear:

To lay down at your unobservant feet,

Is all the gift I bear.

I have no songs to sing,

That you should heed or know:

I have no lilies, in full hands, to fling

Across the path you go.

I cast my flowers away,

Blossoms unmeet for you!

The garland I have gathered in my day:

My rosemary and rue.

I watch you pass and pass,

Serene and cold: I lay

My lips upon your trodden, daisied grass,

And turn my life away.

Yea, for I cast you, sweet!

This one gift, you shall take:

Like ointment, on your unobservant feet,

My silence, for your sake.

## 七、幻影愛情

吾愛！沉寂是給你的贈禮

甜美的你該聽不見我的話語：

放這份禮在你未曾留意的腳旁

這是我能給的所有贈予

我不能唱什麼歌曲

來引你留意或知悉

我也沒有朵朵的百合捧在手裡

可以向你踏上的路途擲去

花朵我已丟棄

花團錦簇不適合你！

我曾編製一頂花冠，於往昔：



用迷迭香交織我的悔意

我望著你漸行漸遠地離去

冷冷、靜謐：我吻著草地

草上有你的足跡與雛菊

此後，我倆的生命便沒有交集

是的，吾愛！我留給了你

這份贈予，你該收取：

給你，我的沉寂

一如油膏塗在你未曾留意的腳上

#### [8] AMOR PROFANUS<sup>65</sup>

Beyond the pale of memory,

In some mysterious dusky grove;

A place of shadows utterly,

Where never coos the turtle-dove,

A world forgotten of the sun:

I dreamed we met when day was done,

And marvelled at our ancient love.

Met there by chance, long kept apart,  
 We wandered, through the darkling glades;  
 And that old language of the heart  
 We sought to speak: alas! poor shades!  
 Over our pallid lips had run  
 The waters of oblivion,  
 Which crown all loves of men or maids.

In vain we stammered: from afar  
 Our old desire shone cold and dead:  
 That time was distant as a star,  
 When eyes were bright and lips were red.  
 And still we went with downcast eye  
 And no delight in being nigh,  
 Poor shadows most uncomforted.

Ah, Lalage!<sup>66</sup> while life is ours,

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<sup>65</sup> A Mundane Affection

<sup>66</sup> Flower refers to Horace's *Odes*, I, 22, where the name appears twice: first, "For as I wandered fancy-free / Beyond my bounds in Sabine wood, / Singing my darling Lalage, / I met a wolf, and, though I stood / Unarmed, it fled me." and "Place me right 'neath the sun-god's ray / In lands where no man dwells or toils; / And there I'll love my Lalage, / Her winsome prattle, winsome smiles." R. K. R. Thornton suggests the allusion to the same book but II, 5: "Soon she will come; time's mad career / Draws years from thee to give to her; / Soon boldly, when she needs a fere, / For thee will Lalage bestir." Here the translation is taken from *The Complete Works of Horace* edited by Casper J. Kraemer, Jr. Flower's reference is also confirmed by Dr. Longaker. In the biography of Ernest Dowson, he

Hoard not thy beauty rose and white,  
 But pluck the pretty, fleeting flowers  
 That deck our little path of light:  
 For all too soon we twain shall tread  
 The bitter pastures of the dead:  
 Estranged, sad spectres of the night.

## 八、世俗之愛

在記憶的藩籬之外  
 在神祕的暮靄樹林  
 有一處全然闐黯的地方  
 那裏，沒有斑鳩啼唱  
 那個世界，已被太陽遺忘  
 我夢見我倆相會在夜裡  
 對我倆曩昔的愛讚歎訝異

我倆長久分離，而後邂逅彼地

---

points out with his prose translation of Horace's *Odes*, II, 5: "He [Dowson] probably reflected often on the theme of the early passage in the Fifth Ode of the Second Book of Horace: 'Lalage is not old enough for your advances. Let her be a child a little longer. Have patience, she will come to you by-and-by, and return the love greater than you ever gave to Pholoë or Chloris.'" (Longaker, Mark. *Ernest Dowson*. 151) Dr. Longaker's explanation of the allusion of the name seem most appropriate to interpret the poem and the connection between the poet and his beloved Adelaide, younger than Dowson by at least 10 years.

我們走過漸暗的林間空地

那心中古老的言語

我們尋覓欲言：唉！可憐的陰影！

慘白的雙唇上，已流過

浩瀚似海的遺忘

籠罩在世間男女的情愛之上

我們徒然期艾；自遠方

我們既有的慾望變得冰冷，死亡

那段時光遙若星光

那時雙唇紅潤，眼眸中透露著光芒

而我們還是雙眼低垂走著

近在咫尺，沒有喜悅

可憐的陰翳祇有更悲

啊！蕾拉潔，當生命還掌握在我們手中

別典藏你的美，不管是白皙或是殷紅

且摘下美麗有期的花朵

那裝點著我們明亮小徑的花朵

因為不久我倆就要踏上

亡者殘酷的牧場

從此仳離，成黑夜中的兩條悲魂

## [9] VILLANELLE OF MARGUERITES

*“A little, passionately, not at all?”*

She casts the snowy petals on the air:  
And what care we how many petals fall!

Nay, wherefore seek the seasons to forestall?  
It is but playing, and she will not care,  
A little, passionately, not at all!

She would not answer us if we should call  
Across the years: her visions are too fair;  
And what care we how many petals fall!

She knows us not, nor recks if she enthrall  
With voice and eyes and fashion of her hair,  
A little, passionately, not at all!

Knee-deep she goes in meadow grasses tall,  
Kissed by the daisies that her fingers tear:  
And what care we how many petals fall!

We pass and go: but she shall not recall

What men we were, nor all she made us bear:

“*A little, passionately, not at all!*”

And what care we how many petals fall!

## 九、詠瑪格莉特

「這情愫，是幾許？是洋溢？全然沒有嗎？」

空中，她擲出雪片般的花瓣：

而我們又何嘗在乎有多少落下！

不，莫要把這時節抑軋

她不會在意，畢竟是遊玩

是幾許？是洋溢？全然沒有吧！

即便我們往後喚著流逝的年華

她也不會回答：她的視界太燦爛

而我們又何嘗在乎有多少花落下！

她也不會在意，對我們陌生的她

是否她的聲音、眼神及髮絲已將我們的心神羈絆

是幾許？是洋溢？全然沒有吧！

她朝向及膝的草地邁開步伐

吻上草地的朵朵雛菊，由她手中飛散  
而我們又何嘗在乎有多少花瓣落下！

我們擦身而過：但她終究無法  
想起我們曾為誰何，或想起她給我們的一切承擔  
「是幾許？是洋溢？全然沒有吧！」  
而我們又何嘗在乎有多少花瓣落下！

#### [10] YVONNE OF BRITTANY

In your mother's apple-orchard,

Just a year ago, last spring:

Do you remember, Yvonne!

The dear trees lavishing

Rain of their starry blossoms

To make you a coronet?

Do you ever remember, Yvonne?

As I remember yet.

In your mother's apple-orchard,

When the world was left behind:

You were shy, so shy, Yvonne!

But your eyes were calm and kind.

We spoke of the apple harvest,  
When the cider press is set,  
And such-like trifles, Yvonne!  
That doubtless you forget.

In the still, soft Breton<sup>67</sup> twilight,  
We were silent; words were few,  
Till your mother came out chiding,  
For the grass was bright with dew:  
But I know your heart was beating,  
Like a fluttered, frightened dove.  
Do you ever remember, Yvonne?  
That first faint flush of love?

In the fulness of midsummer,  
When the apple-bloom was shed,  
Oh, brave was your surrender,  
Though shy the words you said.  
I was glad, so glad, Yvonne!  
To have led you home at last;  
Do you ever remember, Yvonne!  
How swiftly the days passed?

---

<sup>67</sup> People in Brittany sometimes refer to this very place as Breton.



In your mother' s apple-orchard  
 It is grown too dark to stray,  
 There is none to chide you, Yvonne!  
 You are over far away.  
 There is dew on your grave grass, Yvonne!  
 But your feet it shall not wet:  
 No, you never remember, Yvonne!  
 And I shall soon forget.

## 十、不列塔尼的伊芳

在你母親的蘋果園  
 就在一年前，去年春天  
 你可記得，伊芳！  
 株株可愛的果樹，傾瀉著  
 一場如繁星的花簇  
 為你編織一頂花冠？  
 你是否記得，伊芳？  
 一如我未曾遺忘

在你母親的蘋果園  
 這世界被拋在腦後

你那時靦腆，如此靦腆，伊芳！

而你雙眼靜謐溫柔

我們聊著蘋果豐收

那是榨汁機備妥的時候

我們聊著這般瑣碎的的種種，伊芳！

無疑，你會遺忘

在不列塔尼沉靜柔和的晨曦中

我們默默無語

直到你的母親出來責備

因草地遍染著露水的光輝

但我知道你的心在悸動

如一隻鴿子，受了驚擾，帶著惶恐

你是否記得，伊芳？

那最初浮現稀微的愛的光芒？

在仲夏充盈的時候

也是蘋果花凋落的時候

啊！英勇！你的屈服

雖然羞澀充滿你的話語

我歡喜，滿心歡喜，伊芳！

因為我終於帶你回到家裡

是否還記得，伊芳！

歲月飛逝，剎那流光？

在你母親的蘋果園

雖天色已晚，不得流連

再沒人會責備你，伊芳

你已好遙好遠

露水沾上了你的墳草，伊芳！

但不會落在你的腳上

不會，你永遠不會記得，伊芳

而我不久也會遺忘

### [11] BENEDICTIO DOMINI<sup>68</sup>

Without, the sullen noises of the street!

The voice of London, inarticulate,

Hoarse and blaspheming, surges in to meet

The silent blessing of the Immaculate.

Dark is the church, and dim the worshippers,

Hushed with bowed heads as though by some old spell,

While through the incense-laden air there stirs

The admonition of a silver bell.

Dark is the church, save where the altar stands,  
 Dressed like a bride, illustrious with light,  
 Where one old priest exalts with tremulous hands  
 The one true solace of man' s fallen plight.

Strange silence here: without, the sounding street  
 Heralds the world' s swift passage to the fire:  
 O Benediction, perfect and complete!  
 When shall men cease to suffer and desire?

## 十一、祝禱詞

外界，街道上陰鬱的喧囂  
 倫敦城的聲音，汨汨湧出  
 含糊，沙啞，而褻瀆 融入  
 聖母的默默祈福

黑暗染上教堂，籠罩禮拜的人群  
 低頭噤然，彷彿中了古老的咒語  
 銀鐘正響起警訊  
 劃過滿盈空中的馨香氣息

---

<sup>68</sup> Benediction [of God]

黑暗染上教堂，除了祭壇矗立的一方  
 裝扮一如新娘，散發醒目的光輝  
 彼處，年邁的神父，顫動著雙手，頌揚  
 人類墮落的困境中，唯一而真正的撫慰

此地奇異的靜默：外界，這喧嘩的街道  
 預示著世界飛快地奔向一團火焰：  
 啊！無瑕完美的祝禱  
 人類何時才有免於苦難，摒除欲望的一天？

## [12] GROWTH

I watched the glory of her childhood change,  
 Half-sorrowful to find the child I knew,  
 (Loved long ago in lily-time)  
 Become a maid, mysterious and strange,  
 With fair, pure eyes—dear eyes, but not the eyes I knew  
 Of old, in the olden time!  
  
 Till on my doubting soul the ancient good  
 Of her dear childhood in the new disguise  
 Dawned, and I hastened to adore

The glory of her waking maidenhood,  
And found the old tenderness within her deepening eyes,  
But kinder than before.

## 十二、成長

看著她孩提時的燦爛變樣了  
總有幾分的悲，在發覺我熟悉的那孩子  
（很久很久，在屬於百合的時節裡，我深愛過）  
已亭亭玉立，已有些神秘，有些陌生  
她有著明亮而純潔的眼 - 可愛的眼神  
不是我往昔所熟悉的，那舊日的眼神！  
  
直到，她可愛的童年裡那份往日的美好  
披上新裝，破曉在我猜疑的靈魂上  
我頃刻便愛上  
她荳蔻年華中的光芒  
而後發現她深邃的眼中，那份昔日的溫柔  
卻祇有比往日更溫柔

[13] AD MANUS PUELLAE<sup>69</sup>

I was always a lover of ladies' hands!

Or<sup>70</sup> ever mine heart came here to tryst,

For the sake of your carved white hands' commands;

The tapering fingers, the dainty wrist;

The hands of a girl were what I kissed.

I remember an hand like a *fleur-de-lys*

When it slid from its silken sheath, her glove;

With its odours passing ambergris:

And that was the empty husk of a love.

Oh, how shall I kiss your hands enough?

They are pale with the pallor of ivories;

But they blush to the tips like a curled sea-shell:

What treasure, in kingly treasuries,

Of gold, and spice for the thurible,

Is sweet as her hands to hoard and tell?

I know not the way from your finger-tips,

Nor how I shall gain the higher lands,

The citadel of your sacred lips:

---

<sup>69</sup> On the Hand of a Girl

<sup>70</sup> before.

I am captive still of my pleasant bands,  
The hands of a girl, and most your hands.

### 十三、玉手

對女性的手，我有一往的深情  
早在往昔，我的心赴約此地  
便是奉了你曲線有緻、白皙雙手之命  
手指纖細，手腕典雅  
女孩的手上，我的吻落下

想起那隻手，鳶尾花的模樣  
卸下手套，它絲質的外衣  
帶著芬芳，飄送著龍涎香  
但那祇是愛所遺留的空洞軀體  
啊！多少吻都不夠，我吻你雙手不已

雙手，帶著象牙般乳白蒼蒼  
然而紅潤漸次暈開，爬上指尖  
如此的寶藏，諒君王也無法典藏  
使馨香瀰漫，把香爐燃點  
又豈能媲美她雙手的芳香



從你雙手通向你雙唇的路  
 我不知該怎麼走  
 也不識攀上那高台的徑途  
 我始終是個俘囚，迷戀令人神往的雙手  
 女孩的雙手，而且是，妳的雙手

[14] FLOS LUNAE<sup>71</sup>

I would not alter thy cold eyes,  
 Nor trouble the calm fount of speech  
 With aught of passion or surprise.

The heart of thee I cannot reach:  
 I would not alter thy cold eyes!

I would not alter thy cold eyes;  
 Nor have thee smile, nor make thee weep:  
 Though all my life droops down and dies,  
 Desiring thee, desiring sleep,  
 I would not alter thy cold eyes.

I would not alter thy cold eyes;  
 I would not change thee if I might,

To whom my prayers for incense rise,<sup>72</sup>

Daughter of dreams! my moon of night!

I would not alter thy cold eyes.

I would not alter thy cold eyes,

With trouble of the human heart:

Within their glance my spirit lies,

A frozen thing, alone, apart;

I would not alter thy cold eyes.

#### 十四、月之華

我不想去改變，你冷峻的眼光

也不願去激起平息的一泉辭語

祇因有什麼激情或什麼驚惶

你的心，是我伸手所不及

我不想去改變，你冷峻的眼光

我不想去改變，你冷峻的眼光

或使你微笑，或使你哭泣

雖我的生命全然瑟縮、死亡

---

<sup>71</sup> The Flower of the Moon

<sup>72</sup> possible allusion to Psalm 141: 2.

想要擁有你，想要睡去  
我不想去改變，你冷峻的眼光

我不想去改變，你冷峻的眼光  
既使我可以，也不會去改變你  
我對你的祈禱，隨焚香冉冉而上  
我黑夜中的月亮！夢鄉的兒女！  
我不想去改變，你冷峻的眼光

我不想去改變，你冷峻的眼光  
用盤踞一顆凡心的憂慮  
在你的垂顧中，我的靈魂臥躺  
冰冷，孤寂，遺世子立  
我不想去改變，你冷峻的眼光

[15] NON SUM QUALIS ERAM BONAE SUB REGNO CYNARAE<sup>73</sup>

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine  
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed  
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;  
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,  
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:

I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,  
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;  
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;  
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,  
    When I awoke and found the dawn was gray:  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,  
Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,  
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;  
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,  
    Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,  
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,  
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;  
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,  
    Yea hungry for the lips of my desire:  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

---

<sup>73</sup> I Am Not What I Used to Be Under the Reign of Cynara. From Horace, *Odes*, IV, I, 3

## 十五、希娜拉

在你跟前，我已不復為我

昨夜啊昨夜，她與我，唇間銜著你的影子

希娜拉！妳的氣息落在我的靈魂

其間，是酒及一次次的吻

落寞的我，身染熱情的餘溫

是的，落寞的我，思緒低沈

希娜拉，對妳，一往情深，以我所謂的真

整晚，我感覺得到，她的心貼著我的心跳

徹夜，她睡在愛中，睡在我的懷抱

誠然，甜美的吻來自金錢換得的紅唇

但落寞的我，身染熱情的餘溫

一覺醒來，灰靄靄的晨昏

希娜拉，對妳，一往情深，以我所謂的真

希娜拉，許許多多已不復憶起，且隨風逝去

玫瑰狂亂飄零，隨著人群

飛舞，蒼白而迷惘的百合朵朵從心中除根

但落寞的我，身染熱情的餘溫

是吧，祇因一起舞，總是漫漫無盡

希娜拉，對妳，一往情深，以我所謂的真

嚎啕索求，更狂野的音樂，更濃烈的酒

而席終人散，燈火不再通明依舊

希娜拉！妳的身影款款落下，夜是屬於妳的時分

而落寞的我，身染熱情的餘溫

如此，渴望著我所嚮往的雙唇

希娜拉，對妳，一往情深，以我所謂的真

#### [16] VANITAS<sup>74</sup>

Beyond the need of weeping,

Beyond the reach of hands,

May she be quietly sleeping,

In what dim nebulous lands?

Ah, she who understands!

The long, long winter weather,

These many years and days,

Since she, and Death, together,

Left me the wearier ways:

And now, these tardy bays!

The crown and victor' s token:

How are they worth to-day?

The one word left unspoken,

It were late now to say:

But cast the palm away!

For once, ah once, to meet her,

Drop laurel from tired hands:

Her cypress were the sweeter,

In her oblivious lands:

Haply she understands!

Yet, crossed that weary river,

In some ulterior land,

Or anywhere, or ever,

Will she stretch out a hand?

And will she understand?

## 十六、空虛

早已沒有哭泣的必要

早已不是伸手可及  
祇願她就靜謐地睡著  
在矇矓惺忪的某地  
啊！她知悉！

漫漫無期，這寒冬的氣候  
日復一日，歲復一歲  
自從她與死神相守  
留給我的路途更令人疲憊  
而眼前，是氣息奄奄的月桂

冠冕，勝者的表徵  
又何以換得今朝？  
心中的話未及出聲  
現在已不能相告  
且將棕櫚擲拋！

祇求再次，啊！再次，與她相遇  
從倦怠的手中，月桂落地  
她的柏樹更加地馥郁  
在她記憶之外的境地  
或許，她知悉！



但，涉越疲憊的河流  
在那隱密的某地  
或者在哪裏，是否  
把手伸出，她可願意？  
是否，她知悉？

[17] EXILE

By the sad waters of separation

Where we have wandered by divers ways,

I have but the shadow and imitation

Of the old memorial days.

In music I have no consolation,

No roses are pale enough for me;

The sound of the waters of separation

Surpasseth roses and melody.

By the sad waters of separation

Dimly I hear from an hidden place

The sigh of mine ancient adoration:

Hardly can I remember your face.

If you be dead, no proclamation  
 Sprang to me over the waste, gray sea:  
 Living, the waters of separation  
 Sever for ever your soul from me.

No man knoweth our desolation;  
 Memory pales of the old delight;  
 While the sad waters of separation  
 Bear us on to the ultimate night.

## 十七、放逐

相隔兩地，面對傷感的海域  
 我們在迥異的路途上，各自徘徊  
 我祇能追憶殘影，祇能模擬  
 腦海中往日的歲月

音樂，已無法給我慰藉  
 玫瑰，怎能伴我憔悴  
 相隔兩地，浪濤陣陣的海域  
 覆沒玫瑰與回憶

相隔兩地，面對傷感的海域

我隱約，從某處隱密之地  
聽見曩昔我為愛發出的嘆息：  
你的面孔，我已很難想起

倘若你從這世上離去  
這一片灰暗的汪洋也不會讓我知悉  
倘若尚未離去，這令人分離的海域  
也阻隔我倆的靈魂，永遠不得相聚

沒人會懂我倆的悲悽  
蒼白的記憶藏著舊日的欣喜  
而這傷感的海域相隔我你  
將我們帶往最深最深的夜裏

#### [18] SPLEEN

I was not sorrowful, I could not weep,  
And all my memories were put to sleep.

I watched the river grow more white and strange,  
All day till evening I watched it change.

All day till evening watched the rain

Beat wearily upon the window pane.

I was not sorrowful, but only tired

Of everything that ever I desired.

Her lips, her eyes, all day became to me

The shadow of a shadow utterly.

All day mine hunger for her heart became

Oblivion, until the evening came,

And left me sorrowful, inclined to weep,

With all my memories that could not sleep.

## 十八 憂鬱

我不傷悲，我不流淚

所有的回憶都已入睡

我望著河流，愈感蒼茫，愈感陌生

我望著這轉變直到日落黃昏

直到日落黃昏，我望著雨

無力地打在窗上的玻璃

我不傷悲，祇是厭倦

過去想實現的種種心願

她的雙唇，雙眼，在我鎮日的光景

已全然成為幻影中的幻影

她的心，我鎮日所渴望

我將一切遺忘，直到昏暮臨降

留我傷悲，引我落淚

所有的回憶怎堪入睡？

[19] O MORS! QUAM AMARA EST MEMORIA TUA HOMINI

PACEM HABENTI IN SUBSTANTIIS SUIS<sup>75</sup>

Exceeding sorrow

Consumeth my sad heart!

Because to-morrow

We must depart,

---

<sup>75</sup> “O Death, How Bitter Is the Remembrance Of Thee to a Man that Liveth at Rest in his Possessions”  
From Vulgate, Ecclesiasticus (in the Book called Apocrypha) 41: 1. Here the translation is taken from

Now is exceeding sorrow

All my part!

Give over playing,

Cast thy viol away:

Merely laying

Thine head my way:

Prithee, give over playing,

Grave or gay.

Be no word spoken;

Weep nothing: let a pale

Silence, unbroken

Silence prevail!

Prithee, be no word spoken,

Lest I fail!

Forget to-morrow!

Weep nothing: only lay

In silent sorrow

Thine head my way:

Let us forget to-morrow,

This one day!

## 十九、啊！死亡

悲慟綿延

在我愁苦的心中侵襲

因為明天

我倆必須分離

而今悲慟綿延

在我五內淋漓

先別讓樂聲悠揚

將六絃琴高束

祇消臥躺

枕首在我身旁之處

請你，先別讓樂聲悠揚

不管是快樂，是嚴肅

什麼都別再說

淚水不再為什麼染頰

讓蒼白的沉默，保持沉默

沉默籠罩四下

請你，什麼都別再說

別讓我承受不下

明日就忘了一切！

別哭：只消臥躺

默默地傷悲

枕首在我身旁：

明日就讓我倆忘卻

今日即成過往

[20] *Ah, dans ces mornes séjours*

*Les jamais sont les toujours.*<sup>76</sup>

PAUL VERLAINE

You would have understood me, had you waited;

I could have loved you, dear! as well as he:

Had we not been impatient, dear! and fated

Always to disagree.

What is the use of speech? Silence were fitter:

Lest we should still be wishing things unsaid.

Though all the words we ever spake were bitter,

Shall I reproach you dead?



Nay, let this earth, your portion, likewise cover

All the old anger, setting us apart:

Always, in all, in truth was I your love;

Always, I held your heart.

I have met other women who were tender,

As you were cold, dear! with a grace as rare.

Think you, I turned to them, or made surrender,

I who had found you fair?

Had we been patient, dear! ah, had you waited,

I had fought death for you, better than he:

But from the very first, dear! we were fated

Always to disagree.

Late, late, I come to you, now death discloses

Love that in life was not to be our part:

On your low lying mound between the roses,

Sadly I cast my heart.

I would not waken you: nay! this is fitter;

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<sup>76</sup> Oh! In these Dreary Abodes / The Never' s Are the Always'

Death and the darkness give you unto me;  
Here we who loved so, were so cold and bitter,  
Hardly can disagree.

## 二十、啊！在陰鬱的居所

“絕不”成了“永久” - 波·魏崙

其實你會了解我，如果你肯等待  
其實我可以愛你，親愛！不亞於他：  
如果我們有足夠的耐心，親愛！  
而宿命不使我們永不融洽

言語何益？沉默才更得宜：  
免得後悔有些事不該講  
雖我們所說的一切教人傷悽  
難道我該責怪你，當你不在世上？

否，就讓大地，如掩埋你，一同掩去  
往日所有拆散我倆的餘恨  
一直，我由衷愛你，全心全意  
一直，我捧著你的心

我也遇過一些溫柔的女人

而你卻冷漠，親愛！帶著特有的優雅  
你是否以為我會轉身去找她們？  
眼中祇有你的美，我豈會拜倒在別人裙下？

如果我們有足夠的耐心，親愛！啊，如果你肯等待  
我會為你與死亡搏鬥，更勝於他：  
但自開始的那一刻起，親愛！  
宿命就註定我們永不融洽

遲遲，遲遲地我到你的身旁  
死亡愛揭示愛在生前不屬於我倆  
玫瑰夾側的土丘，是你長眠的地方  
土丘上我擲下我的心，黯然神傷

我不會吵醒你：否！如此才更得宜；  
死亡與黑暗把你交給我  
此地我們如此相愛，也如此冷漠與傷淒？  
我們不得不融洽

## [21] APRIL LOVE

We have walked in Love's land a little way,

We have learnt his lesson a little while,

And shall we not part at the end of day,

With a sigh, a smile?

A little while in the shine of the sun,

We were twined together, joined lips, forgot

How the shadows fail when the day is done,

And when Love is not.

We have made no vows—there will none be broke,

Our love was free as the wind on the hill,

There was no word said we need wish unspoke,

We have wrought no ill.

So shall we not part at the end of day,

Who have loved and lingered a little while,

Join lips for the last time, go our way,

With a sigh, a smile?

## 二十一、愛在四月

在愛的境地，我們漫步小徑上

我們上了一會兒愛的課堂

是否我們會奔往不同的方向

帶著嘆息？帶著微笑？當日落西方

我們曬了一會兒耀眼的太陽

我們纏綿、親吻，乃致於遺忘

當白晝已盡，而愛也滅亡

重重陰影會如此臨降

我們沒有立下誓言，也就沒什麼可違背

我們的愛自由自在，嶺上微風吹

說出口的，沒什麼教我倆後悔

所作的，沒什麼讓我倆受罪

那麼，是否我們會離別，當日落西方

我們流連了一會兒，彼此愛過對方

最後一次再把唇貼在你的唇上

帶著嘆息？帶著微笑？而後奔往不同的方向

## [22] VAIN HOPE

Sometimes, to solace my sad heart, I say,

Though late it be, though lily-time be past,

Though all the summer skies be overcast,

Haply I will go down to her, some day,

And cast my rests of life before her feet,  
 That she may have her will of me, being so sweet,  
 And none gainsay!

So might she look on me with pitying eyes,  
 And lay calm hands of healing on my head:  
*“Because of thy long pains be comforted;  
 For I, even I, am Love: sad soul, arise!”*  
 So, for her graciousness, I might at last  
 Gaze on the very face of Love, and hold Him fast  
 In no disguise.

Haply, I said, she will take pity on me,  
 Though late I come, long after lily-time,  
 With burden of waste days and drifted rhyme:  
 Her kind, calm eyes, down drooping maidenly,  
 Shall change, grow soft: there yet is time, meseems,  
 I said, for solace; though I know these things are dreams  
 And may not be!

## 二十二、空想

有時，為了撫慰悲傷的心，我說

雖然太遲，雖然百合的花期已過  
雖然夏日的晴空已佈滿陰翳雲朵  
或許，有那麼一天，我會去找她  
在她腳旁留下我生命中贖下的所有  
而她也會樂意接納我  
好好地待我，沒人可以反駁

也許她會用悲憫的雙眼朝我觀望  
再以從容的雙手撫慰我，在我額上  
“因為你長久承受苦痛，你得到安詳  
悲傷的靈魂，飛騰！我也可以同愛神一樣”  
所以，最後我或許，經由她的慈祥  
可以覲見愛神的臉龐  
我會毫無掩飾，緊抱愛神不放

或許，我說，她會同情我  
雖然我已來遲，百合的花期早過  
是荒廢的光陰、渙散的詩句，牽絆著我  
她仁慈安定的雙眼，聖潔地俯視  
眼光轉變得更柔：我想時間還夠  
來得及撫慰，我說  
雖然我知道這都是夢想，沒有結果

## [23] VAIN RESOLVES

I said: "There is an end of my desire:

Now have I sown, and I have harvested,

And these are ashes of an ancient fire,

Which, verily, shall not be quickened.

Now will I take me to a place of peace,

Forget mine heart's desire;

In solitude and prayer, work out my soul's release.

"I shall forget her eyes, how cold they were;

Forget her voice, how soft it was and low,

With all my singing that she did not hear,

And all my service that she did not know.

I shall not hold the merest memory

Of any days that were,

Within those solitudes where I will fasten me."

And once she passed, and once she raised her eyes,

And smiled for courtesy, and nothing said:

And suddenly the old flame did uprise,

And all my dead desire was quickened.

Yea! as it hath been, it shall ever be,



Most passionless, pure eyes!

Which never shall grow soft, nor change, nor pity me.

### 二十三、無法自拔

我說：“我的慾望到了盡頭  
現在我已耕耘，而後也已收穫  
這一切都是灰燼，來自一把曩昔的火  
一把再也點不燃的火  
現在我要向一處寧靜的地方走  
去把心中的慾望拋向腦後  
在孤獨與祈禱中，讓我的靈魂解脫

我會忘卻她的雙眼，有多麼冷漠  
忘卻她的聲音，有多麼柔和微弱  
我的嘆息，她都不曾聽過  
我所作的一切，她又何嘗懂過  
我從禁錮自己的孤獨中趕走  
往昔的回憶，不再棧戀任何時候  
那怕一絲一毫也不留

而一旦當她經過，一旦她舉目抬頭  
微笑問候，什麼也沒說：

驀地，又竄起舊日的那把火  
 俱成灰燼的慾念卻又復活  
 是的，過去如此，也將永遠這樣，都是那雙  
 最無情的純潔眼眸！  
 永不轉柔，永遠依舊，永不憐憫我

[24] A REQUIEM

Neobule,<sup>77</sup> being tired,  
 Far too tired to laugh or weep,  
 From the hours, rosy and gray,  
 Hid her golden face away.  
 Neobule, fain of sleep,  
 Slept at last as she desired!

Neobule! is it well,  
 That you haunt the hollow lands,  
 Where the poor, dead people stray,  
 Ghostly, pitiful and gray,

---

<sup>77</sup> Flower. *The Poetry of Ernest Dowson*, 254: “Neobule, a beautiful woman to whom Horace addressed the twelfth Ode of his third Book, Ad Neobulem.” The stanza in which the name appears: “How unhappy are the maidens who with Cupid may not play, / Who may never touch the wine-cup, but must tremble all the day / At an uncle and the scourging of his tongue! / Neobule, there’s a robber takes your needle and your thread, / Let the lessons of Minerva run no longer in your head;” (taken from

Plucking, with their spectral hands,  
Scentless blooms of asphodel?

Neobule, tired to death  
Of the flowers that I threw  
On her flower-like, fair feet,  
Sighed for blossoms not so sweet,  
Lunar roses pale and blue,  
Lilies of the world beneath.

Neobule! ah, too tired  
Of the dreams and days above!  
Where the poor, dead people stray,  
Ghostly, pitiful and gray,  
Out of life and out of love,  
Sleeps the sleep which she desired.

## 二十四、追思曲

妳，倦了  
倦得沒有笑聲，沒有淚  
在緋紅抑或灰靄的時節

都已不見她的容光燦耀

妳，一心想睡

終於，如願睡了

妳，是否可好？

當妳寄身在虛冥之地

那裡，已故的亡者游盪

駭人，陰森，又令人感傷

伸著他們枯槁的雙手採集

不曾飄香的冥界花草

妳，倦得人寰撒手

厭倦了的花，是我留下

在潔美如花的腳邊

而你盼的花簇非如此香甜

蒼涼藍鬱的玫瑰開在月下

以及陰間的百合朵朵

妳，啊！好倦好倦了

倦人間的夢想與光陰

彼處，已故的亡者游盪

駭人，陰森，又令人感傷

不懂愛，不懂生命

一得如願的長眠，睡著

[25] BEATA SOLITUDO<sup>78</sup>

What land of Silence,

Where pale stars shine

On apple-blossom

And dew-drenched vine,

Is yours and mine?

The silent valley

That we will find,

Where all the voices

Of humankind

Are left behind.

There all forgetting,

Forgotten quite,

We will repose us,

With our delight

Hid out of sight.

The world forsaken,  
And out of mind  
Honour and labour,  
We shall not find  
The stars unkind.

And men shall travail,  
And laugh and weep;  
But we have vistas  
Of gods asleep,  
With dreams as deep.

A land of Silence,  
Where pale stars shine  
On apple-blossoms  
And dew-drenched vine,  
Be yours and mine!

## 二十五、幸福的孤獨

那裏，有著蒼白的星辰  
照耀蘋果花簇上

以及露水浸潤的藤蔓  
何處，有此一片沉寂的地方  
可屬於我倆？

幽靜的山谷  
我們會找到  
那裏 萬千  
人間的喧擾  
全被遠拋

那裏一切令人釋懷  
那裏早為世人忘記  
那眼睛所無法察覺  
而屬於我倆的歡愉  
伴我們此地歇憩

遺棄了世界  
也不再掛心  
什麼榮辱、勞苦  
我們將會認清  
原來星辰並非無情

而世人總得奔波受苦

總有歡笑悲泣  
但我們不乏期望  
盼能人世外睡去  
睡在深沉的夢裏

此處，有著蒼白的星辰  
照耀蘋果花簇上  
以及露水浸潤的藤蔓  
此處，有一片沉寂的地方  
會屬於我倆

[26] TERRE PROMISE<sup>79</sup>

Even now the fragrant darkness of her hair  
Had brushed my cheek; and once, in passing by,  
Her hand upon my hand lay tranquilly:  
What things unspoken trembled in the air!

Always I know, how little severs me  
From mine heart' s country, that is yet so far;  
And must I lean and long across a bar,  
That half a word would shatter utterly?



Ah might it be, that just by touch of hand,  
Or speaking silence, shall the barrier fall;  
And she shall pass, with no vain words at all,  
But droop into mine arms, and understand!

## 二十六、應許之地

到現在，還感到她一頭芬芳的幽暗  
輕拂了我的臉頰；曾經，當她走過  
她的手靜靜地靠上我的手  
未說出的話在氛圍中微顫

一直，我都知道，沒什麼可以  
隔闕我與心田，而心田還是離我太遠  
是否我必須倚身渴望，隔著一截欄杆  
那怕隻字片語，它便會瓦解離析

啊，但願，祇要輕輕觸碰  
或什麼也不說，阻礙便崩落  
當她走過，多餘的話都不說  
祇是鑽進我懷裡，我的心她懂

## [27] AUTUMNAL

Pale amber sunlight falls across  
The reddening October trees,  
That hardly sway before a breeze  
As soft as summer: summer's loss  
Seems little, dear! on days like these!

Let misty autumn be our part!  
The twilight of the year is sweet:  
Where shadow and the darkness meet  
Our love, a twilight of the heart  
Eludes a little time's deceit.

Are we not better and at home  
In dreamful Autumn, we who deem  
No harvest joy is worth a dream?  
A little while and night shall come,  
A little while, then, let us dream.

Beyond the pearled horizons lie  
Winter and night: awaiting these

We garner this poor hour of ease,  
Until love turn from us and die  
Beneath the drear November trees.

## 二十七、秋意

微弱的陽光，琥珀般金黃  
照落，穿過十月轉紅的樹木  
幾幾乎一動也不動的樹，即使微風吹拂  
輕柔如夏的微風，看不出夏日已消逝無蹤  
親愛！當我們在如此的日子中身處

讓霧靄的秋將我們浸淫  
歲暮的微煦宜人甜美  
這裡陰影同昏暗交匯  
融入我們的愛，心中的微煦  
游離了些許光陰的欺偽

可不？我們可以更加自在  
在這充滿夢想的秋季中  
對我們而言，秋收的歡喜比不上一場夢  
再過一會兒，黑夜便會到來  
再多一會兒，讓我們入夢

在珍珠色澤的地平線外  
是我們等待的冬季與夜幕  
這閒適的片刻我們藏貯  
直到愛自我倆身旁離開  
在十一月淒涼的樹下亡故

[28] IN TEMPORE SENECTUTIS<sup>80</sup>

When I am old,  
    And sadly steal apart,  
Into the dark and cold,  
    Friend of my heart!  
Remember, if you can,  
Not him who lingers, but that other man,  
Who loved and sang, and had a beating heart,—  
    When I am old!

When I am old,  
    And all Love's ancient fire  
Be tremulous and cold:  
    My soul's desire!

Remember, if you may,  
 Nothing of you and me but yesterday,  
 When heart on heart we bid the years conspire  
 To make us old.

When I am old,  
 And every star above  
 Be pitiless and cold:  
 My life' s one love!  
 Forbid me not to go:  
 Remember nought of us but long ago,  
 And not at last, how love and pity strove  
 When I grew old!

## 二十八、年老的時候

當我年老的時候  
 老得悽然離開而隱沒  
 進入了黑暗與冰冷  
 我交心的好友！  
 如果可以忘卻那苟延流連的我  
 勿忘那愛過而高歌的我

一顆驛動的心我曾擁有

當我年老的時候

當我年老的時候

曩昔所有愛的火

風中顫動而降溫熄沒：

我靈魂中的渴求！

如果可以，忘卻你我

勿忘昨日我倆心心相印

催歲月籌劃我們的老朽

當我年老的時候

天上的每顆星星

將變得無情冷漠：

我一生的鐘愛！

別留我，讓我走：

記住我倆的往日，忘卻盡頭

那愛情與憐憫拉鋸的交錯

當我變老的時候

## [29] VILLANELLE OF HIS LADY'S TREASURES

I took her dainty eyes, as well

As silken tendrils of her hair:

And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her voice, a silver bell,

As clear as song, as soft as prayer;

I took her dainty eyes as well.

It may be, said I, who can tell,

These things shall be my less despair?

And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her whiteness virginal

And from her cheek two roses rare:

I took her dainty eyes as well.

I said: "It may be possible

Her image from my heart to tear!"

And so I made a Villanelle.

I stole her laugh, most musical:

I wrought it in with artful care;

I took her dainty eyes as well;

And so I made a Villanelle.

## 二十九、詠她的好

看著她一雙優雅的眼眸  
以及她鬢髮如絲綢般柔細  
於是我寫下歌詠的詩一首

聽著她一如銀鈴的聲喉  
祈禱似地溫柔，歌唱般地清晰  
還有著一雙優雅的眼眸

也許，這些美好可為我解憂  
我說，但有誰能會意？  
於是我寫下歌詠的詩一首

看著她雙頰如玫瑰般紅透  
以及聖潔無瑕的白皙  
還有著一雙優雅的眼眸

她的容貌也許會從我心頭溜走  
我說，可能會被忘記！  
於是我寫下歌詠的詩一首



我把她最曼妙的笑聲偷走  
 靈巧而仔細地融入詩筆  
 看著她一雙優雅的眼眸  
 於是我寫下歌詠的詩一首

[30] GRAY NIGHTS

Awhile we wandered (thus it is I dream!)  
 Through a long, sandy track of No Man' s Land,  
 Where only poppies grew among the sand,  
 The which we, plucking, cast with scant esteem,  
 And ever sadlier, into the sad stream,  
 Which followed us, as we went, hand in hand,  
 Under the estrangèd stars, a road unplanned,  
 Seeing all things in the shadow of a dream.  
 And ever sadlier, as the stars expired,  
 We found the poppies rarer, till thine eyes  
 Grown all my light, to light me were too tired,  
 And at their darkening, that no surmise  
 Might haunt me of the lost days we desired,  
 After them all I flung those memories!

三十、灰暗的夜

我們徘徊了一會兒（正如我所夢見！）  
 越過了無人之境中漫長揚沙的路途  
 彼處祇有朵朵罌粟長滿沙土  
 我們採下這芬芳作為敬獻  
 更加悽愴地投入悽愴的溪澗  
 這流水一路跟隨，當我倆牽手漫步  
 星光稀疏，我們走在不知所至的道路  
 舉目所見，皆覆在夢境幻影裡面  
 而我們更加悽愴，而你的雙眼也好疲憊  
 因為星光已熄，罌粟更難尋覓  
 你那照亮我的雙眼，曾洋溢我所有的光輝  
 但在那眼神黯然逝去之際  
 我們嚮往的昔日不會再縈繞我心扉  
 因我已一一拋去往日的記憶

[31] VESPERAL

Strange grows the river on the sunless evenings!

The river comforts me, grown spectral, vague and dumb:

Long was the day; at last the consoling shadows come:

*Sufficient for the day are the day's evil things!*<sup>81</sup>

Labour and longing and despair the long day brings;  
 Patient till evening men watch the sun go west;  
 Deferred, expected night at last brings sleep and rest:

*Sufficient for the day are the day's evil things!*

At last the tranquil Angelus of evening rings  
 Night's curtain down for comfort and oblivion  
 Of all the vanities observèd by the sun:

*Sufficient for the day are the day's evil things!*

So, some time, when the last of all our evenings  
 Crowneth memorially the last of all our days,  
 Not loth to take his poppies man goes down and says,  
 "Sufficient for the day were the day's evil things!"

### 三十一、晚禱

沒有落日的昏暮，流水顯得如此生疏  
 流水帶來撫慰：晦暗、沉默，如鬼魅：  
 白晝漫漫；終於幽暗降臨帶來安慰：

---

<sup>81</sup> Matthew 6:34.

夠了！我們已經受盡了一天的苦

漫漫的白晝，帶來了渴求，絕望與勞苦

直至昏暮，人們耐心地望著夕陽落去

遲來的，企盼的夜，終於帶來睡眠與安息

夠了！我們已經受盡了一天的苦

終於，平和的晚禱鐘聲傳出

低垂的夜幕，帶著安慰與遺忘落下

讓人忘卻所有太陽目睹的浮華

夠了！我們已經受盡了一天的苦

所以，會有一天，當我們最後的昏暮

似墓誌銘在最後一日緩緩降落

我們會歡喜地沿路採集罌粟，然後說

“ 夠了！我們已經受盡了一天的苦”

### [32] THE GARDEN OF SHADOW

Love heeds no more the sighing of the wind

Against the perfect flowers: thy garden' s close

Is grown a wilderness, where none shall find

One strayed, last petal of one last year' s rose.

O bright, bright hair! O mouth like a ripe fruit!

Can famine be so nigh to harvesting?

Love, that was songful, with a broken lute

In grass of graveyards goeth murmuring.

Let the wind blow against the perfect flowers,

And all thy garden change and glow with spring:

Love is grown blind with no more count of hours,

Nor part in seed-time nor in harvesting.

## 三十二、幻影花園

愛不再留意風的嘆息

對著無瑕花朵的嘆息

你花園的盡頭一片荒蕪埋沒

沒人會發現最後一刻最後一瓣玫瑰的凋落

哦！閃亮，閃亮的髮絲！哦！如熟果的小口

飢荒是否能逼近來採收？

充滿歌聲的愛，彈著破舊的琴

在墓園的草地上哼出輕柔的聲音

且讓風吹襲無瑕的花

你的花園將全然蛻變，因春天而煥發：

反正愛已盲目，把時間忘卻腦後

也就不須播種，毋庸採收

[33] SOLI CANTARE PERITI ARCADES<sup>82</sup>

Oh, I would live in a dairy,

And its Colin<sup>83</sup> I would be,

And many a rustic fairy

Should churn the milk with me.

Or the fields should be my pleasure,

And my flocks should follow me,

Piping a frolic measure

For Joan or Marjorie.

For the town is black and weary,

And I hate the London street;

But the country ways are cheery,

And country lanes are sweet.

---

<sup>82</sup> “Arcadians, Alone Gifted to Sing.” From Virgil, *Eclogues* 10, 32-33.

<sup>83</sup> Flower offers a possible explanation of the allusion of this name: “The use of the name here may have been suggested to him [Dowson] by this line from *La Pucelle* (*La Pucelle d’Orléans* by Voltaire), Canto I, on the translation of which he was either already engaged, or about to embark: ‘Colin s’endort sur le

Good luck to you, Paris ladies!

Ye are over fine and nice,  
I know where the country maid is,  
Who needs not asking twice.

Ye are brave in your silks and satins,  
As ye mince about the Town;  
But her feet go free in pattens,  
If she wear a russet gown.

If she be not queen nor goddess  
She shall milk my brown-eyes herds,  
And the breasts beneath her bodice.  
Are whiter than her curds.

So I will live in a dairy,  
And its Colin I will be,  
And it's Joan that I will marry,  
Or, haply, Marjorie.

### 三十三、祇有世外桃源裏的人懂得歌唱

啊！願我生活在牧場  
身為牧場的少年郎  
許許多多鄉間的姑娘  
伴我攪乳製酪此一方

或許，原野也成了我的歡愉  
而羊群緊跟我身際  
吹奏一曲輕快的旋律  
給阿瓊，或給阿莉

鎮上昏暗 沒有生氣  
倫敦的街道更不合我意  
鄉間道路可就讓人歡喜  
鄉間的小路是這般美麗

巴黎的仕女，我祝福你！  
你們太過於美好，也太纖細  
我知道何處有鄉村少女  
不會婉拒人家的好意

你們衣綢著緞，光鮮亮麗  
你們在城裏踩著細碎的步履



但她步伐愜意，踩著木屐

身著樸素的褐布衣

就算她不比女王也非來自天際

她會幫我將牛群的鮮乳汲取

而她襯衣裡的乳房

比她製的凝乳更白皙

所以我要住在牧場

當個牧場的少年郎

我還要當阿瓊的新郎

或是跟阿莉步入禮堂

#### [34] ON THE BIRTH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD

Mark the day white,<sup>84</sup> on which the Fates have smiled:

Eugenio and Egeria<sup>85</sup> have a child.

On whom abundant grace kind Jove imparts

If she but copy either parent's parts.

Then, Muses! Long devoted to her race,

---

<sup>84</sup> Here and the ensuing notes are Flowers: "It was a Roman custom to mark with a white stone (as chalk) a festival on the calendar.

<sup>85</sup> Egeria, as annotated by Flower, is "a nymph of Arcia," and "she was considered by many as a goddess who presided over the pregnancy of women, as such as she is mentioned by Ovid, Livy, Virgil

Grant her Egeria' s virtues and her face;  
 Nor stop your bounty there, but add to it  
 Eugenio' s learning and Eugenio' s wit.

### 三十四、賀友人得子

銘記這吉慶的日子，這命運之神微笑的日子  
 才子佳人喜獲麟子  
 孩子身上有天神賦予的豐厚恩賜  
 與父母如此地神似  
 那麼，長久寄情人間的繆思！  
 賜予她母親的美德與容貌  
 但別讓你的慷慨僅止於此  
 也給她父親的學識與睿智

### [35] EXTREME UNCTION

Upon the eyes, the lips, the feet,  
 On all the passages of sense,  
 The atoning oil is spread with sweet  
 Renewal of lost innocence.

The feet, that lately ran so fast  
    To meet desire, are soothly sealed;  
The eyes, that were so often cast  
    On vanity, are touched and healed.

From troublous sights and sounds set free;  
    In such a twilight hour of breath,  
Shall one retrace his life, or see,  
    Through shadows, the true face of death?

Vials of mercy! Sacring oils!  
    I know not where nor when I come,  
Nor through what wanderings and toils,  
    To crave of you Viaticum.

Yet, when the walls of flesh grow weak,  
    In such an hour, it well may be,  
Through mist and darkness, light will break,  
    And each anointed sense will see.

### 三十五、最終的塗油聖禮

在雙眼，雙唇與雙腳

在一切感官的通道

塗上救贖的油膏

召回失去的純真美好

步履倏疾，追逐慾望不已

現在已被撫慰而得以歇息

目光游移，不時放眼名利

現在已被撫觸而得以痊癒

從種種撩亂的聲色中解脫

在這生息將盡，微光殘餘的時候

是否人該將身後的日子回溯

或面對死亡的真面目，在望穿幻影重重之後

慈悲的聖水！神聖的油膏！

我置身何方？何時來此？我不知道

而歷經一再的漂流與辛勞

最後的聖餐也不懂去求討

然而，當這血肉之軀一再衰竭

很可能，在這樣的時節

會有光芒劃破迷霧與漆黑

所有塗油的感官都能知覺

[36] AMANTIUM IRAE<sup>86</sup>

When this, our rose, is faded,  
And these, our days, are done,  
In lands profoundly shaded  
From tempest and from sun:  
Ah, once more come together,  
Shall we forgive the past,  
And safe from worldly weather  
Possess our souls at last?

Or in our place of shadows  
Shall still we stretch an hand  
To green, remembered meadows,  
Of that old pleasant land?  
And vainly there foregathered,  
Shall we regret the sun?  
The rose of love, ungathered?  
The bay, we have not won?

Ah, child! the world's dark marges

May lead to Nevermore,  
 The stately funeral barges  
 Sail for an unknown shore,  
 And love we vow to-morrow,  
 And pride we serve to-day:  
 What if they both should borrow  
 Sad hues of yesterday?  
  
 Our pride! Ah, should we miss it,  
 Or will it serve at last?  
 Our anger, if we kiss it,  
 Is like a sorrow past.  
 While roses deck the garden,  
 While yet the sun is high,  
 Doff sorry pride for pardon,  
 Or<sup>87</sup> ever love go by.

### 三十六 愛人之怒

這朵，我倆的玫瑰，凋零  
 這段，我倆的歲月，終了

---

<sup>86</sup> The Anger of Lovers. From Terence, *Andria*, Act III, Scene 2: "Amantium irae amoris integratio est."

<sup>87</sup> before.

彼處籠罩在深邃的陰影  
不見風暴，不見日照：  
啊！彼時彼地，讓我們再次相聚  
是否，我們不再對過去追究  
且安然度過世間的風風雨雨  
最後將我們自己的靈魂擁有？

抑或，身處重重陰影之中  
是否，我們該把手伸往  
那令人難忘的綠野蔥蘢  
在昔日歡愉的那一方？  
如果我們又枉然重逢一場  
是否，我們該怨太陽？  
怨不曾摘下的愛的玫瑰？  
怨我們不及採擷的月桂？

啊，孩子！這世界昏暗的邊際  
或許通往不堪回首的某地  
華美的海葬樓船  
航向未知的彼岸  
而明日我們為愛情起誓  
而今日我們受自尊主宰  
但會不會兩者都被染漬

昨日悲傷的色彩？

我倆的自尊！啊，是否我們該拋棄

還是我們會成為它的主宰

我倆的怨忿，如果我們吻去

不過似消逝的傷懷

趁玫瑰還裝點著花園

趁太陽還高掛在上空

接受寬恕，將惱人的自尊丟遠

趁愛未永遠消失無蹤

[37] IMPENITENTIA ULTIMA<sup>88</sup>

Before my light goes out for ever if God should give me a choice of graces,

I would not reck of length of days, nor crave for things to be;

But cry: "One day of the great lost days, one face of all the faces,

Grant me to see and touch once more and nothing more to see.

"For, Lord, I was free of all Thy flowers, but I chose the world' s sad roses,

And that is why my feet are torn and mine eyes are blind with sweat,

But at Thy terrible judgement-seat, when this my tired life closes,

I am ready to reap whereof I sowed, and pay my righteous debt.



“But once before the sand is run and the silver thread is broken,  
 Give me a grace and cast aside the veil of dolorous years,  
 Grant me one hour of all mine hours, and let me see for a token  
 Her pure and pitiful eyes shine out, and bathe her feet with tears.”

Her pitiful hands should calm, and her hair stream down and blind me,  
 Out of the sight of night, and out of the reach of fear,  
 And her eyes should be my light whilst the sun went out behind me,  
 And the viols in her voice be the last sound in mine ear.

Before the ruining waters fall and my life be carried under,  
 And Thine anger cleave me through as a child cuts down a flower,  
 I will praise Thee, Lord, in Hell, while my limbs are racked asunder,  
 For the last sad sight of her face and the little grace of an hour.

### 三十七、始終無悔

在我燈火永遠熄滅之前，如果上帝允許我選擇一項恩典  
 我不會要求能活多久，或盼企身外的東西  
 但我會吶喊：失去的美好日子，多讓我過一天；人海中有一張臉，再讓我見一面  
 恩准我再次見到、撫摸那臉龐，此外無所希冀

---

<sup>88</sup> The Final Impenitence.

主，你賜予我萬千花卉，但我選了人間最傷悲的玫瑰

因此，我奔波飄泊，汗水使我盲目

但在你可畏的審判座前，當我疲憊的一生終告結尾

我已甘心，來採收我種出的果，清償我的債務

但，只要一次，趁生命的沙漏未止，懸命的銀線未斷

賜我一個恩典，揭去籠罩歲月的哀傷

在我一生中的一切，讓我一見

她純潔可人的雙眼，些許光芒，淚水滴落腳旁

她可人的雙手安撫我，她長髮垂下，我眼中無他

超乎夜幕，超乎恐懼

她的雙眼是我的明燈，當太陽在身後落下

而她曼妙的聲音將會在最後縈繞我身際

在吞噬一切的大水來臨之前，我生命被覆沒之前

趁主的憤怒尚未將我劈裂，一如小孩將花朵砍喪

我讚美你，主，雖將我四肢斷截，讓我受刑冥間

因為有了那一刻的恩賜，得以在最後向她的臉龐，投以悽愴的一望

If we must part,  
 Then let it be like this;  
 Not heart on heart,  
 Nor with the useless anguish of a kiss;  
 But touch mine hand and say;  
 “*Until to-morrow or some other day,  
 If we must part.*”

Words are so weak  
 When love hath been so strong:  
 Let silence speak:  
 “*Life is a little while, and love is long;  
 A time to sow and reap,  
 And after harvest a long time to sleep,  
 But words are weak.*”

### 三十八、臨別贈言

如果一定要分手  
 那麼就這樣走：  
 什麼心心相印都不要有  
 吻別祇會讓餘恨空留  
 祇要你握著我的手，說出口：

“ 明天，或往後會再聚首  
如果一定要分手 “

話語已然哽咽

愛已如此熾烈

就讓沉默藥揭：

生命短促，愛情綿甦

有耕耘也有收獲的時節

豐收之後便是闔目長歌

但話語已然哽咽

### [39] SAPIENTIA LUNAE<sup>89</sup>

The wisdom of the world said unto me:

*“Go forth and run, the race is to the brave;*

*Perchance some honour tarrieth for thee!”*

“As tarrieth,” I said, “for sure, the grave.”

For I had pondered on a rune of roses,

Which to her votaries the moon discloses.

---

<sup>89</sup> Literally—The Wisdom of the Moon, a Latin idiom, meaning fancy, illusion. Flower. *The Poetry of Ernest Dowson* 263: “It is an old custom that roses should be gathered by moonlight on Midsummer’s Eve by maidens who wish to see their future husbands. Dowson in this case seems to have the custom in mind, and is playing with the idea of finding a new love. The wisdom of the world urges him to go out adventurously, but it is not meet to run for shadows, disclosed by virtue of roses, when the

The wisdom of the world said: "*There are bays:*

*Go forth and run, for victory is good,*

*After the stress of the laborious days."*

"Yet," said I, "shall I be the worms' sweet food,"

As I went musing on a rune of roses,

Which in her hour, the pale, soft moon discloses.

Then said my voices: "*Wherefore strive or run,*

*On dusty highways ever, a vain race?*

*The long night cometh, starless, void of sun,*

*What light shall serve thee like her golden face?"*

For I had pondered on a rune of roses,

And knew some secrets which the moon discloses.

"Yea," said I, "for her eyes are pure and sweet

As lilies, and the fragrance of her hair

Is many laurels; and it is not meet

To run for shadows when the prize is here;"

And I went reading in that rune of roses

Which to her votaries the moon discloses.

## 三十九、冥想

人間的智慧告訴我：

“快步向前去，這是勇者的競技

或許有什麼榮譽正等著你！”

“等我的，”我說，“一定是塊墓地“

因為我已思索過玫瑰詩篇

那月亮對她的信徒揭露的詩篇

人間的智慧說：“月桂等著你

快步向前去，美好的勝利

會尾隨刻苦時所帶來的壓力

“不過，”我說，“我終將死去，宴饗螻蟻”

當我沉思著玫瑰詩篇

那蒼白、柔和的月亮，在夜裏揭露的詩篇

然後換我說：“為何奮鬥，為何前去？

功名塵土，生命短促，祇為徒勞的競技？

漫漫長夜降臨，沒有星辰的天際，太陽早已匿跡

何等的光，能一如她光芒的臉龐襯托著你？“

因為我已思索過玫瑰詩篇

而得知月亮揭露的奧義秘言

“是的，”我說，“她的雙眸甜美，潔晰  
 像百合，而她髮際的馥郁  
 像月桂錦簇；既然眼前就有獎勵  
 何須追逐幻影去爭取”  
 而我還是去讀玫瑰詩篇  
 那月亮對她的信徒揭露的詩篇

[40] *Dum nos fata sinunt, oculos satiemus Amore.*<sup>90</sup>

PROPERTIUS

Cease smiling, Dear! a little while be sad,  
 Here in the silence, under the wan moon;  
 Sweet are thine eyes, but how can I be glad,  
 Knowing they change so soon?

For Love's sake, Dear, be silent! Cover me  
 In the deep darkness of thy falling hair:  
 Fear is upon me and the memory  
 Of what is all men's share.

O could this moment be perpetuate!  
 Must we grow old, and leaden-eyed and gray,

And taste no more the wild and passionate

Love sorrows of to-day?

Grown old, and faded, Sweet! and past desire,

Let memory die, lest there be too much ruth,

Remembering the old, extinguished fire

Of our divine, lost youth.

O red pomegranate of thy perfect mouth!

My lips' life-fruitage, might I taste and die,

Here in thy garden, where the scented south

Wind chastens agony;

Reap death from thy live lips in one long kiss,

And look my last into thine eyes and rest:

What sweets had life to me sweeter than this

Swift dying on thy breast?

Or, if that may not be, for Love's sake, Dear!

Keep silence still, and dream that we shall lie,

Red mouth to mouth, entwined, and always hear

The south wind's melody,

---

<sup>90</sup> "While the Fates Allow Us, Let Us Satisfy Our Eyes with Love." From Propertius, Book II, XV, 23.



Here in thy garden, through the sighing boughs,  
Beyond the reach of time and chance and change,  
And bitter life and death, and broken vows,  
That sadden and estrange.

#### 四十、快！讓眼神充滿愛

收起笑容，親愛！暫且傷悲  
在這一片沉寂，沐浴蒼茫的月色  
楚楚的，你的雙眼，但教我何以喜悅  
當我發覺它們變了，僅在傾刻

看在愛的份上，親愛！別開口  
放下你的長髮，覆我於深邃的幽暗  
恐懼已爬上我的心頭  
想起人命中註定的生死悲歡

哦！願此刻永遠不歷蒼桑  
難道我們不得不老，而滯目白頭  
而再不得輕嘗狂放  
而激情不堪回首？

成長，而後老死，吾愛！跨越了慾念

就別再追憶，別空餘惋惜

忘卻那昔日，那熄滅的火燄

曾在我們聖潔、失去的青春燃起

你無瑕的小口，石榴般殷紅

是我唇間生命的美果，我願一嘗瞑目

此地，在你的花園之中

馥郁的南風，洗滌我的痛苦

用深深的一吻，從你生氣盎然的雙唇，將死亡收刈

而後在你的眼裡，看到了我的安息與結局

對我而言，生命中有什麼會更美麗

比起在你胸前倏忽死去

如果那不可求，看在愛的份上，親愛！

別打破沉寂，讓我們躺下，在夢裡

相擁而吻，傾聽南風帶來

永不止息的旋律

此地，在你的花園之中，穿過嘆息的枝頭

超越時間、命運與變異

超越生命的痛苦，誓言的殘破

那種種的悲傷與疏離

[41] SERAPHITA<sup>91</sup>

Come not before me now, O visionary face!  
 Me tempest-tost, and borne along life's passionate sea;  
 Troublous and dark and stormy though my passage be;  
 Not here and now may we commingle or embrace,  
 Lest the loud anguish of the waters should efface  
 The bright illumination of thy memory,  
 Which dominates the night: rest, far away from me,  
 In the serenity of thine abiding-place!

But when the storm is highest, and the thunders blare,  
 And sea and sky are riven, O moon of all my night!  
 Stoop down but once in pity of my great despair,  
 And let thine hand, though over late to help, alight  
 But once upon my pale eyes and my drowning hair,  
 Before the great waves conquer in the last vain fight.

四十一、女神

此時，別在我眼前浮現，啊！夢幻的臉龐！  
 我飽受風暴翻騰，漂蕩在生命中的情愛海洋；  
 雖然我昏暗的旅途充滿風暴浪濤  
 此時此地別讓我們聚首擁抱  
 以免大海的怒聲滔滔把對你的記憶  
 帶來的那明亮光芒一抹而去  
 那照亮黑夜的光芒：從我身旁遠離  
 在你的境地那片靜謐中歇息

但在風浪高漲，雷霆價響  
 而當海天崩裂時，哦！我一切黑夜中的月亮  
 再一次降臨，憐恤我的絕望  
 雖已不及拯救，且讓你輕盈的手上  
 再次撫觸我快被淹沒的髮際與雙眼蒼涼  
 趁駭浪尚未戰勝這一場抵抗無益的仗

#### [42] EPIGRAM

Because I am idolatrous and have besought,  
 With grievous supplication and consuming prayer,  
 The admirable image that my dreams have wrought  
 Out of her swan's neck and her dark, abundant hair:

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<sup>91</sup> The Goddess

The jealous gods, who brook no worship save their own,  
Turned my live idol marble and her heart to stone.

## 四十二、雋語

因為我崇拜偶像，殷切追隨  
不辭辛勞地祈禱，直到憔悴  
崇拜我夢中那令人愛慕的身影  
天鵝般的粉頸，烏黑的秀髮盈盈：  
善妒的眾神，怎容許對他們以外的信仰  
便把我活生生的偶像化為雕像，再賜她鐵石心腸

[43] QUID NON SPEREMUS, AMANTES?<sup>92</sup>

Why is there in the least touch of her hands  
More grace than other women's lips bestow,  
If love is but a slave in fleshly bands  
Of flesh to flesh, wherever love may go?

Why choose vain grief and heavy-hearted hours  
For her lost voice, and dear remembered hair,  
If love may cull his honey from all flowers,

And girls grow thick as violets, everywhere?

Nay! She is gone, and all things fall apart;

Or she is cold, and vainly have we prayed;

And broken is the summer's splendid heart,

And hope within a deep, dark grave is laid.

As man aspires and falls, yet a soul springs

Out of his agony of flesh at last,

So love that flesh enthralls, shall rise on wings

Soul-centred, when the rule of flesh is past.

Then, most High Love, or wreathed with myrtle sprays,

Or crownless and forlorn, nor less a star,

Thee may I serve and follow, all my days,

Whose thorns are sweet as never roses are!

### 四十三、世間的愛人盼什麼

何以，她雙手的輕輕撫觸

就足以遠勝再多女子的吻

如果，愛情不過為肉體所奴役

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<sup>92</sup> “What Do We Lovers Hope for?”

彼此受制於彼此的肉慾，不管愛何從何去？

何以拾起徒勞的傷感與沉重的時刻

為了聽不到她的聲音，和祇在記憶中的秀髮？

如果愛能在百花中任採花蜜

何處不是女孩成群，花草茂密？

不！她已離去，一切便隨之傾圮

也許是她冷漠，任憑百般祝禱都無益

一顆夏日耀眼的心就此破碎

而願望就葬送在深邃幽暗的墓裡

人因企盼而落寞

靈魂卻終能自血肉的苦惱掙脫

於是受制肉體的愛，將展翅飛翔

靈魂才是主宰，當肉體的統治成過往

那麼崇高的愛不管是佩帶著桃金孃

或似星辰，不著冠冕而些許淒涼

在我所有的歲月裡，我將臣服追隨你

你的荊棘擁有玫瑰沒有的甜蜜

[44] CHANSON SANS PAROLES<sup>93</sup>

In the deep violet air,  
Not a leaf is stirred;  
There is no sound heard,  
But afar, the rare  
Trilled voice of a bird.

Is the wood's dim heart,  
And the fragrant pine,  
Incense, and a shrine  
Of her coming? Apart,  
I wait for a sign.

What the sudden hush said,  
She will hear, and forsake,  
Swift, for my sake,  
Her green, grassy bed:  
She will hear and awake!

She will hearken and glide,  
From her place of deep rest,

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<sup>93</sup> The Song Without Words



Dove-eyed, with the breast  
Of a dove, to my side:  
The pines bow their crest.

#### 四十四、無言之歌

花香在深沉的空中  
不見枝頭的蠢動  
耳際毫無聲息  
除了遙遙遠方 依稀  
鳴轉的鳥啼

是否在林中的幽幽深處  
那飄香的松樹  
讓她的到來有所棲宿  
孤子！讓我獨處  
帶著一線希望，我此地佇足

驀然的沉默聲息  
會傳到她耳際  
又飛快為了我而忘記  
她的床，茵茵碧綠：  
她會耳聞身起

她會聽見，輕快走來  
從她沉沉歇息的地方  
帶著柔和雙眼鴿子模樣  
與溫腴的胸膛，到我身旁：  
松樹頷首稽顙

## Appendix

### **Biography of Ernest Christopher Dowson (1868-1900)**

Born August 2, 1867 in Lee, Kent, Ernest Dowson enjoyed an infancy a lot brighter than the impression offered by the brief description of his life by Dr. Longaker. Alfred Dowson, his father, received fair income from his dry dock, the Bridge Dock in Limehouse, which has been handed down to him, and at the same time cultivated an impressive literary atmosphere to nourish the family and to feast the guests ever visited. The young Dowson's mother, Annie Dowson née Swan, is reported in various volumes a sensitive, intelligent, shy lady of Scottish descent. In spite of the considerable disparity in their ages,

the parents had in their dwelling, “The Grove” at Belmont Hill in Lee, due comfort and livelihood. Also noticeable is that they directed their lives in many ways in common, especially to the profound literary interest, and unfortunately to the aggravating health and mind that later led to untimely death.

It was not until the child Dowson reached the age 10 when Alfred Dowson started facing the fact that his interest in literary works and associates has by far outpaced that in his business. While he indulged himself in literature, the dry dock was left uncared-for. The result was increasingly dwindling income. In addition to the worsening financial situation of the family, the physical affliction that stroke both of the parents has also influenced the childhood of Ernest Dowson. For a more salubrious climate away from the cold and damp of London, to fight against the physical affliction that affected both the parents, the family took regular trips to the southern part of Europe, no matter how reluctantly for their financial concern.

When poverty and tuberculosis struck the family, it was the time when the young Dowson was ready to go to public school. Even if it was pointed out that at the moment his parents were more concerned about their own health and wealth, than his formal education, it is recognizable that without his father’s encouragement, he would not have acquired his impressive literal and literary knowledge of Latin. Neither is it fair to say such a plight of his family impeded his studies of any kind. On the contrary, it is the unstable life full of frequent travels that endowed with him an excellent command of French and a decent one of Italian. Under such circumstances, his language talents known to us were revealed, and later impressed his classmates, tutor at Queen’s College, and his contemporary literary figures.

At the age of 19, his father decided to send him to Oxford, where he studied for five terms, and left without a degree. His first weeks at Queen's was characterized by maladjustment due to his lack of school life in his earlier years. Unfamiliar with the ways and thoughts of the classmates at his age, he appeared shy and unresponsive. He was somewhat isolated by the topics in others' conversations and sports activities he never tried his hand at. With the lapsing of the first few weeks, the situation turned out friendlier to the young poet. He started his contact with others, through mutual interest in literature. By the next spring term, his room at the top of the back quadrangle on campus has won its regular visitors,<sup>94</sup> and his literary works and literacy of ancient Roman poets drew a great attention, both his classmates and that of the authorities in Oxford.

Here in Oxford, where Walter Pater and Schopenhauer started sowing their thoughts among the young minds, Dowson rendered his literary talents recognizable and furthered his studies in Latin poetry and French works. First starting his attendance as a commoner, he was later recommended to read for Honours; the discussions of Latin and French literatures with friends accompanied him late into the night. Recollected by one of his intimate classmates, this year was "one of the happiest in his life."<sup>95</sup>

When his college life seemed to exercise more and more positive influences over his mind and health, the Long Vacation of 1887 called an end to it. The young poet who finally shed a light of cheer afterwards returned from home, tinged with the color of the Dowsons, sick and gloomy.<sup>96</sup> Although it is suggested that "the novelty of college life had

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<sup>94</sup> Mostly his most intimate fellow students, W. R. Thomas, Arthur Moore, and Sam Smith.

<sup>95</sup> Longaker, Mark. 35-36.

<sup>96</sup> Report has it that "Apparently nothing significant happened to him during his vacation to cause him to adopt a different attitude toward university life," along with a proof of his meeting with his cousin.

worn off,”<sup>97</sup> it makes less sense for the change to take place after a long vacation away from school. It is more likely that the delicate health and the innate melancholy which he succeeded from his parents have during this period grown more synergistic in the depressing atmosphere in his home and later diverted him from his academic pursuits.

Moreover, conflicts between his literary pursuits and college life loomed large since his return. Unused to the confinement in school life, he left his quadrangle and found his new dwelling on the Grove Street, where he started his own life and his friendship with another contemporary poet and schoolmate, Lionel Johnson. Wide as his reading range was, none of his school assignments were covered. It was not only the life but also the requirements of school that did not meet his taste, or, he failed to meet.

Now the undergraduate believed that his refuge against “abhorrent Nature” should be found in art, his literary pursuits, not in the insipid works assigned to earn a degree. It is not surprising that he saw no necessity of the terms ahead. He chose to focus his attention on his own writing and reading. Regardless of the persuasion by his tutor and the arguments with friends, he decided to leave school. Never convinced by “the value of fulfilling the requirements for a degree,” he left Queen’s in March, 1888. “Without financial emergency at home” or “difficulty with the authorities,” the decision was all his own.

Partly out of the disappointment he brought to his father, and partly out of his loyalty to his family, he went home to assist in his father’s business. An ill-qualified business

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(Longaker, Mark. 36) In the only collection of Dowson’s letters now available (Flower, Desmond & Maas, Henry, ed. *The Letters of Ernest Dowson*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1967.), no letters of 1887 have been included. The reason remained unknown.

<sup>97</sup> Longaker, Mark. 37.

runner, like the father, he surprisingly proved a competent bookkeeper. Before “the intolerable ennui of the office,” as he told his friend, completely wore out his loyalty to his family, he had intermittently kept the ledgers at the dock house for five years. No matter how beautiful the landscape around the Bridge Dock might be, as he sometimes described, it was definitely not a working environment which could nurture his pursuits of letters.

What kept him working as a bookkeeper for such a long time was that knowing the financial difficulty which had been haunting his family since he was 10, he always wanted to do his best to contribute to his family. No doubt, his love for his family was deep enough to delay his search for something he never thought about giving up.

Later on, through his friend,<sup>98</sup> he found a job as an assistant editor of a magazine.

Were this magazine more well established, had the editor more resources, and were Dowson able to find more contributors and to cater to the proletarian taste, this would have been a promising job more related to his pursuits. In the beginning, he was all so serious when he started this new job in addition to his service to his family, but, in the end, only five weeks later, *The Critic*, the short-lived magazine, with all odds against it, gave its last breath at the five issues. Dowson was no doubt a Muse's child, but the Lady Luck seemed to ignore him from time to time.

Down from college, he was never short of companionship. During the years following his departure from Queen's, even when he had to face the tedious job of dry-docking, he never failed to possess friends whom he could share his interests with. Except for conversations with his most intimate friends at this time,<sup>99</sup> his frequent evening visits to the

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<sup>98</sup> Victor Plarr.

<sup>99</sup> Charles Sayle, Frank Walton, and Victor Plarr.

Crown<sup>100</sup>, where he met new literary pursuers and kept contacts with his old friends, also helped him to fight “the intolerable ennui of the office.” Though often known as forlorn, desolate by later generations, Dowson seemed always more light-hearted in a company than alone.

As far as his works are concerned, the following two events happening during this period were definitely influential; so are they significant in his short life span of 32 years. The first is his embracing the Church, his conversion to the Roman Catholic. Such an inclination was said to be perceived in his Oxford days, while some indicated that the formal conversion was not performed until 1891.<sup>101</sup> Little as we know about his life, the reason for his conversion can also be replaced by surmises. Personal experience at Queen’s, influence from relatives who are Catholic both come to justify; while some asserts that “it was the picturesqueness of the Roman ritual that attracted him,” still some advocates that the poet of “Extreme Unction” harbors a kind of devotion far beyond the beauty of the ritual. Certain is that he once told a friend, “I am for the old faith. I’ve become a Catholic, as every artist must.”<sup>102</sup> Whatever the reason which inspired this line is, his works like “The Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration,” “Benedictio Domini,” and probably the most typical “Extreme Unction” do reveal the Catholic element which claims an important dimension in his life.

More often, to readers acquainted with Dowson, more conscious are they of his love for Adelaide than of his love for religion. Back in his stay at Queen’s when his works first

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<sup>100</sup> A very famous gathering place for young artists in London at that time, where Paul Verlaine also paid his visit on his trip to London in November, 1893. It is usually compared to the Mermaid Tavern by critics.

<sup>101</sup> Longaker, Mark. 66.

caught the public attention, he extolled “the beauty of innocence” in “Sonnets of a Little Girl,” and drew from the work his standard of true beauty. When he first met Adelaide<sup>103</sup>, the daughter of the owner who ran the eating place Poland, he was immediately enthralled by her charm. Dowson never mentioned her physical beauty, and hers, according to his friends, was actually far from stunning. It would rather be the her “unspoiled, unaffected grace and sincerity” which made him an infatuated adorer. A little Polish girl nearly 12, Adelaide Foltinowicz arrested his attention and later his love—“the natural result of his devotion of the beauty of innocence.”<sup>104</sup>

The course of his love, true and unrequited, never did run smoothly. His friends and family first took his love as a passing interest. When they found out his passion grew all but more serious, so did their concern and objecting. This only made his love stronger. His love his friends and family never understood; his poems and thoughts Adelaide failed to appreciate. Yet, for years before she married a waiter and so broke his heart, Dowson’s emotional dependence on Adelaide was surely heartfelt delight even the gatherings at the Crown could not compete. No one ever read Dowson’s love poems can deny in his works the absent presence of “the child,” his Muse, though not his destiny. Her name, Adelaide Foltinowicz, has since been one of the names most often associated with the poet and lives in his eternal lines.

In this phase of his life, except the office that could dull anyone’s mind, Dowson was

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid. 67-71.

<sup>103</sup> Often referred to by Dowson in his letters as “Missie” or in his work “child.”

<sup>104</sup> Reports of the date they first met clashed. According to Dr. Longaker, they met sometime in 1891 when Dowson dined in Soho. (Longaker, Mark. 74.) Yet Dr. Flower pointed out that they met by November, 1889, (Flower, Desmond. 15) with his earliest but indirect mention of her in his letter to Arthur Moore on November 7, 1889. (Ibid. 114)



far from a sullen figure. His conversion has provided somehow another shelter for his soul; his first years in love with Adelaide, even more pleasant; his companionship of his close friends, new or old, was always a source of delight to him; the frequent gatherings at the Crown helped refresh him from the boring burden of the family business. He had at the moment things his prime deserved, outside family.

The years from 1890 to 1894 were among his most productive middle twenties. From his stay at Queen's his poetic faculty had been drawing more and more attention. First was his "Sonnets of a Little Girl," which demonstrated his poetic talents on campus, then "Amor Unbratilis," one of the poems which staged his debut in the literary circle, opened the eyes of the Londoners, and finally "Cynara," secured his stance in the English literature and made him widely known. Even today, to readers less acquainted with Dowson, his name can often be associated with this unique lyric poem. The increasing recognition allowed him more contacts with other literary figures of his time.

Now, the young poet, more than just going to the Crown for acquaintances on literary topics, he finally found his way into a group he himself belonged to. The group often held its gatherings at the dining spot, Cheshire Cheese. The participants in time called themselves "Rhymers," and the informally formed circle, the "Rhymers' Club." Through their dinners together, they exchanged their poetic works as well as their common appreciation for Walter Pater's thinking and Paul Verlaine's *Art Poétique*. However, it is crucial to point out that the Rhymers' Club was by no means a group consisted only of young poets of the time who followed any single literary creed. On the contrary, the Rhymers' Club contained differences in ages, conceptions, personalities, and poetic interests. It is but a makeshift to address some of the poets of the nineties, not to be

mistaken that they were a group of uniform literary assertions. It is more correct and objective to indicate that, as Dr. Longaker suggested, “the Rhymers’ Club was the result of many influences and it expressed its interests in many voices.”<sup>105</sup>

The Rhymers’ Club furthered Ernest Dowson’s literary reputation by issuing collections of poems by this Club. When the idea was forged to put their works in print by the late months of 1891, the Rhymers scheduled their meetings for their anthology, *Book of the Rhymers’ Club*. The first *Book of the Rhymers’ Club*, published in the autumn of 1892, included six poems by Dowson, “The Carmelite Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration,” (later in other collections “Carmelite” was omitted) “Amor Umbratilis,” “O Mors! Quam Amara Est Memoria Tua Homini Pacem Habenti in Substantiis Suis,” “Ad Domnulam Suam,” “Vanitas,” “Villanelle of Sunset”; the second *Book of the Rhymers’ Club*, the Club’s swan song chanted in 1894, included another six poems by Dowson, “Extremem Uction,” “To One in Bedlam,” “Non Sum Qualis Eram Bonae sub Regno Cynarae,” “Growth,” “The Garden of Shadow,” “You Would Have Understood Me Had You Waited.” Poems by Dowson in both collections are eligible to demonstrate the fine qualities of Dowson, and it is said that the poetic works by Dowson included did honor these two volumes. When Yeats talked about the *Book of the Rhymers’ Club*, he did not hesitate to let known that it is Dowson’s works which makes him preserve his copy.<sup>106</sup>

Reviews favored Dowson at this time were even more than ever.

Between the publications of the two volumes, Dowson’s attendance of the Club’s meetings became irregular. Partly because of his frequent colds and rheumatism, partly

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<sup>105</sup> Longaker, Mark. 90.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 110.

because of his transient enthusiasm in his nature, his participation in the group dropped increasingly until the publication of the second anthology of the Club. Again active for the second publication, sometime before the Club's demise, Dowson resumed his presence in the meetings held until the summer of 1894 when the Club ceased to be. But for the mutual expectation for the publication, this group would have probably been dissolved earlier. The dissolution of the Club of course brought regret to Dowson. It provided him not only chances to publish his works, but also an organization, though sometimes disappointing for the disparity between its members, he could identify himself with. Nevertheless, for a "heterogeneous group with nothing but a common interest in verse,"<sup>107</sup> the two-year life span should prove a grace.

Whatever else the Club might offer to Dowson, it would never be the improvement of his congenital introversion. At those meetings, he was never an dominant talker of conversations in front of a large crowd. He was even so shy, as a full grown-up among companions of the same interest, that he had difficulty reciting his poems for the Club, and some other Rhymers had to come to his rescue. Avoiding facing his diffidence, he often justified himself by claiming that he had no gift for recitation of poetry. Such personality denies any leadership, and it is understandable that he was never included in the committee deciding which poems to be published, and that when the Club was about to wither, he had neither will nor ability to bring back its bloom. The seemingly qualified apostle of Lao-tze never took an active part in anything, except for his own creation and melancholy in the blood.

Only with his best friends could he temporarily let loose his restraints in social behavior

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 106.

somehow. Lionel Johnson, among those best friends, shared much of his friendship and most resemblance. They are of the same age, converted to the same religion, both endowed with poetic gifts, and worst of all, troubled by poor health. The establishment of the Club brought the two friends who met each other in Oxford even closer. Dowson's regular visits to Johnson's dwelling hardly ended up rather than long talks synchronizing the next dawn. Both, who have long been accustomed to a nocturnal schedule, now kept their hours all the more irregularly. While they nourished those nights with their exchange of wits, the nights returned with delight to their minds and damages to their bodies.

Known as a poet and accompanied by poets, Dowson did not confine himself solely in verse. He was at the same time a prose writer, novelist, playwright and translator. His short life did not allow voluminous works, yet he indeed proved a versatile author, and at his time his works also received considerable appreciation won him fame. From 1890 to 1895, his interest in prose had been embodied into several pieces of short stories; the first novel he collaborated with his old-time classmate, Arthur Moore received good review<sup>108</sup> and thus encouraged a second one—*A Comedy of Masks* (published in 1893) followed by *Adrian Rome* (started in 1895; published in 1899); his poetic drama, *The Pierrot of the Minute* (started before the end of 1892; published in 1897), was put on stage several times; his enlistment by the translating project, the Lutetian Society, introduced a more pronounced French literary influence to the Victorian England (the complete *La Terre* by Emile Zola and part of *Majesty* by Louis Marie Anne Couperus, both started by the end of 1893 and

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<sup>108</sup> The critic who reviewed *A Comedy of Masks* in 1893 for the November *Bookman* pointed out that Dowson was “a young man who has been steadily making his way in literature.” Ibid. 138.

published in 1894).<sup>109</sup> As one of Dowson's closest friend once said, "he [Dowson] never, indeed, suffered from that unmerited neglect which is the portion of so many."<sup>110</sup>

Unquestionably, the reputation coming with his works, as well as his evenings in Soho and later at the Café Royal had made his life more favorable. However, neither his despair in love nor distress in family was thus eased. Adelaide, or Missie, was by no means the only girls who Dowson had contact with. There were at least two ladyfriends of his who shared quite some time with him. Neither had he really loved, though, he did enjoy the vivacity and humor of one and he paid serious care and friendship to the other.<sup>111</sup>

Moreover, his later excess in night life also shocked his friends. None of the girls who shared his shocking excess could be addressed as a ladyfriend. Believing that sex and love are separable and recognizing that he needed both, Dowson sought female companionship which went beyond conversation relation and kept his heart only accessible to no one else

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<sup>109</sup> The translation of Zola's work was conducted and issued secretly, for then Zola was banned by the Victorian authorities. Zola's works were enthusiastically praised by the undergraduate Dowson, who once planned to write Zola his appreciation. There is also an anecdote of his translation for the society: Dowson seemed to always believe in the "spontaneous overflow" than scheduled work, even while dealing with the bulky assignments by the society. As a result, the born dilatory translator had to work on the outskirts of London in a cabin of his friend, Arthur Hiller, to meet the deadline. The ambitious translator, who was first so eager to overwhelm the English reader with the literary achievements of his favorite novelist, was soon worn of his enthusiasm and pouring his complaints onto his friends. The above two translated works are only part of his efforts in this field. Among the others, the most noted are: *La Fille aux Yeux d'Or* by Honoré Balzac, part of *Geschichte der Malerei im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* by Richard Muther, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by Choderlos de Laclos, *La Pucelle d'Orléans* by Voltaire (translated in verse), *The Confidantes of a King: the Mistresses of Louis XV* by the Goncourt brothers, and the famous fairy tale, *The Story of Beauty and the Beast*.

<sup>110</sup> Victor Plarr.

<sup>111</sup> They were known as "Dulcie," and "Essie," or "Marie," respectively. The former was variably reported a barmaid or dance girl who was vivid, humorous, and learned in art and literature; the latter, a new comer in London from Scotland, for a reason hospitalized, received Dowson's sympathy and care

but Missie. Although his literary fame was paralleled by his notoriety in excessive life, his heart never opened for a second time.

After the summer of 1894, when he bared his chest to Missie and her mother, his anxiety grew only worse. He was not in any way rejected. Her mother, considering the difference between their rank—a poet and a restaurant owner’s daughter, was rather bewildered and flattered than annoyed in the first place. It was probably Dowson’s later careless way to court her daughter that bothered her. His frivolous company, reeking of alcohol, along with his pale appearance, and his signs of ill health surely provided enough support for a mother to worry about for her daughter. His proposal, instead of being declined, was delayed by a promise that everything would be “favorably arranged,” which had never. In time, the mother’s tolerance waned with the daughter’s fondness of him, his despair fully waxed in the long run.

Despair-ridden as he was, his love for Adelaide lasted all through his life. While such constancy failed to defend him for his true love, slanders were triggered to add to his pain. Rumors started prevailing among the London circles that Dowson’s love for a such a young girl, was brooded by his mental problem which made him impossible to share life with “normal” women. His libertinism in any London or Paris nights rules out the possibility. Rather, it is more reasonable that after all those wild nights, Dowson’s feeling of emptiness was only increased and his devotion for the innocence of beauty was accordingly affirmed. For him, the mundane relation between men and women serves only as physical relief, but the love of the pure transcends into the spiritual sphere.<sup>112</sup> Confronted by the suffering

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until her return back to where she came from.

<sup>112</sup> According to Arthur Symons’ s account recorded by Dr. Longaker, “there [his love for Adelaide]

from love, he now had to cope with the gossips around him. Lest his sorrow further betrayed him, he still managed to steel himself to give off an air of happiness.

Notwithstanding, unfavored by Venus and ignored by Lady Luck, his tragedy had just staged its first act.

His father, Alfred Dowson, had been always conscious of his failure in business and the thought that all the later instability and poverty of the family should be attributed to his failure. The family business of dry-docking which was handed down to him from his forefathers, by the second half of 1893 was almost entirely placed in the hands of his creditors who offered loans for his business. His tuberculosis-smitten health was surely additionally undermined by his cares and moving from place to place for a new house which he could afford.<sup>113</sup> Under such circumstances, he had long relied on medicine for a decent rest at night. It was one night in August, when he slept with his dose, or overdose, he never had to wake up facing the cold of London or his sense of guilty drown from his failure. The health and financial predicaments of Alfred Dowson did not allow comfort or sense of security for his son, yet, nor did they arouse from the young Dowson any complaints or resentment towards him. His loyalty and love to his family never seemed to dwindle, and this only help augment his anguish from the heavy news.

After the decease of the father, the mother took over her husband' s role—attributing

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was a sort of virginal devotion, as to a Madonna'

<sup>113</sup> By 1888, the young Dowson was already used to the family' s regular visits to Europe, mostly Riviera, France. In those days, the visits aimed at more pleasant climate which every victim of tuberculosis demand. Later they began their moving for financial concern. First to Scotland, where they settled down at Bristol Gardens, Maida Hill from 1889 to 1892; they returned to Lee for a short while before they found their dwelling in Chadwell Heath in the year 1893; finally, the father bought a house for his family in Battersea Park in 1894, where he died. The instability of moving was thus called an end and later

every ill fate the family suffered from to her own fault. Her born delicate health and nerves were not free from the influences of tuberculosis and melancholy which haunted her husband before his death. Now the situation appeared even more malevolent for her. Without her husband, without the ability to support the family, and especially, without the courage to face the death of her husband, six months later, she decided to leave all the cruel fact to her son, by a sudden suicide. Thus, in 1894, the spring of despair and contempt lurked into the autumn of obituaries when the death of his father was followed fast by his mother's suicide. The Dowsons were bitterly torn apart by the most ruthless year to them, 1894.<sup>114</sup> Along with the death of his parents, the sometime light-hearted young man was transformed into a pallid, pessimistic poet, characterized by profound and lasting distress, which he seemed to survive only physically.

It took him more than time to recover from the stupor of bereavement. Although his relatives, from both paternal and maternal sides, reached out their helping hands, it was not until Dowson realized that he had to live on for his love for literature that he regained his courage to face the world. Instead of accepting his caring relatives who suggested he should live with them, he kept them unknown of his track and moved to Bloomsbury. The

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succeeded by the poet's sojourns in France.

<sup>114</sup> Ernest Dowson was not at this moment bereft of every family. A younger brother, Rowland Corbet Dowson, was born to the family when they first settled themselves in Lee, Kent. Without any comparison between his brother and intimate friends of Ernest Dowson, the brother has already been a distant figure in Dowson's life. He was hardly mentioned in Dowson's biography, nor was he talked about by his own elder brother in any more published letters than two, both slight. Accounts related to him conflict: one reports that Rowland was younger than his brother by 8 years, later emigrated to Canada and earned his living as a rancher; the other indicates that he was 10 years younger than Ernest, later found his lifelong residence and farming occupation in United States, died in San Diego, California, 1913. Soon after their parents died, Rowland moved to live with their relatives; Ernest, did not accept the offer.



new settlement granted not only a new environment to forget the sorrowful home, but also walking distance to his frequent resorts after evening—the Crown, where he could meet acquaintances, and Poland, where he first met his lifelong love. Still more consoling was that he found his source of a more stable income there when a publisher required Dowson's regular contribution to his magazine. The publisher, Leonard Smithers, who was always friendly and helpful to Dowson, did play an important role assisting Dowson maintaining his living in the ensuing years since Dowson first started writing for the magazine, *The Savoy*. In turn, Dowson became his loyal contributors and friend. With his incessant love for literature, as his for Adelaide, and with the help from Smithers, Dowson finally managed to stand up from the ashes of collapse of home.

He stayed in Bloomsbury until the summer of 1895. Afterwards, he left again. This time, however, was not because of any heart-rending reason. This decision was made after he consented to translate *La Fille aux Yeux d'Or* by Balzac for Smithers. He had long felt that in France he could find a better working environment. For the translation and for his expectation of life in France, he left London for Dieppe in France. It was not long when the novelty of Dieppe was replaced by his resentment to the scene of bourgeois tourists who surged in the summer resort from across the channel. He found the place was actually more English than French. Sensitive he was, especially to the noisy tourists who shared his living space, he decided to move to the quieter Arques. The quiet of Arques did not avail to complete his work on time, but the dilatory nature of the poet, who found back both his life and lifestyle, stepped in the way of his work.

This trip of France did not last long. Before the end of the summer, when neither the shortage of money nor his loneliness allowed him to stay there any longer, he went back to

London with his translation barely started. Companionship and money were not his only concerns. He would like to stay longer in France, of course, but before that, he wished he could further take of something he left in London—the Dock and Missie. He believed his share in Bridge Dock could bring him considerable profits, and to Missie, he still entertain the wish that she might grant him her hand. At the Dock, the foreman, who had been working for his family for years, did give him a sum of money at his return, but the sum did not come from his share of the bleak Dock which no one would like to lease anymore. Which he did not have the slightest idea. Adelaide was now over 17. On one hand, Dowson thought she was still too young; on the other, he was afraid her beauty of innocence might be worn away with lapse of time. He somehow still did not want to give up either of France or his Missie, but he did not have enough money, or regular lifestyle, to support a family of two. If hesitation has ever doomed one's life in the real world than in a play, Dowson was surly on the list. His reunion with Adelaide ended up to be a quarrel. What exactly happened was left unknown, but this saddening experience hastened Dowson's return to France.

Packing up his disappointment bestowed by London, he left again for the Continent. His trip was again sponsored by Smithers, who gave him another sum of money though he failed to complete the translation. On this trip, he was accompanied by another writer, Conal O' Riordan, with whom he shared some time in Dieppe during the previous stay in France. About the time Dowson made up his mind to leave London, O' Riordan also had a plan of travel which headed for Belgium and ended up in Paris to finish his novel. It was this plan that brought these two men of literary interests closer. But for O' Riordan's later influence on him, the translation might never come to see the light.

Before O' Riordan's beneficial influence took effect, this moving to Paris did not make him any different from the young poet wandering at night in London. Although O' Riordan never appreciated the Bohemian life that Dowson practiced, Paris was abundant with what Dowson needed, even company of debauchery. It was not difficult for him to find someone for a sleepless night. Dowson's literary fame was never confined at home. By the time he arrived in Paris, there were actually few unacquainted with his name in the city, writers, editors or literary critics. In addition, his acquaintances from London also offered warm welcome to him. The night life in Paris held Dowson's presence for a time long enough to delay his work and to run out of his money. What was worse, he, though often caught by hesitation, never hesitated to buy the vagrants he met a drink, and he could not help but give one or two francs to the streetwalkers he talked to, for nothing. Such generosity could hardly do much good to those who accepted his help, nor could do him. He was also a major patron for tobacco shops where cigarettes and Vevey cigars were available as well as places offering absinthe, his favorite liquor since this stay. It was not unusual for him to complain about his repeated financial embarrassment to Smithers, the major sponsor for his literary pursuits and otherwise. It is interesting to find out how tightfisted Dowson was to buy himself a more decent meal, but when it comes to the expensive, unhealthy peripherals for a dissipated life, he never said no.

Here, he also attained a place near Verlaine's dwelling. Being one of the most loyal admirer of Verlaine, he did not miss the chance to meet him. At the cafés in Paris, he had seen him several times. He did not only appreciate his poetic achievements, but also followed his lifestyle. Learning from him, Dowson's night life that usually crawled into dawn was even more "colorful" to dull his health. When Verlaine died in early 1896,

Dowson was among the saddest mourners who attended the funeral. Among Dowson's companions, there were few positive influences, especially in Paris. Even his French poetic mentor served to encourage his already dissolute life. O' Riordan, however, made an exception. The benefits he brought Dowson were not only related to work, but also a salutary attitude towards life.

During their stay in Paris, O' Riordan had his patience for the distractions of the city all worn out. In his eye, Paris was absolutely far from the working environment he demanded. By Christmas, O' Riordan moved to the countryside of Mons-par-Donne-Marie, Seine et Marne. Probably Dowson was at the time tired of the emptiness which followed his drinking nights, or probably he realized that he should not disappoint Smithers by leaving the assigned translation behind. He soon followed O' Riordan's track to the countryside over Christmas. The lifestyles of these two literary devotees were at two extremes. Unlike Dowson, O' Riordan led a well-organized life. Yet, their different attitudes towards life never hindered their friendship. It was O' Riordan that made Dowson recognize the value of a regular life; while O' Riordan kept himself from any influences of Dowson's lifestyle, he found his view was for sure widened by this friend. In the seclusion from his distracting life in Paris, Dowson finally finished translating the Balzac's work. The outcome brought to him and Smithers not only a relief, but also a good sale.

Although he was long spoiled by wide companionship, it would be misleading to say he suffered nothing from O' Riordan's departure. The busy life in Paris did distract him from working regularly, but loneliness frightened him more. Unable to be alone, he was always yearning for friends, real friends, not just someone he could meet on the street to talk to for a short while. As he once wrote to his friend, "in my sick and sorry old age [only

28], I begin to be dependent on my society.”<sup>115</sup> Certainly, London was not a good place for him. Its depressing scenes and his pride directed him otherwise. After he survived the severe winter,<sup>116</sup> he left for Pont-Aven in Brittany where knew everybody, and had “many friends, French, English, and Breton.”<sup>117</sup> By Easter 1896, he set his feet there.

What makes us to associate the poet with the place Pont-Aven is his first collection of poems—*Verses*. Here in Pont-Aven he started revising his poems for taking them to press, as the preface of this collection reveals. He made considerable effort as well as much time on the work. Even a use of punctuation mark could decrease much of his loneliness and aggravation of drinking. It is also this work that immortalize the name “Adelaide.” To this dedication, almost all his friends expressed their bewilderment. They never seemed to realize Dowson’s attachment to Missie. The more Dowson showed his affection, the more his friends showed their confusion. What they saw was a poet presenting and dedicating his poetic gifts to a restaurant-keeper’s daughter, while for Dowson’s part, he was honoring his Muse.

This revision of course occupied quite an amount of his time spent in Pont-Aven, and

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<sup>115</sup> Flower, Desmond & Maas, Henry, ed. *The Letters of Ernest Dowson*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1967. 361. A letter to Victor Plarr.

<sup>116</sup> Here the word “survive” is by no means hyperbole, and for him, any winter can be seriously severe. Even though before 27 he knew himself a victim of the same disease his parents used to suffer from, tuberculosis, this fatal disease at his time was never taken into his consideration when he “enjoyed” his life. It is no doubt that whenever winter came, his coughing fits could always make him the first one to know. According to Dr. Longaker, his situation was actually much worse. “His teeth, to which he had never given care, were responsible for the racking neuralgia of the winter of 1896, and one by one he had them extracted until he had only a few discolored lower teeth left. His eyes, once luminous, began to take on a shade of lifeless green; and his complexion, always pale, had assumed an unhealthy pallor which attracted attention even among those who were themselves little given to self-preservation.” (Longaker, Mark. 197.)

the outcome was again satisfying. Nevertheless, his achievement in literature never paralleled his improvement in a healthy life. His health kept growing ill under his deliberate drinking to temporarily chase away his weariness of life. To say his drinking was the cause of his collapsed health is only to reveal part of the truth. He drank to ease his pain, physical or mental, and when his pain was furthered by his drinking, he could only resort to drinking again. It is more correct to say he was trapped in a vicious circle wrought up by himself. Even in his early twenties, drinking had become a very important and harmful part of his life. In Pont-Aven, this situation remained unchanged. The truth is that except his die-hard habit of drinking and baleful night life, he was reported to wind up in a physical fight from time to time. There was even one time he was imprisoned for days because of a fight. This tendency was not absent from his sober moment, though such engagement can hardly fit a poet with delicate constitution.

In the summer of 1896, things started to change for the better. A kind lady walked into the poet's life and tried to help him out of his self-abandoning condition in her eye.<sup>118</sup> According to Dowson's friend, this lady did once diminish his drinking to an impressive degree.<sup>119</sup> Her concerns about Dowson's life were absolutely sincere, but her situation did not allow her to look after him for long. When her sister insisted going back to London, and she failed to convince Dowson to return with her, this friendship remained a mere episode, rather than a turning point, in Dowson's life. Although this lady wrote several

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, an admirer of Dowson's works, through the introduction of a Dowson's friend, Horace Vachell, began taking care of Dowson. She was then on her trip from London with her sister, Aleece.

<sup>119</sup> Vachell once told Mrs. Atherton that "You have accomplished wonders; he hasn't been drink since that day in the studio[the second time they met].:" (Longaker, Mark. 209)

times to Dowson, he answered none. The harm brought to Dowson was self-evident. Such an affectionate friendship was beyond Dowson's expectation, but was exactly what he needed. Her presence might first seemed unbelievable or even confusing to him, once accepted, it promised him a brand-new start of life. When her sudden disappearance took him by surprise, Dowson was actually robbed of a dream she handed to him. For Dowson, this transient joy in life was worse than none. Her absence, to be more correct, her presence had accomplished more regret than relief to him.<sup>120</sup>

His drinking afterwards and instability of residence and mental status continued with his literary profession. His frequent moving in France was as usual as at home. In fact, his life during this period in France is comparatively untraceable. Except for a few incidences, such as the fights he was involved in, his meeting with the above mentioned lady, and his continued contribution to *The Savoy* along with other works including his success in *Verses*, most was remained unsure. More widely unknown were his several moving from and back to Paris, and his creation or translation even after the short life span of *The Savoy*, which came to being in January, 1896 and gave out its last breath at its last December issue, because of its lack of a comprehensive project. The last stop of his stay in France was Paris.

Finally, after two years, London regained his presence in May, 1897. He now began to avoid most of his acquaintances. He was afraid that his appearance and difficulties in life would aroused from them the most heinous thing—"the intolerable pity." To his patron, Smithers, however, he did not hesitate to pay his visit. Even if there was

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<sup>120</sup> A friend of her, Mrs. Trulow, wrote to her from France, "Your poet has been drunk ever since you left, and no longer sports his collar and cuffs. Too bad your influence was not more lasting." (Longaker,

time when Smithers had his own difficulties, his help to Dowson, especially financially was hardly suspended. On his return, Smithers, whose reputation of dissipated life was by no means less notorious than Dowson's, welcomed him with more unrestrained drinking nights. In addition to the patron Dowson took for granted, his avoidance of old-time acquaintances made its exception only for two other literary figures—Oscar Wilde and Lionel Johnson, both later becoming incentive for him to go abroad.

When Rhymer's Club first brought them closer, Dowson had long admired his literary achievements. Dowson's knowledge in Latin literature and the language had also impressed Wilde. When Wilde received his verdict at court, Dowson was there. Even without any contact during Wilde's imprisonment of two years, Dowson visited him right after Wilde was released. Both lacking friends and appreciating the genius of each other, a closer friendship emerged between them. When Wilde first set off to Paris after his two-year confinement, Dowson took his flight too to accompany him, or to find someone to accompany himself.<sup>121</sup> It was not until a loan which was dilatorily returned by Dowson to Wilde when this friendship faced its end in the late spring.

In comparison, the friendship between Johnson and Dowson was always satisfactory. There was no difficulty for them to pick up their relationship without contact for two years. Dowson was never afraid that Johnson would show any signs of pity, and Johnson never cared about his decreasing decency in appearance. They enjoyed each other's company since they first met in Oxford all through their lives. After this reunion, they took a trip to Ireland in summer. It was probably another distraction planned by Johnson to alleviate the

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Mark. 210)

<sup>121</sup> It is a sore need to point out that there was never any evidences indicating their relation in any way



pain Dowson received from the confirmation that Missie was about to marry a waiter in September, the same year of Dowson's return. When some of Dowson's friend asserted their opinions towards Missie was proved that a girl preferred a waiter to a poet absolutely would not fit Dowson, Johnson's companionship seemed more constructive than any other.

The fact of his eternal loss of love was faced by Dowson without outburst of hateful expressions. With the loss, he took his trip again to Paris, his last trip there. When Dowson first took his trip across the Channel after his parents' death, his had already started his tale of two cities dominated by restlessness. A change of living environment always occurred to him when there was an incidence racking his mind. When his nostalgia attacked afterwards, his feeble attempt to fight it back was without fail followed by a homecoming—no matter how long his resistance lasted.

After this trip, such restlessness finally reached its end, but before his return, another collection of his, like the previous one, was completed here in France. The second collection, *Decorations: in Verse and Prose* (published 1899), was believed as his greatest achievement in 1898. Probably he consciously kept himself busy to ignore his pain from the loss of love, or probably he heard "Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near," from the autumn of 1897 to the winter of 1898, he proved himself to be productive again. Besides *Decorations*, his creative and translated work came to a considerable amount—especially considerable for a swan song.

It was in the same year when *Decorations* found its way to the shelf of bookstores that Dowson was found in a small café in Paris, intoxicated and inactive. The one who found Dowson in the summer night of 1899 was Robert Sherard. By the time he reached

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went beyond friendship, as Wilde's inclination in his personal life might suggest.

out his helping hand to Dowson, there was not yet any intimacy between them. A mere acquaintance as he was, his sincere concerns about the poet was not impeded by his own financial difficulty. Besides his concerns about Dowson, it might also be destiny that left Dowson to the care of such a kind-hearted gentleman in Dowson's last days. When Dowson was later helped back to London, it was Sherard again to find him at a pub in late December, 1899, when Dowson's condition could only be described as dying.

Sherard again took Dowson with him to his own dwelling, this time, his home. The Sherards paid much attention to take care of the guest. Sherard himself for several times postponed his own working projects, Mrs. Sherard, without any complaints, assisted her husband to comfort him, and even their little adopted son made a qualified partner of conversation for Dowson. Even though the Sherards were far from prosperous themselves, they did do the best they could to offer Dowson a pleasant environment. What they provided were not only food, medicine, and a comfortable room, which were in a sore need for Dowson's health. Their meticulous care, warm companionship were even more helpful for Dowson's soul. There was one time when Dowson seemed to get well, but the cheerful prospect did not last long. His health soon dwindled again. Six weeks of the Sherards' attentive care and Dowson's insistence against calling for a physician, Dowson shuffled off his mortal coil in bed at Sherard's house.

The obituary was sent out by Sherard, the funeral was arranged by his uncle.<sup>122</sup> For days later, under the modest monument ordered and paid for by his aunt,<sup>123</sup> Dowson took his permanent residence in Ladywell Cemetery. The coffin-plate, inscribed "Ernest

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<sup>122</sup> Stanley Hoole.

<sup>123</sup> His mother's sister, Miss Ada Swan.

Christopher Dowson, Died 23 February 1900, aged 32 years,"<sup>124</sup> keeps echoing the story of a ephemeral poetic glory gone with the wind.

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<sup>124</sup> Flower, Desmond & Maas, Henry. 421.

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