

The Wind and the Sea

I stood by the shore at the death of day,

As the sun sank flaming red;

And the face of the waters that spread away

Was as gray as the face of the dead.

And I heard the cry of the wanton sea

And the moan of the wailing wind;

For love's sweet pain in his heart had he,

But the gray old sea had sinned.

The wind was young and the sea was old,

But their cries went up together;

The wind was warm and the sea was cold,

For age makes wintry weather.

So they cried aloud and they wept amain,

Till the sky grew dark to hear it;

And out of its folds crept the misty rain,
In its shroud, like a troubled spirit.

For the wind was wild with a hopeless love,
And the sea was sad at heart
At many a crime that he wot of,
Wherein he had played his part.

He thought of the gallant ships gone down
By the will of his wicked waves;
And he thought how the church-yard in the town
Held the sea-made widows' graves.

The wild wind thought of the love he had left
Afar in an Eastern land,
And he longed, as long the much bereft,
For the touch of her perfumed hand.

In his winding wail and his deep-heaved sigh

His aching grief found vent;
While the sea looked up at the bending sky
And murmured: "I repent."

But e'en as he spoke, a ship came by,
That bravely ploughed the main,
And a light came into the sea's green eye,
And his heart grew hard again.

Then he spoke to the wind: "Friend, seest thou not
Yon vessel is eastward bound?
Pray speed with it to the happy spot
Where thy loved one may be found."

And the wind rose up in a dear delight,
And after the good ship sped;
But the crafty sea by his wicked might
Kept the vessel ever ahead.

Till the wind grew fierce in his despair,

And white on the brow and lip.

He tore his garments and tore his hair,

And fell on the flying ship.

And the ship went down, for a rock was there,

And the sailless sea loomed black;

While burdened again with dole and care,

The wind came moaning back.

And still he moans from his bosom hot

Where his raging grief lies pent,

And ever when the ships come not,

The sea says: "I repent."