

## The Mystery

I was not; now I am—a few days hence,  
I shall not be; I fain would look before  
And after, but can neither do; some Pow'r  
Or lack of pow'r says "no" to all I would.  
I stand upon a wide and sunless plain,  
Nor chart nor steel to guide my steps aright.  
Whene'er, o'ercoming fear, I dare to move,  
I grope without direction and by chance.  
Some feign to hear a voice and feel a hand  
That draws them ever upward thro' the gloom.  
But I—I hear no voice and touch no hand,  
Tho' oft thro' silence infinite, I list,  
And strain my hearing to supernal sounds;  
Tho' oft thro' fateful darkness do I reach,  
And stretch my hand to find that other hand.  
I question of th' eternal bending skies  
That seem to neighbor with the novice earth;

But they roll on, and daily shut their eyes

On me, as I one day shall do on them,

And tell me not the secret that I ask.