

Classic Poetry Series

**Robert Crawford**  
**- poems -**

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## Robert Crawford(1868 - 13 January 1930)

Robert Crawford was an Australian poet.

Crawford was born in Doonside, New South Wales, the son of Robert Crawford senior, and was educated at The King's School, Parramatta, and the University of Sydney. Crawford settled on a farm as his forefathers had done, but not being successful, became a clerk in Sydney and afterwards had a typewriting business. Some of Crawford's poems were published in *The Bulletin* and other periodicals. Crawford is believed to have been the first prize-winning haiku poet published in Australia, in *The Bulletin* on 12 August 1899. In 1904 a small collection, *Lytic Moods: Various Verses*, was published in Sydney. An enlarged edition was later published in Melbourne retitled simply *Lytic Moods* (1909). In 1921 another volume, *Leafy Bliss*, was published, and an enlarged edition appeared three years later. Crawford died suddenly at Lindfield, Sydney, on 13 January 1930.

Not a great deal is known about Crawford; he was short of stature, poetical in spirit. He mixed little in literary circles and seems to be forgotten a few years after his death. The statement that he was educated at The King's School originally appeared in the *Bookfellow*, and may have come direct from Crawford. If so there is no reason to doubt it, yet in the records of The King's School of his period the only R. Crawford is listed as Richard Crawford. It was also not possible to identify him positively with the Robert James G. W. Crawford who graduated B.A. at the University of Sydney in 1912, when the poet was about 44 years of age. Crawford is represented in some of the anthologies, and A. G. Stephens thought highly of his work. His work has a delicate charm and, though at times one fears it will not rise above merely pretty verse, in some of his quatrains and lyrics Crawford does succeed in writing poetry of importance. Perhaps, as Stephens once suggested, he may be better appreciated in the 21st century.

# A Bridal Song.

Love that art enlargéd  
As the sun!  
Shine upon the bride-life  
Here begun,  
And upon his, too, that stirs  
Now within the breath of hers —  
No more two, but one.  
Touch her beauty, quickening  
With the spell  
Of her girlhood passing:  
Favor well  
All his ways with her, that she  
May deem this day's mystery  
Was thy miracle.  
Pass now, Love! upon them  
In this light,  
Till the magic of them,  
Touch and sight,  
Fades as either's lone life-story  
Into all the grace and glory  
Of their joy to-night!

Robert Crawford

## A Father's Fear.

The little feet that run to me,  
The little hands that strive  
To touch me at the heart, and find  
The heart in me alive:  
Oh God! if hands and feet should fail,  
If Death his mist should fling  
Between my heart and the touch of  
The little living thing!

Robert Crawford

## A Memory.

She had an other-worldly air,  
So like a flower she grew,  
As if her thoughts and feelings were  
The only life she knew.  
She moved in other ways apart,  
As in a secret place,  
And the emotion of her heart  
Seemed breathing in her face.  
It was as if a faery power  
Had charmed her with its mood,  
And graced her with the dreamy dower  
Of earthly angelhood.  
And when Death touched her starry brow,  
It seemed as if it were  
The dream she was became somehow  
Another dream of her.

Robert Crawford

## A Mother's Loss.

When I did name her little lost one, she  
Brushed from her eyes the precious drops of love,  
As if her memory with his sweet name shaken  
Trembled, and shed its dew.

Robert Crawford

## A Night In Babylon.

We whom to-night Love keeps awake  
For his own joy, may one day break  
Our fast in some Lethéan cave,  
When we but a faint memory have,  
Or none, of such dear nights as this.  
Sweetheart! thy lips again to kiss,  
Thy limbs to fold, though all ends thus  
And time makes such poor wrecks of us,  
Who feast to-night on Love's own food  
As in a heavenly solitude,  
And drink his wine, — this bliss of ours  
Which makes our bodies bloom like flowers,  
In whose quick scents our souls escape  
We know not where — each wingéd shape  
That haply shall elude the curse  
When we have lost the universe  
In this night's Babylonian heart —  
Have then lost all that may impart  
Life to the dead, the lust of that  
On which the purple heart grows fat,  
And thrills to prove that it can be  
The bourne of its own ecstasy  
Within a paradise whose skies  
Have never known the sun to rise  
Nor all the moony rapture wane!  
Clasp me, Sweetheart! and kiss again  
Until we have so drunk the light  
Of this delirious sweet night  
Our souls may nevermore be dry,  
Though death our bodies may deny  
The power to appease that thirst  
Which Love's heat raised within us first  
Ere he had taught our lips and eyes  
The purport of his paradise,  
And made the trembling senses take  
The night for day, and keep awake  
With all the strange delights that are  
Under our Babylonian star  
That came from chaos, it may be,

To guard our first night's mystery,  
And let his cloak of glory lie  
Over us, dear, who would not die.  
Ah, Sweetheart! if all comes to this,  
And we must lose the sum of bliss  
(When we lie by the Lethéan wave  
And know that nothing Love can save)  
We may forget ourselves, and be  
Content with Death's tranquillity.

Robert Crawford

## A River Isle.

A little island in the river  
There is, round which the breezes quiver  
Like sweet birds that would stay  
A moment on their way,  
So green it is with leaves and grass,  
And chequered by the clouds that pass  
Far over in the blue above:  
As sweet with flowers as life with love,  
And breathing of a mood  
That, like a wild bird in the city's din,  
Though far from all its kith and kin,  
Sustains its solitude.

Robert Crawford

## A Song Of The Sea.

Here within the half-light 'tween the night and day  
Upon the sands I lie, with thoughts that idly stirr'd  
Seem, as in a dream, with life and death to play,  
As o'er the sea there flits a pale white bird.  
In my heart I hear it, the murmur of the sea,  
Ah! and memories of other lives are stirr'd,  
As somewise there came a mystic voice to me  
As o'er the sea there flits a pale white bird.  
Who but knows that in me is a ghost that hears  
A voice it heard of old in the primeval word —  
A memory so dim, it like a dream appears  
As o'er the sea there flits a pale white bird!

Robert Crawford

# Achievement.

In life's exigencies men have been known  
To pass themselves, and to attain to more  
Than hope; as if in combat with the gods  
The god in them secured supremacy.

Robert Crawford

## An Aspiration.

Music, with the tears in it,  
Through my soul is ringing,  
Moods like bodies flame and flit  
Through the spirit's singing;  
Dream-birds half-articulate,  
Which no charms can capture,  
Come by twos and nest and mate  
In a moment's rapture.  
Now I seem to be upborne  
On a starry pinion  
Where the poet's hope forlorn  
Has divine dominion —  
Where he sees the clouds of earth  
Gather light and cluster,  
As babes on the dawn of Birth  
Watch the visions muster!  
All that thought and feeling share  
In a soul's possession  
To my singing seems to bear  
A divine confession;  
As within my dreaming brain  
Lips of inspiration  
Breathe the beauty gone again  
On a new creation.

Robert Crawford

## Antony's Friend.

Bring me my robes and crown!  
I must make a brave end,  
Charmian, fitting the renown  
Of Antony's friend.  
Caesar shall find me so,  
'Tired like a royal bride,  
When he comes in, and the lights are low,  
And I'm by Antony's side —  
Wedded in Death's bright hall  
Beyond the Egyptian air,  
My crown and robes on me, and all  
The love that made me fair.  
My women! sooth to tell  
Soft is the aspic's bite:  
It would have pleased my Roman well  
So to have said good-night.

Robert Crawford

# At Camelot

Her maiden dreams were redolent of love,  
Warm-bosomed as she breathed the passionate air  
Of old romance, and did in fancy move  
'Mong the gay knights who died for ladies fair;  
Until she heard the thunder of the press,  
And so became a lover; her heart rang  
The note of love's alarm, his tenderness,  
When in the onset all the tourney sang.  
And she was one of the dead ladies who,  
In beauty's blazon, to his misty bower  
With Launcelot, when the Queen was gone, withdrew  
Under the shadow of the tourney tower;  
And, liltng to him through the gloaming, made  
His heart a lyre whereon her passion played.

Robert Crawford

## At Juliet's Tomb.

This fair woman who is dead  
(Sung so sweet of long ago)  
Lies not in a mortal bed —  
Song has made her couch to grow  
With all sweet things, as they stir  
Like unfading growths that cling  
In an everlasting spring  
Round her Poet's dream of her.  
Time is dead — she has not died!  
All the light of beauty stays,  
As if the sweet lips replied  
To whate'er her lover says  
O'er the tomb to her, as he  
Fingers her undying hair:  
Such is death when Love is there,  
Love that lives in poesy.

Robert Crawford

## At Love's Beginning.

I might not have it then — I might not, yet  
She was so near to me, could I forget  
She might be nearer? There was in her eyes —  
What shall I say? — a hint of the sunrise  
Of her heart's day: would it then break on me  
In my life's glory, or should I but see  
The malediction of that morning pour  
Disaster on my heart for evermore?  
I did not know, and all I was became  
A hush, a wonder. I scarce breathed her name,  
Scarce dared to read her eyes too deeply, lest  
Wrath in their tenderness should be exprest;  
When suddenly love's lightning ran a streak  
Up the white throat into the pallid cheek;  
Her eyes took wonder too — and even thus  
What we to either were, revealed to us,  
Rose like God's heaven, at once, in such a way  
For aye; and her eyes fell as mine took sway  
Upon the moment when she knew it all,  
And knew in knowing it beyond recall  
Was the confession which her heart had made  
With eyes, not lips, ere lips to mine were laid —  
That mystic moment, when all she was drew  
Out of herself, as all that I was too,  
Emptied of self, then found itself in her.

Robert Crawford

## At The Back Of The Brain.

At the back of the brain a picture lies  
Of all we have been and done,  
And ever and then a color flames  
In the shadow of thought's sun.  
At the back of the brain our life-tale's writ  
In wondrous words and fine,  
And poet and painter but mimic it,  
Your life, my friend, and mine.  
They are God's spies it may be, yet  
They lack the art to limn  
The back of the brain of a man that moves  
And makes a dream of him.

Robert Crawford

## At The Last.

The sky grows white with the moon,  
And the sea yearns up to the night  
As the soul to an unknown height,  
Drawn thence by a starry rune.  
Only a lost wind strays,  
Like the breath of Passion blown  
In the vault of the night unknown;  
And the heart in me sobs and says:  
'After a while we, too,  
Shall rest as the stars above,  
When we have no more to do  
With the dream of life and love.'  
O Time! thy feet that run  
Over the hills and waves,  
Over the cradles and graves,  
From the first to the final sun!  
Some day thou too shalt cease —  
Some way there'll come to thee  
Death's white tranquility,  
The boon of an awful peace —  
When the latest grief shall flow  
With the surge that drifts away,  
And the Night shall no more go  
In her endless chase of Day.  
Then shall the worn heart rest,  
Then shall the sad Sea yearn  
No more for the Moon's return,  
Like a bird on its frozen nest  
Dead, with her young ones dead  
Under her breast on the bough,  
Where nothing can wake them now —  
Not the Dawn with its golden tread:  
Where Death has been good to all,  
Good to the mother and young,  
And the dreams are beyond recall,  
And the songs have all been sung.  
So, at the last, to sleep!  
So, at the last, to be  
Still as the dead still sea!

Never to wake and weep,  
Never to know Love's pain,  
Never to yearn on for  
What is gone for evermore;  
To be as we were again  
Ere we came o'er the bourne of birth,  
Ere we knew of the fading flowers,  
Of love and of life on Earth  
And the hearts that were not ours!

Robert Crawford

## Autumn.

I in the autumn of my days  
Stand by a place of tears,  
And hear the unborn children weep  
Within the unborn years;  
And feel how all God's sorrow must  
Go wailing on until  
Man's autumn, too, is past, and he  
May winter from all ill.

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A pale light in the fading wood,  
The sob of dying leaves —  
A lorn bird lying in the dusk  
Of life that wakes and grieves!  
O mournful heart whose love is dust,  
In the decaying wood  
Death's deepening mystery will cling  
Round thee like solitude.

Robert Crawford

## Barbarians.

As the crinoid star-fish to the sea-base  
By his stem fixed draws bare subsistence in  
His straitened sphere, as in the sunless ooze  
He turns on his long jointed pedicle,  
So are half-bruted men, barbarian-brained,  
Endued with scarce more power to see and hear  
The visions and the rumours of the world,  
So poorly apt to think and feel and know,  
As each turns on his dark time-pivot in  
A universal ignorance, as it were  
Far back in the beginning of the world;  
Disjointed and dismembered in the mind,  
And in the spirit so confused and foul,  
With no sign of truth's authenticity,  
As nature in their origin had jarred  
The primal tone of man.

Robert Crawford

## Beauty, Its Effect.

I have been touched with her, and have ta'en (Unclear  
The acquaintance of her beauty like a dream,  
Or as it were a flower of Faerie breathed  
By an immortal; for the light and air  
Of life and love so, so endue her, she  
Puts on and off the sweetest favours like  
The momentary raiment that  
A goddess dons and doffs.

Robert Crawford

# Beauty.

Her beauty is the bourne thought cannot pass;  
And the angel of the heart's intelligence,  
Young Love, might deem that boundary infinite,  
So he within the glamour of her eyes,  
As in some ether too thin to be weighed,  
Might breathe for ever.

Robert Crawford

## Before Actium.

Life is up and takes the morning;  
Why should love still lie abed?  
Lo! the charms of slumber scorning,  
Tramps the troop that must be led.  
Thousands come from hill and valley  
Loud the town with clamour fill;  
Why must then their leader dally,  
Couched with Cleopatra still?  
Life's awake — let Duty waken!  
Love's a snare at such a time,  
When Mars' harness should be taken  
And the hearts of heroes chime.  
Let the leader leave the lady!  
Cupid is not lord of these,  
Now the War-god ranks them ready  
To post over land and seas.  
Done with power's imperial pity,  
Oh the hearts to-day must die —  
Romans in an alien city  
Pledged to death for Antony!

Robert Crawford

## Before Execution.

The sun is set, and all the stars are come,  
Stars I shall no more see; the air is still,  
And my life waits the ruin so near now.  
A little space, and I shall have done here.  
Ah, God! twelve hours, twelve little hours, and, lo!  
The air and these lips part, day becomes night,  
Earth nothing, time a skeleton, and I  
An angry ghost, or a tired phantom laid  
With many others in oblivion.  
Twelve hours, twelve little hours, and I shall have  
A wondrous change — feel one fierce pang, and then  
Fade off I know not where, or like a star  
Shot fearfully from the zenith singe my way  
Through chaos haply for some aeons till  
I reach another air, a lower sky,  
And maybe with a baleful influence  
Burn in Pluto's reign.

Robert Crawford

## Bereavement.

The little feet have left the house,  
The little voice is still:  
Without, the wan wind-weary boughs;  
Within, the will  
To go and hear the wee feet tread  
Within the garden of the dead.

Robert Crawford

# Bigotry.

How often our beliefs more than our doubts  
Ruin and mar us here, clog the soul's feet,  
And shackle the heart's best impulses so,  
That for Heaven's love we do inhuman things,  
And with a (Unclear quietude  
Hear babes moan in the everlasting fire!

Robert Crawford

## Birth And Death.

I who have known thee, Birth, must know Death too:  
As old, old men their children's children fold  
In their gaunt arms, and though their blood be cold  
Feel their own youth burn in them as they view  
The features that were theirs — each sign so true  
To their own breath and blood, 'tis as retold  
Their very youth was, when they are so old,  
By those who nothing of their childhood knew.  
So even Death but a new birth may be,  
And in some other star beyond to-day,  
When we have put the use of Earth away,  
E'en like those old men's children's children we  
May see ourselves rise from our own decay,  
The very offspring of our verity.

Robert Crawford

## Bottom's Dream.

Bottom's dream had no bottom; ours may, too,  
Have no foundation. We may wake, indeed;  
But all seems such a vision, none can say  
(If aught's real) where reality begins.  
What if we were dead now — if this were death,  
And we had been alive long, long ago,  
And here and now were in an after-life!  
Thought sets us to a tune that we can sing;  
But, like the rustic waked in fairyland,  
It's all too hard for us to understand.

Robert Crawford

## Business And Pleasure.

He'll have his all; and though his heart is great,  
Ay, prodigal of kindness, yet is he  
A very Shylock in his bargaining.  
Those soft, mild eyes of his grow hard as iron  
To gauge the too, too little or too much,  
When commerce puts his temper to the touch.

Robert Crawford

# Butterfly.

In the fierce light the butterfly wings free —  
So delicate, and yet so fibred to  
Withstand the stress a giant would faint under.

Robert Crawford

## By The Sea.

The heat is on the sea, and Noon  
Has hushed the sounds upon the shore;  
There is a silence evermore  
That with the heart is so in tune  
That ear and eye their senses steep  
As if within a dreamy dew,  
As charmed as when the bells of Sleep  
To Night's church, Sweet, are calling you.  
A sail far off hushed in the light  
Comes into view and fades, as 'twere  
Something that rose from slumber there:  
E'en as a blind man musing might  
Image a bird upon the wing,  
The picture seems to us the same,  
The whole bright noon around the thing,  
As if it with the silence came.  
And still we lie in the warm grass,  
Our senses on the shining sea,  
While thought like a sweet lethargy  
Counts not the moments as they pass;  
As time itself had ceased to stir,  
The glamour here on everything  
Grows one with us, as all things were  
Where now no winds are wandering.

Robert Crawford

# Charon.

Who goes across those waters  
On which the Moon ne'er shone,  
With the passenger he came for  
As in a dream moved on?  
Cypress and yews o'ershadow  
The verge on either side,  
Within whose boughs for ever  
The winds of woe abide.  
And all the air is haunted  
With a wail that seems to flow  
From the living lips of Sorrow  
As the ages come and go.  
The boatman, dumb and hoary,  
Pulls with a steady pull,  
And the dead man seems to listen  
To voices beautiful.  
And it may be the weird River  
Has sights we cannot see,  
And the far shore burns its signals  
Of eerie mystery.  
And Charon knows each signal —  
Above the River's rim  
The spectral lights that glimmer  
Are pilot-stars for him.  
Ay me! he knows the water  
As few, few boatmen know;  
'Tis not the first he's taking  
Down where we all must go!

Robert Crawford

## Cheery Old Age.

The old man is not miserable, nay, cheery  
For such a grey old fellow. Life's still good,  
And he at many points is yet in touch  
With the material; and what if now  
He has not the old energy to sling  
The passion of his nature off, he can  
Beat many a fancy from its ambush; tease  
A knotty problem with the best; in fine,  
Go up and down the thoroughfares of thought,  
And nobly don a holiday attire  
To suit the season.

Robert Crawford

# Christian Burial.

No Christian burial? Ah, he'll sleep as sound  
As the old Jew who, by Beth-Peor, had  
God for a sexton.

Robert Crawford

# Cleopatra.

The asp, her baby, on her breast,  
She falls asleep,  
Ever, like Antony, to rest  
While Nile shall keep  
Its course, and Egypt be a name  
Whose utterance stirs  
The shadow on the Roman's fame,  
His love and hers.  
Out of the mire and mirth of Time,  
By thought removed,  
The life that might have shone sublime,  
Nor unbeloved —  
A dotting mallard when her sail  
From Actium flew,  
He knew her love was, passion-pale,  
The sword that slew!  
Ah! even though her love was lust,  
The swarthy Queen,  
When her babe gave the mortal thrust,  
A woman's mien  
Wore, as her Circean eyes their last  
Looked on the slave  
And with her fatal witchery passed  
Into the grave.  
She yet shall stand in Beauty's list  
A thing superb,  
The Roman's light in Egypt's mist —  
A lover's verb  
That through his moods and tenses toned  
A royal way,  
And took Death rather than be loaned  
To Caesar's sway.

Robert Crawford

## Counsel In Sorrow.

How poor is comfort when the loss is great,  
And vain all counsel to assuage a tear!  
A light affliction it may medicine;  
But when deep Nature groans all words are air,  
And, like the aboriginal instrument,  
Return on the comforter. 'Tis but a wind  
That in the desert sows the germless sand,  
Which by the whirlwind reaped is but sand still.

Robert Crawford

# Death.

The natural death we each night undergo  
Should teach us that our passing's but a sleep,  
Which we beyond the body's shadow may,  
Even as a garment of the day we doff,  
Put off for ever, being then no more  
Nor less, indeed, than we have been before.

Robert Crawford

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Robert Crawford

## Deliberation.

Within the mist of argument men lose  
Ofttimes the thread of reason, and the fume  
Of thought, until its urgency subsides,  
So cloudeth counsel, that on a debate  
Time should avail for meditation ere  
The matter comes to judgment.

Robert Crawford

## Dies Irae.

The last great Day it may be near,  
Or Man may pass ere it comes here.  
There may be nothing but weeds and flowers  
Over the Earth in her dying hours;  
Men, beasts and birds may all be gone  
Ere the world's disaster shall come on;  
Or there may be neither grass nor trees,  
But stony wastes round the ashen seas —  
No life to take when the days are dead,  
And God is doing the thing He said;  
Nothing but Desolation's wing  
Like a sunless mist o'er everything!  
And all the millions long, long gone,  
To ashes turned in Oblivion;  
And the last great Day shall but consume  
The bones of a world in its fiery tomb,  
As God puts by for ever and aye  
The thought of the sorrow that's passed away!

Robert Crawford

# Dream-Death

There is a breath at midnight that comes in  
Sad as a sigh, for then the day is dead  
And the young morrow doth his course begin,  
Sowing new dreams in many a dreamer's head.  
And there are two have waked in one dark bed  
Just as the last stroke fades in lonely air,  
And having whispered, half-awake, have sped  
With silent feet into sleep's popped lair.  
She with the morning wakes, but he is gone;  
Her tears and kisses are of no avail--  
Perchance it was his good-bye murmured on  
The midnight in death's visionary dale.  
Ah, woe! she thought 'twas in sleep's fairyland  
When in the dark he pressed her warm, soft hand.

Robert Crawford

## Early Summer.

The light is silent on the greeny sward,  
And from a bough above the wild dove's coo  
Steals on the ear like a dream-dewy word,  
Or the voice of one of a faery crew.  
The warmth within the azure of the hills  
Breathes like the picture of a perfect thing,  
Which some supernal artist limning has  
Made mystical with love's remembering.  
Now the faint murmur of the coming tide  
Grows like a spirit in the quiet cove,  
While with a drowsy murmur kin to it  
The brown bees among the sweet flowers rove.  
Here where the heart could fold itself, and sleep  
As if within a shining century,  
Naught seems to change but thought, and even it  
Makes every change a tender melody.  
All here is so remote from the world's care,  
As if it were a dream that would not fade,  
Amid so much that man has ruined here  
Like some old-world divineness that has stayed.

Robert Crawford

## Earth Rune.

I heard the Earth within me sing  
As if it were a tranced thing,  
Or as if under thought's control  
All things were chaunting in my soul.  
I was the centre of the sphere,  
And made the imaginary year,  
Whose seasons four were each a mood  
Like God's within His solitude.  
The unborn may dream of our life  
As we still dream of death, until  
Its shadow falls upon our strife,  
As the birth-light on the unborn will  
When they emerge as from a tomb  
Within the antenatal gloom.  
Ah! they may guess at what we know,  
May picture what their lives will be  
When they into time's essence flow  
And take on thought's reality,  
As we may deem of death, who pass  
Like shadows o'er the shining grass.

Robert Crawford

## Echo.

Here, Echo, was thy reign of old,  
Among these hills, a mystic crowd  
Whose thunder rolled  
When they speak loud  
Still shocks the sea: here thy hair grew  
Long as a cloud whose shadow drew  
Itself o'er chaos, ere Time rose  
With life and death and all of those  
Who live and die, whose weakest word  
Thine ears have heard;  
Still as thou sitt'st with sightless eyes  
On a bright cloud in the lone vale,  
Or leaning o'er a mountain rill  
Dost hark the ebbing roar  
Of a dead sea on some primeval shore,  
Whose unrecorded memories  
Are like the language of old gods who fell  
From some starred pinnacle  
In the lost years — as all things will  
Too fall at last, and the great tale  
Of Time be never more retold;  
Ay, e'en when chaos is re-rolled  
O'er the opprest and the oppressor, thou  
(Unseen, and but a word within that wail)  
Shalt pass as in a trance where thought may go  
When all is lying low.

Robert Crawford

## Egoism.

Not as mine their thoughts who pass:  
Each has his life's looking-glass  
Limning therein the light and shade  
His own entity has made.  
I have my life's vision still  
Coloured for me, good or ill,  
And my point of view must be  
But my own immortally.  
Could I guess at theirs, or know  
What shapes in their vision go.  
Lift the veil by day and night  
That's laid on another's light, —  
They might with a fancy free  
Get, too, at the gist of me,  
And with a plebeian shout  
Turn the Gods I worship out,  
To be in a concourse lewd  
Jeered at by the multitude,  
While I with a reeling brain  
Talked with Demons in the fane!

Robert Crawford

## Entranced.

A trance upon my spirit fell;  
It seemed as I were hurled  
Through aeons like an atom dark  
Beyond the flaming world:  
From void to void without a breath,  
As in a weird unknown  
Where Death had done his oldest work,  
And God himself was gone!

Robert Crawford

## Evening.

The light is drawn out of the leaves and grass,  
And the sweet flowers grow pale in the gray air,  
As if their beauty's essence e'en did pass  
With the departing light from all things fair,  
As the sap in the trees when summer's fled  
Draws back to the earth, leaving the leaves dead.  
The sky becomes a cloud, the hills a shade,  
As the mysterious darkness fills the sphere,  
A monstrous elf whose tentacles are laid  
In silence upon all things far and near;  
Now the bats flit about the mothy damp  
In which the spiders weave their airy camp.  
I, too, could fill as 'twere a dreamy bed  
Under the green leaves in the darkness now,  
And watch the evening planet overhead  
Like a dewdrop upon the airy bough  
Of heaven tremble — till my soul too grew  
Like liquid light in water, shining through.  
And I can feel that which the dead inherit —  
Peace, and the power to forego the pain  
That like a vulture on the human spirit  
Draws its fine essence from the fading brain,  
Till every sense contracts, and the slow breath  
Oozes away in the desire of death.  
So from me slips the day's disquietude,  
And I am made one with the night, as those  
Who pass from thought into a faery mood  
On Lethe's wharf, whenas old Charon goes  
Into the dusk of that eternal eve  
Where all must go when the earth-light they leave.

Robert Crawford

## Ever And Only.

Be with me ever and only,  
No other in thought with you;  
Only without me lonely,  
Ever in this way true.  
So will I be yours only,  
Whatever I dream or do,  
Only without you lonely,  
Ever in this way true.

Robert Crawford

# Experience.

Experience is a stern pace-maker, and  
'Tis on the road to wisdom, that rough way,  
So many fall.  
Wrongs unrepented and unpunished breed  
More deadly growths of that pernicious seed.  
Were all men equal, were all dull or keen,  
Ulysses or Ajax had never been.  
Even as men shut their doors to unkind airs.  
Misery in poverty unpitied fares.  
I hate effeminate men, she frowning cried;  
And I a mannish woman, he replied.  
The one white violet's the innocence  
A maid knows not she had — until it's gone.  
An unclean thought still like an ulcer eats  
The life immortal.  
Life at the best is what it makes of hope;  
Its use or its abuse is all.  
Our sweet sins have their own sour medicine,  
And that must cure us.

Robert Crawford

# Falling Stars.

Only a falling star!  
What was it to him  
If millions of mortals were  
Hurled down the dim  
Dark void to the abyss?  
His world was this.  
Only a falling star!  
The Earth was sure  
To outlive him at least:  
Whatever were  
Their fates who yonder passed,  
His star would last!  
Only a falling star!  
What if some day  
The Earth, as in a flash,  
Too, passed away,  
Would, say, a Mars-man sigh  
As we flamed by?  
Only a world gone out  
With all its care —  
God! but a speck at most  
In Thy great air,  
As 'twere an insect's breath  
Breathed out in death.

Robert Crawford

## Fate.

O Thou, who knowest whence we came, and can  
Endow a moment with the mood of Man,  
When my wan moment like a dream is gone,  
Destroy or take me then where I began.  
If it be in that moment I have err'd  
A thousand times, remember I'm a word  
Which Thou hast spoken, and its echoes have  
All from Thine own intensity occur'd.  
I am no other than what Thou hast made,  
Apprenticed to Thy purpose, like a trade,  
I know not why; and if I care or no,  
'Tis to Thy purpose, too, how I am paid.

Robert Crawford

## Father And Lover.

My father was a god before you came;  
Now in another shrine I bow the knee,  
E'en as my mother in her own love-dream  
Did from her father turn to worship mine.

Robert Crawford

## For Lillian

She was so dear, so fair. Her memory stays,  
Even her dying robs me not of this,  
That I have walked with her in mortal ways  
Whose tender beauty now immortal is.  
There are sweet flowers that bloom in ways forlorn  
And sad sweet eyes whose beauty is a flower  
Blown in the night to which there is no morn,  
Dream-born and dying in its dewy bower;  
And she was such a flower, her sweet eyes such;  
The secret hours that only the heart knows  
Thrill with the glamour of her tone and touch  
Like music that is sweetest at the close,  
Falling to death as falls the fairest thing  
Beyond the power of love's recovering.

Robert Crawford

## For Love I, Too, Could Die (She Said) Nor Fear It,

Such love as some of the dead queens have had  
Whose sorrow matched their beauty. I could bear it,  
And I think die too, to have been so glad.  
With the sweet wonder in a great light lying  
I would not e'en upbraid the deadly dart,  
But gazing in the eyes of my Love, dying,  
Passion my beauty in his aching heart.  
Beyond the shadow of my own renewal  
So to have set my beauty like a flame,  
Quivering as Helen's — ah! that Trojan jewel,  
Where all love's pride and sorrow has a name —  
I, too, would take time's grandeur to the dust,  
And haply in Hades smile as lovers must.

Robert Crawford

# Ghosts.

They look in with dim eyes  
And faces sweet and sad,  
Upon the life that dies —  
Shades who have had  
Their part in all things here,  
The mortal hope and fear,  
Till, as now from the bier  
But one remove,  
They hark the still hours chime  
Within the Tower of Time  
As to the sad, sweet rhyme  
Of life and love.  
They see more than we know,  
They hear more than we may,  
Who ever come and go  
Like stars on a cloudy way:  
And they grow sad to ken  
The mortal life of men,  
In the vesper light again  
As they look in  
And feel the phantom thrill  
Of all the good and ill,  
Of love and beauty still  
And pain and sin.  
And then with faces wan  
They to each other turn,  
Dreaming of what is gone,  
E'en as they yearn  
Perchance to lift the veil  
With fingers thin and pale  
Showing the no avail  
Of so much here,  
And how all things are cast  
As in a dream at last,  
When the future as the past  
Shall disappear.

Robert Crawford

## God's Rest.

I saw God in a dream go by,  
As if He trod the phantom air  
Within a hushed eternity,  
Dead worlds around Him everywhere.  
No sign of life — and God asleep!  
All things absorbed in Him at last;  
Nothing for Him to care for, keep,  
Since thought from everything had passed.  
A mystic vision on its way  
His image filled the awful gloom,  
As if His work were o'er for aye —  
Himself His own creation's tomb!  
As if, when sleep fell on Him, all  
Sensation with a tremor ceased,  
As all things felt the weird recall,  
And the gigantic strain released.  
The worlds stayed still without a breath,  
Entranced within the phantom air,  
Since God had done with life and death  
And ta'en Himself from everywhere.  
This was His Sabbath. In the past  
'Tis said He rested for a day;  
But this was a sleep that would last,  
Since He had done with all for aye.

Robert Crawford

# Gold.

Ah, Gold! 'tis filthy lucre, honour's shame,  
For which so many a Judas still sells truth!  
It is the devil's lure; yet good men use it,  
And many a dove for sacrifice within  
The temple's been sold for it.

Robert Crawford

## Good And Evil.

Good thoughts, 'tis said, are no more than good dreams  
Save they be into action put, and that  
On opportunity depends. Alas!  
If place and power cohered, what good were done  
Which else, a babe still-born, has no way here,  
But in the womb of good intention fails,  
The heart's abortion! Ay, and thuswise too,  
Full many a foul intent in that it has  
No power or place of action is debarred  
A monstrous birth. So nature haply does  
In some mysterious way we do not know  
Still hold the balance 'tween the good and ill  
Of thought in action here, and we become  
(In spite of our own selves full oft indeed)  
Dispensers of a higher equity  
Than the bare law of reason would allow.

Robert Crawford

# Haikai.

Flannel-flowers dancing  
To the Dawn on the hill-tops ...  
The Vision of Spring!

Robert Crawford

## Half-Views.

It is the half-views are disastrous still;  
But size a thing up fully, seize the whole,  
And reason then has ground to go upon  
For its acceptance or rejection; but  
What is half-known, like undigested food,  
Ferments, and sourly taints the mental gorge  
Until it rises; ignorance so heaves  
His good things with his bad into the ditch.

Robert Crawford

## Healthy Labour.

The charm of labour is health's appetite,  
For lack of which the clammy sinew is  
A joyless power, and, like a hopeless heart,  
Throbs to a sickly tune.

Robert Crawford

## Her Face.

There is a something in her face  
Which in no other I can trace,  
And feelings sweet as music stir  
When I gaze in her dreamy eyes,  
And breathe a perfume, as it were,  
From flowers in Paradise.  
At morn, at noon and night it seems  
As if I moved by faery streams,  
A strange light on the leaves and grass;  
As if her life-breath were the air  
Through which the magic moments pass  
In her dream-beauty there.  
It is thought's paradise which she  
Inhabits like a mystery,  
Through which my feelings come and go  
Like tunes which to her pulses stir;  
And my life day by day, I trow,  
Is one sweet dream of her.

Robert Crawford

## Her Glass.

Her glass yet holds, or seems to hold her!  
But now she visioned herself here;  
Her glass spoke truth, and fondly told her  
What a man might, a man's lips near  
The shell of her soft ear.  
But too cold thing that could not capture  
The blush of beauty, as it were!  
When a man's heart with dreamy rapture  
Would at the least, least touch of her  
Feel all his pulses stir.

Robert Crawford

## Her Grave.

The flowers on her grave scarce breathe,  
So sweet a flower lies hid beneath;  
As if they feared their growth might stir  
The sleepy earth that covers her.

Robert Crawford

# Homo Sum

The hearts of men are like mine,  
therefore  
it must laugh and weep with them.

Robert Crawford

## Honey-Suckles.

The sweet dew in the honey-suckle flowers  
Tastes of the morning; to Love's palate still  
Are tender thoughts so all-delicious too.

Robert Crawford

# Impetuosity.

His over-hot desire itself defeats,  
And where mere prudence had attained, he fails  
For lack of self-retention; as on ice  
A ravening wolf, when his prey swerves, o'ershoots  
The mark, and, floundering in his fury, slides  
On the smooth floor.

Robert Crawford

## In Egypt.

Speak softly, wake her not! We all must die.  
This is a sleep that wraps her in secure  
From Caesar's luck. Yet is that veiny bosom  
Warm where now love's despair wrought life's undoing,  
Or it may be life's parting, love's renewing,  
So all's not over yet. See you, and how  
She sleeps in his esteem, and he in hers,  
Conjoined in Song's immortal monument;  
While Caesar triumphs on through Syria,  
And these two lie in Egypt — so together,  
And, through the working of a worm, for ever.

Robert Crawford

## In Nineveh.

As he of Joppa sought to 'scape  
The utterance of the given word,  
And dared to get him from the Lord  
In a ship down to Tarshish, — know  
Thou canst not any burden throw  
That was ordained for thee to bear  
Though faith may make it light as air.  
Though thou within the dust may rave,  
Within the dust may rave and curse  
Thy being and the universe,  
He sends His lightnings still abroad,  
Yet plants for thee the shadowy gourd,  
And comes so near He leaves a trace  
Of beauty on thy bitter face.  
Thou canst not lose thyself: thou art  
The given word; its utterance too  
Is in all thou dost dream and do:  
All men must hear it, hearing thee:  
Thou canst not 'scape the prophecy  
Of thy life here, howe'er thou rave  
Between the cradle and the grave.  
What if thou wert He, being here —  
So much of Him made flesh as can  
Find its conception in a man;  
Thy very breath His own, and thou  
The veriest utterance of Him now?  
It is His work: — let thyself be,  
And He will cry in Nineveh!

Robert Crawford

## In The Grass.

'Tis as if I saw it all — sat now in the grass, and heard  
The soft warm wind in my ears like the lilt of a lonely bird;  
Sat now in the grasses so — saw, but said never a word.  
The two of them in the wood, below me there by the rill;  
He with the light on his brow, she in the shadow still;  
And a cloud so white goes over the blue on the gleaming hill.  
My nest in the grass was good: they deemed that none might see —  
Ah God in heaven! my eyes looked out of the hell in me,  
As his arm went round her waist, and his lips where mine might be —  
Touched hers, as her face drew up like a flower in the light to his —  
Touched hers, as I felt her soul shine out in a dream of bliss;  
While mine with the pangs of hell was alive in a world like this!  
I dared not move, nor could I shut my eyes to it all;  
And still they clung and kissed: I heard the waterfall,  
I heard the warm wind sing till the day began to pall.  
And then they rose, the twain who had taken my life from me;  
I did not rise, but lay where none might hear or see,  
In the grass in the dark and sobbed, 'Would God that the end might be!  
The years have come since then, and the years have gone but I,  
Though the fever of death was strong upon me, did not die;  
And though I am old and weak as upon my couch I lie,  
'Tis as if I saw it all — sat still in the grass, and heard  
The soft warm wind in my ears like the lilt of a lonely bird;  
Sat still in the grasses so — saw, but said never a word.

Robert Crawford

## In Verona.

Juliet will never rise  
In her passion's paradise;  
Dust is in her ears and eyes.  
And time too, as all men know,  
Has put by, with beauty's woe,  
What remains of Romeo.  
In that grave within the green  
Since the dawn of death was seen  
Nothing has been changed, I ween;  
Nor shall their praise be unsown,  
Like a bud each year new-blown  
While Verona's name is known;  
And the hearts of men shall come  
To where Love has made his home  
In their beauty's martyrdom.  
Ah! the two that are so one  
Since the dream of life was done: —  
Would another life begun  
With its dream for them too be  
Mid the world's humanity  
Like this in Love's history?

Robert Crawford

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Robert Crawford

## Insect.

We do not grasp ourselves, but still drift on  
As aimless as a mote in the warm air,  
Whose senses take the sweetness of the time,  
And in a moment let existence go,  
Its tiny death-squeak an indefinite thing  
Recorded in the general ear of God.

Robert Crawford

# Inspiration.

There's a wind that sweeps through the day and night,  
And like the lightning goes,  
But none have heard the sound of its wings,  
And none know whither it blows;  
But where'er it comes the thoughts of men  
Are like clouds together hurled,  
As they are carried with mystic speed  
Over the crazy world.

We see no waving of leafy boughs,  
Nor heave of the purple sea;  
When this wind its fiercest blows, the Earth  
May be still as the dead men be;  
But the spirit feels its fiery breath  
And the souls of men are stirr'd,  
As o'er the mesmeric lines of life  
Is flashed the magic word.

The gale from the Spirit-land blows in,  
And they who feel it glow  
With an ecstasy and ardour like  
The seers of long ago —  
The vital and inspiring breath  
With which ideas are sown,  
Like visioned seeds, in the mystic soil  
Where the spirit-flowers are grown!

Robert Crawford

## Isolation.

He came by unknown ways, and stood  
At evening in the fading wood,  
Which when the glowing hills were gone  
Would as in a dream murmur on,  
As he beside his camp-fire's glare  
Sat as if in a vision there,  
And felt the silence like a thing  
In which his soul was functioning.  
He was a poet maybe who  
The world's impression dreamy drew  
From his own heart in that strange air,  
Like one who had been everywhere  
And with the stars and fire-lit trees  
Did blend a thousand memories,  
Making that speck of light his home  
Until the dewy dawn should come.  
He well had seemed a phantom at  
Some mystic work as lone he sat  
Within his ring of charmed light,  
Who might step out into the night,  
And in a mischief-making mood  
Perturb the starry solitude  
Until his fire burnt out, and then  
Might creep back to his camp again,  
And wrapped within his blanket be  
A thought-deserted entity.

Robert Crawford

## Jove.

Jove himself moves in the abyss  
As in the heights he goes;  
The God is so in all that is,  
Yet is what no one knows.

Robert Crawford

# Lethe.

The waves of Lethe wash till we forget  
Our earthy life and love; and 'twould appear  
Before Time's tune possessed us, before we  
Let fall the shadow of our meaning here —  
Oh, it would seem that in another Lethe  
We had been dipped as Death will dip us, to  
Wash out the memory of ourselves, as though  
Each stage had its own livery, and we threw  
Off the old meaning, like the garments that,  
Worn and occasion-soiled, men doff when they  
Have to look natural in another sphere.

Robert Crawford

## Life And Death.

We come like bats that out of a dark cave  
Have suddenly been scared into the day,  
Blear-eyed and vexed as here and there they flap,  
Unnatural denizens of such a world.  
So seem we all, as this were not our home,  
And we, as aliens in these elements,  
Move here and there, purblind, heart-weary, and  
Possessed with many fears, till Death's new dark  
Shows us our passage back to the old cave,  
Whence Birth before may have affrighted us.

Robert Crawford

## Life, A Language.

Life is a language every man must use,  
Some with a wondrous faculty, and some  
So blindly that they seem like Caliban  
Or e'er the good and great magician took  
Pity upon his impotence, and made  
The discord of his reason musical.

Robert Crawford

## Life's Eden.

'Tis in sooth life's Eden,  
We within it;  
Love put all the seed in  
To begin it,  
Made the air to fan it,  
Light illumine,  
Then put on the planet  
Man and woman —  
Us with our twin-nature  
Dreamy framéd,  
One with every creature  
Thought has naméd.  
Though the fiend find Eden,  
Shall he find us?  
In the heart so hidden  
Love has shrined us,  
By no earthly portal  
May they enter  
Where the life immortal  
Has its centre —  
Paths that are forbidden  
Sin and sorrow,  
In the heart of Eden  
Love's to-morrow  
Walks with feet that trod in  
God's endeavor,  
With the life of God in  
Ours for ever!

Robert Crawford

## Life's Offices.

Most of life's offices may overlap,  
And form a covert for the growth of thought;  
But there are some no thought and no device  
May ever join; or if perchance they do,  
Or this or that will soon unsightly warp,  
Like green material, and give recourse  
To the disastrous airs of circumstance.

Robert Crawford

## Linnet-Like.

The joy of God gets into us, and we  
Hum with the intuition of His power;  
Even as a linnet, like a thing inspired,  
Throats his love-lyrics in the dewy leaves.

Robert Crawford

## Loss.

She gave the day its heart of fire,  
She gave the night her soul of flame;  
The sun and moon translated through  
Her love as gods became.

She filled me with unearthly strength,  
A power not of my own was mine;  
She passed, and crumbled into dust  
And ashes my divine.

The Night knows not how fair she is  
Before the stars come in the sky:  
It is the light within ourselves  
We see ourselves and others by.

Robert Crawford

## Love #1.

E'en her own eyes tell Beauty she is fair;  
And Love need know no language save his own  
In any clime to read the heart's desire;  
The Titicacan and Caucasian's his —  
All tongues the theatres and temples where  
He plays or prays while e'er the world endures,  
And sun and moon, and night and day are true  
To their beginning.

Robert Crawford

## Love #2.

The small, white, soft hand of a maid can shoot  
A bolt will bar a giant's way; and, oh!  
The dreamy Love is a unique magician,  
That, tender as the maiden's lily hand,  
Is yet as sinewy retentive as  
The bolt that bars the giant's way.

Robert Crawford

## Love #3.

There is so much in us is  
godlike still,  
Love lifts us to heaven  
that is ours.

Robert Crawford

## Love In Hades.

I saw Love pass with Charon down  
The pale infernal tide,  
To visit in the starless town  
All who for him had died.  
The gay God and the old Ghost came  
Slow to that sleepy shore,  
And a dead passion burned like flame  
Before each true-love's door!  
Into this place and that he stept:  
The eyes still held their tears,  
Though some had their strange sorrow kept  
More than ten thousand years.  
He saw the old and young who went  
Devoid of life, yet who,  
Though all their joys on earth were spent,  
Were to their dream-loves true.  
He saw all who had worshipped him  
Before thought's light withdrew,  
Until the ages seemed to swim  
Round him there dying too!  
And he could feel his faint heart beat  
A ghostly tune with theirs,  
As he, too, might cease to compete  
With the decaying years.  
Ay! though a God, he went aghast  
From the mysterious shore,  
And Charon smiled when he at last  
Touched time with him once more.

Robert Crawford

## Love Litanies.

I.

I, too, have come to feel and see  
How little in the world can be  
Ours, as we pine and pass —  
How all we long for, know of, love,  
As in a dream from us remove,  
Till each becomes the shadow of  
A light that was.

II.

We must all somehow be made  
One with time, that fleeting shade;  
Until we within the dust  
Wither as sweet violets must  
In their own scent, as they lie  
Like a virgin memory  
Trembling with its sweetest breath  
In the mystery of death.

Robert Crawford

## Love's Bower.

On the white bosom, 'tween the breasts  
Of Helen Love has made his bower,  
As in a sweet and secret tower  
Where mid the world's decay he rests —  
A bridegroom in his dream's desire  
With the imperial bride whose brow  
Is great with beauty now,  
Whose eyes have the old fire  
That in their passion's joy  
Burnt to a cinder on the towers of Troy!  
All youths and virgins may go there,  
And thence their hearts as torches light,  
Fragrant and fresh as new-born air  
In the old world's serenest might —  
May learn from Love and his warm mate  
The secret of the tender tune  
Of that long honeymoon,  
That like the fire of Fate  
Still in their passion's joy  
Burns to a cinder on the towers of Troy!

Robert Crawford

## Love's Mesmerism.

When you are with me I put by the world  
In having you. When I can hear and see you,  
All else is dark and dumb; or is it, Sweet,  
You then are all, and I the dreamer know  
No life but yours? But when that you are gone,  
All things do image you, they do live then  
For me, and in a thousand lights and shadows  
A thousand voices echo you, until  
Your presence dumbs and darkens them again:  
Love has so made you, dearest, one with all  
In and without me.

Robert Crawford

## Love's Messengers.

He came from her, and though rough and uncouth,  
It seemed her tenderness breathed out of him  
As he re-worded her sweet sentences.  
Even as a stony place, clothed with sweet flowers,  
Seems itself to breathe perfume, and to be  
Instinct with tenderness, so, fresh from her,  
The roughness of his quality was charmed:  
Love makes those lovable that deal with him.

Robert Crawford

## Love's Own.

Ah, that hair no age can dye  
That is golden in Love's eye,  
And that face time cannot touch  
On which Love has gazed so much.  
Other hair and faces may  
Take on changes and decay:  
Hers, if Love endures, must be  
Sure of immortality,  
Since no changes can occur  
In the dream he's made of her.

Robert Crawford

## Love's Reveller.

Hard have you won her, and must hold as fast!  
She is Love's reveller — those tawny eyes  
Are up and down still in warm passion cast,  
And woe betide the soul whom they surprise!  
Yet is she yours — you deem not for a while.  
But have you felt the fiery stress of her?  
It is a woman's, yet a serpent's smile  
A Cleopatra yields her worshipper.  
The cruel sweetness of her beauty lurks  
In all her lovers' ruin; none may dare  
To toy with her but love like poison works  
To madness or the sorrow of despair: —  
And you — the Antony of her desire?  
Her love is still as a consuming fire.

Robert Crawford

## Love's Vision.

I am one with thee, and thou  
Art a vision of me now,  
Which love, and not life, has made;  
It with life, then, may not fade,  
But like lightning, swiftly gone,  
Breathe a more immortal tone  
Than the dull light of the day  
That is slow to pass away.

Robert Crawford

## Madrigal #1.

What needs it, then, we stand so long a-gazing,  
And do not our lips mingle,  
Since our hearts, so long single,  
Have married as if in a dream amazing?  
Our lips in such a joy should follow suit,  
And on each other feed as on Love's fruit.

Robert Crawford

## Madrigal #2.

Because our life is brief  
Let us laugh!  
Because for joy and grief  
We may quaff  
Death's nepenthe soon —  
Because this is life's boon  
Let us laugh.

Robert Crawford

## Madrigal.

When morn is wandering on the seas,  
And birds are singing in the trees,  
And all the time is flushed with flowers,  
And youth is in these hearts of ours —  
How sweet then 'tis to love!  
How sweet then 'tis to prove  
How much a man can be to a maid  
In the greenwood shade!

Robert Crawford

## Maiden Lips.

O Sweet, thy lips, how sweet their kisses are!  
Rarer than rosy dewdrops amorous  
That in the lily's tender bosom fall,  
So magical with beauty they so breathe of thee.

Robert Crawford

## Maiden's Heart.

The sweet, fresh, red rose  
of a maiden's heart  
That opes in the dewy  
ecstasy of love.

Robert Crawford

## Marriage Morn.

Fades the moonlight on the sea,  
And the dawn is coming in —  
What will this day bring for me,  
This of all days, Evelyn?  
Ah! to-day our hands we plight;  
Life or death is in the vow;  
All that earth knows of delight  
Or of grief is round me now —  
While the dawn-light limns the shore,  
And thou in thy lonely sleep  
Dream'st thy maiden dreams before  
Hymen's mystery shall steep  
Thy heart's fancies in mine own,  
And the pulse of passion stir  
With the ecstasy that's known  
Only to Love's worshipper.

Robert Crawford

## Men And Women.

It is not that I love you — nay! and yet  
Had I a lover, he would have your eyes,  
Your lips, and be in all like you. Sir, see  
This is a rose the winds have harried. Oh!  
Here is a violet marred, a lily there.  
Poor girls, their love or lover was too cruel;  
And we are like them — we you men call flowers;  
We, too, like these, are hurt with love, and lie  
On the sweet earth so forsaken.

Robert Crawford

# Mind.

Without us and within us mind is all;  
The truth of life and knowledge still are one,  
And though all be a dream, yet in the dream  
All is true to the after and before,  
And ourselves but the shade or mirror of  
The what has been or is to be, who still  
Remembering and forgetting co-exist  
With the mysterious One, and through ourselves  
Attain prevision of the soul's escape  
In some strange eyrie 'bove the flux of all,  
E'en as the termites ere the great rains rear  
Their termitariums in the tallest trees  
To 'scape the deluge. 'Tis the eye within  
That has the potency of light: We see  
But by foreseeing, even as it were  
The soul's prismatic radiance imbued  
Life's rose with an interior loveliness  
For beauty's summer in another sphere.

Robert Crawford

# Morality.

Evil itself may be but good disguised,  
As many a virtue now was once a vice,  
Or held to be such by the moralists;  
Or as even in the eyes of foreigners  
Our virtues may be vices, theirs to us  
As vicious too. We make us new laws still,  
And hold that finable and barred to-day  
That was but yesterday allowable.  
Our neighbours haply no such laws enact,  
And privilege what we make punitive.  
So right and wrong are still conditional,  
And there's no absolute morality  
In all the world; for conscience herself is  
Full oft but Custom's creature, whom he keeps,  
Who sees with him, and hears with him, and acts  
As by his power of attorney still.

Robert Crawford

## Mors Dei.

Methought I saw God dying, and  
The millions round His bed;  
And all in every planet knew  
They'd pass when He was dead.  
In a wan light He lay somewhere,  
Where all was strange and dim,  
And one by one each living thing  
Felt the life leaving Him.  
The fiercest creatures lost their power,  
The brightest eyes grew pale;  
A weakness spread through every star  
Like a funereal tale.  
Through Heaven and Hell a tremor passed;  
The fiends and seraphim  
Had hushed their cries and songs, and came  
To share their doom with Him.  
And o'er the Eyes that looked on all  
A deathly glamour passed,  
And He knew all that He had made  
Was one with Him at last;  
As with His final breath a boom  
Crashed through the worlds, and He  
Let go the awful stress He'd kept  
On Life's immensity.

Robert Crawford

## Mutation.

The peaceful years, and then the stormy time  
When the perturbed Earth moans, and Death himself  
Seems ready to seize all his prey, 'to smite  
Once and to smite no more.' Not yet the end,  
And still the labour of the God goes on:  
Time sows and reaps, and men are born and die;  
Moons wax and wane, and all is changing still  
As in the dream of some mysterious Power,  
A dream of joy and woe, obscure as life —  
That vagrant melody still lapsing down  
The aeons to our doom!

Robert Crawford

## Natural Gifts.

The gifts o' the gods; not all men have them, ay,  
And some indeed that have them know it not;  
And some that have them not, deem that they have,  
And there's the mischief: it is this that makes  
So many failures, tempts men to betray  
Their proper selves, and on a false surmise  
Of what they are or will be, lures them to  
Their own undoing; as pirate lights decoy  
Unwary mariners to ruin on  
A monstrous shore.

Robert Crawford

## Natural Magic.

I have put by the schoolmen,  
The seeming great and sage;  
Nor will I taste the vintage  
Brewed in the vats of Age;  
But I will sip the dewdrops  
On the lily's leaves unfurl'd,  
And list the wild birds warble  
The wisdom of the world.  
But this shall be my learning:  
Whate'er the pundit knows  
Has the dust of doubt upon it  
As to the grave it goes.  
The truths that I would gather  
Are different in kind,  
Touched with a natural magic  
No artifice can find.  
Ere time, a weird, wild creature,  
Had been ensnared and thrall'd  
By any human meaning,  
The gods in thunder call'd  
Among the heights and hollows,  
Like syllables that sent  
Into the moods of Nature  
Aerial wonderment.  
And this shall be my learning,  
And to this tune I'll grow  
As to a magic rarer  
Than all the schoolmen know;  
Within the ways that hint of  
The heathen joys that roam —  
The simple things that come to  
The heart, and find a home.

Robert Crawford

# Night.

The wings of Evening, spread like phantom sails  
Athwart the waning west,  
Now as the last thin streak of crimson fails,  
Seem as with sleep possessed.  
Now hope is changed to memory, and time  
Becomes eternity,  
As thought were chaunting to a runic rhyme  
In some old mystery.  
The shadows deepen, and the Night's weird stir  
Seems like a spirit still  
To tremble in the silence, as with her  
Death walked invisible.  
The heart can ken, e'en like an echo dead,  
The eerie things they say  
Who have come from a coast where none may tread  
Within the dream of Day.  
Night and her paramour — the last of things  
That touch the soul with fear,  
As that which deems that it is deathless clings  
To its own shadow here.

Robert Crawford

## Night-Bound.

Comes the night that brings me rest,  
Comes the dark that folds me in  
This of all my nights the best,  
Nights of virtue, nights of sin.  
I can hear a water moan,  
And it seems no mortal tide,  
But my own grey life that's gone  
With the darkness to abide.  
Ah! beyond the veil I pierce —  
See my pain and pleasure done  
In a mouldering universe  
Without stars and without sun!  
Through my warm red veins the chill  
Of Death's coming seems to creep,  
Till the world grows ghasty still  
To me in my lonely sleep  
So I cease: this night is mine;  
Other nights for other things!  
Comes the gloom that is divine  
With the peace for me it brings.

Robert Crawford

## Noonday Hills.

The silent blue haze in the noonday hills  
Is deep with glory, as the very air  
Were an alembic.

Robert Crawford

## Of Woman's Love.

Of all the loves the heart can hold  
The love of woman's first;  
It was this one love that we had  
Or e'er the world was cursed.  
Then other loves — our passions — threw  
Their shadows on the brain,  
And like ill weeds they grew and grew  
Amid the golden grain.  
Ah! woman's love's the one thing true  
In a world of lures and lies,  
As if it were man's heaven that had  
Survived his paradise!  
Our other loves are but the dross  
That to the soul must cling  
Till we've forgot life's every loss  
In Love's remembering.

Robert Crawford

## Old-Fashioned Child.

He was born old; they who got him were grey,  
And quaint as things that long had seasoned here  
When that he came — a too true vintage of  
The lateness of the brewing blood and brain;  
Even as in their whims and ways he had  
Existed, an imaginary thing,  
Twin-lived in him and her e'en long before  
They were united in the dream of love.  
And therefore comes it that his young life wears  
So old a countenance, that he in sooth  
Is so too grown-up in his ways and whims;  
Unlike the youngling of an early pair,  
Who's ta'en the freshness of their favour on,  
And is as frisky as the youth of love.

Robert Crawford

## On Marriage.

Whom Love has joined no man may put asunder,  
And he has never joined those who can part:  
Marriage is this, no more, howe'er priests moan;  
The rest is words, mere words, and custom's vapour  
The heart will brush aside as easily  
As fancy paints a picture.

Robert Crawford

## On Olympus.

The high noises,  
The great voices,  
They of the sky  
In the clouds wrangle,  
Jar it and jangle  
Till Death shall die.  
In the bright houses  
With their false spouses  
The high ones rave —  
Gods in a passion,  
As those in their fashion  
Who go to the grave.  
Out of the portal  
Where never a mortal  
Has climbed or been,  
Their insane thunder  
Comes to us under  
The holy demesne.

Robert Crawford

# Opportunity.

I can believe it, that we each do have  
One opportunity, and on it hangs  
It may be all.

Robert Crawford

## Patriotism.

We die for home and country; dying thus,  
The welfare of our land shall live with us.

Robert Crawford

## Poet And Priest.

The poet's born, the priest is made: at last  
Shall come a day when all men at the shrine  
Of poesy shall pay their vows, and know  
The oracles of Nature are divine,  
And but the inspired have authority.

Robert Crawford

## Poetic Emotion.

The heart's throb makes the music: words are air,  
A mortal breath, if no emotion thrills  
The subtle syllables; and all men own  
The poesy, the passion, and the power  
When that the Poet's fiery fingers touch  
The lyre immortal. 'Tis from him alone  
The accents of life's mystery are heard,  
As the harmonious numbers take the soul  
And the unearthy in us answers him.

Robert Crawford

## Post Mortem.

When I have passed the bourne of ear and eye,  
And thou my whereabouts no more canst tell;  
When all I am is but a phantasy,  
Seen in thy heart, to none else visible:  
When haply slow time shall have faded then,  
And thee too brought to thy departure here,  
But call me in the spirit, and again  
My soul, that was thy mate, shall answer, dear!  
Then from the confines of that shadowy clime  
As in a visionary light I'll come  
To where, within the fading fields of time,  
Thy soul waits mine, with whom to journey home  
Till, with thy hand in mine, we take our way  
Where all that we have been is ours for aye.

Robert Crawford

## Proem.

I only knew one poet in my life.

— BROWNING.

I have not known a poet but myself,  
If I'm indeed one, as I ought to be,  
Considering how these many years I've made  
The Muse now such a woman in my life.  
No flesh and blood could put to proof the art  
With which I wooed her; ay, and woo her still,  
Though, as I deem, ere this she has been won.  
I have not known another, as I say,  
Who could be called a poet, or has been  
Acclaimed such by the not too wise in wit  
Who label literature's itinerants —  
Professed discerners (as in every art  
With sheer cock-surety there be those who  
Deem their diploma Fame's own warranty);  
Who in this journal or in that take stock  
O' the issue of thought's making — song at best  
A poor result, not to much tending (or if  
Esteemed, good, e'en though flawed in some way still).  
So these crumb-gatherers for the multitude  
Still dole their wit or wisdom week by week,  
'Piece out our imperfections,' choose, elect  
In this or that craft him or her as first,  
Second, or third, whatever the degree  
Arrived at in the inkling of a whim;  
And so with their diploma set the seal  
To the rank world's preferment, failing which,  
Mere poets must have a bad time of it!  
Or haply some one in song's craft himself  
Elects himself the chief musician, and  
The other nine and ninety jugglers, who  
Jig ape-like in the halo of his vogue.  
'Tis then song does become ridiculous,  
And the proud name of poet poor indeed.  
Proud name? Alas! the power of pride is gone,  
And the dull world's humility is theirs;  
The new bards who, unlike the old, gauge not  
The grandeur of the office they fulfil —

The old knight-errantry of Song who rode  
Triumphant with God's targe in the world's eye,  
Emblazoned with the heraldry of soul  
In this wise or in that — the squires of Truth,  
Love's worshippers or Beauty's votaries,  
Whose mere life was the melody of all.  
It may, in fact, be song at best is but  
The rind of this life's apple, not its core,  
And the chief singers still but mendicants  
Of the world's love; and yet it is in sooth  
The one thing sweet to its own votary;  
As to the painter his art, too, is all,  
And to the sculptor his. Ay, though but rinds  
At best, allowed, of our life's apples here,  
Yet the rind, no less than the core, is part  
O' the perfect fruit — more toothsome than the core,  
So the white flesh is eaten with it — so  
Song includes life, as life, including song,  
Retains the sweetness of its strength, and yields  
To all sustainment and fruition too;  
Though, as within the earthy fruit, thought's pulp  
Is th' first thing still, and failing which indeed  
The eater then deems his enjoyment null:  
Song without life is such a withered fruit.  
Ah! but thou sayest that song's subserviency  
To life, the mere foot on the daily fact  
Treading, not the imaginary air,  
But the mire of the actual, breeds alloy  
Too gross for beauty; that 'tis not in these —  
The soilure of the animal, the slag  
Of the material, or custom's pack, —  
Ay, not in these the effluent wings dilate,  
The breath diviner has its issue, nor  
Spirit to heaven finds the nearest way!  
And rightly sayest: Life in these is all,  
And has with these its ending too; but song,  
That more than life of which the poet sings  
With power authentic in each syllable,  
As the moon sends a gleam down watery glooms  
To hint of heaven — song, as it were, unwraps  
All the dense folds of life, one by one, so  
To find a spark of the divine; or tears

The bodily vesture from the breathing man,  
And on the soul's escape pursuing sings  
Of th' more than life, which 'neath the earthy rags,  
For years it may be blind and deaf and dumb,  
Was so uncognisant that God was near —  
That heaven was possible, and the escape  
So easy when His sesame was said!  
As thou, I then on song this value set,  
That it can leaven life, — a yeast of soul  
So quickening us, we are not mere dough, but  
Dough with a resurrection in it here,  
And capable of any miracle! —  
At that we'll let it stand; sometime elsewhere  
With other eyes and other ears we may  
Perceive a higher meaning in it all;  
Song-perfect then, or so life-perfect, we  
Shall be the song, not make it any more.

Robert Crawford

## Quatrain.

Water is wine when lovers kiss;  
The moisture of the eyes  
Which brims up in love's rapture is  
The mist of Paradise.

Robert Crawford

## Queen And Clown.

Cleopatra: Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there, that kills and  
pains not?

Clown: Truly I have him; but I would not be the party that should  
desire you to touch him, for his biting is immortal: those that do die of it  
do seldom or never recover.

\* \* \* \* \*

Asps in a basket for the Queen!  
The pretty worm of Nile  
Will charm her from what might have been,  
And make Death smile.  
So soft an end for one so fair,  
Her Roman lying low —  
The other Roman finds her there,  
Beyond him so!

Robert Crawford

## Quiet Joy.

No Lethean ease, but such a mood as craves  
For naught in earth and heaven, just to breathe  
The simple air of our reality  
Like creatures of the season, — earthy, and  
Made for the earth, at one with all things here;  
So in the generation of ourselves  
To have the certainty of peace, and find  
The natural favour of our functioning  
Sufficient till the end ensue.

Robert Crawford

## Religion.

Priests indeed may prate  
This side o' death, but 'yond the bourne  
Their service fails.

Robert Crawford

## Rondel.

The mist is in the town to-night,  
And all the streets are dumb and drear;  
The passers-by as ghosts appear,  
Or things whose souls have taken flight  
As they drift by in the weird light,  
Each on its shadowy career —  
The mist is in the town to-night,  
And all the streets are dumb and drear.  
A dead town were less sad a sight  
With its dead men and women here,  
So one might see them passing near  
Beyond the death of love's delight!  
The mist is in the town to-night,  
And all the streets are dumb and drear.

Robert Crawford

## Sea-Weeds.

The sunlight piercing through the blue wave feeds  
The joyous growths that, clustered from the air,  
Throw forth their fibres to the Power that breeds  
Love in the lives above of all things fair —  
The ever-living Sun, that through man's days  
Is as the breath of all the thinks and says.  
Light streams down to them in that watery mist,  
E'en as thought's splendor in a human mood  
Life-filling, like a glorious amethyst  
Among the mountains in their solitude;  
And the sea-things drink in at every pore  
The nurture of the light till life is o'er.  
Till life is o'er, and Death within the ooze  
Then hides them from the joyous light and air;  
E'en as, too, in the mind the flaming muse  
Burns down to ashes in a world made bare  
With want and woe, and the pain whose defeat  
Must be by death — when death alone is sweet.

Robert Crawford

## Self-Harmony.

Ourselves within ourselves, we then are free  
To touch the world at every turn, and take  
The moods of men and mingle them with ours;  
But ourselves out of ourselves, we are slaved  
To every passing rumour, loose our hold,  
And slipping in the flood of circumstance  
Are whirled away.

Robert Crawford

# Shakespeare?

And what think ye of Shakespeare? 'Twas not he  
Of Stratford is the lord of England's lyre;  
Ay, not the rustic lad, whoe'er it be,  
Momentous in his doing and desire.  
But little Latin and less Greek? Ah, no!  
It was a teeming scholar who enwrought  
The wondrous pages where the wisest go  
For th' culmination of the life of thought.  
No jovial actor, no mere Shakescene who  
Found it so hard his dear name to indite,  
The marvellous pictures of our nature drew  
And limned the universe in his delight.  
We do not know the man; but 'twas not Will  
Whose hand is on the lyre of England still.

Robert Crawford

## Sleep And Death.

Sleep puts sin by, as the grave life's despair;  
And though bad dreams in sleep may come, the soul  
Is tainted not with error, being then  
Beyond the body's shade, as in a sphere  
Like that to which death may remove us when  
The flesh itself is past pollution too.  
It is the waking thought that we must answer,  
When the whole man is up, and the will has play;  
Not any drowsy essence that contrives  
As with an ultramundane faculty  
To act within us when the reason's gone,  
And that, our temporal government, laid aside,  
Our kingdom is left open, as it were,  
Without a deputy, to all the worlds,  
Whose mystic coursers may by stealth enact  
Their wills upon us.

Robert Crawford

## Sleep Compared To The Sea.

The tide comes in, a surge from the great sea,  
And every little muddy creek and inlet  
Now sweltering in the heat, will soon be filled  
With the salt sweetness; even as sleep comes  
After a term of toil to the tired brain,  
A-surge from out the infinite, and fills  
All of life's inlets with a dewy ease.

Robert Crawford

# Song

LOVE, love me only,  
Love me for ever;  
My life's been lonely,  
A joyless endeavour.  
Though earth were heaven,  
I in it for ever,  
Of thee bereaven—  
I'd love again never.

Robert Crawford

## Song #10.

The dew fell on her upturned brow  
That is as white's the lily;  
The moonlight in her yellow hair,  
In her hand a daffodilly;  
The violet's perfume in her breath,  
Her cheeks like roses grew,  
And as I prest her milky hand  
I murmured, 'I love you!'  
She looked at me with eyes that shone  
Like stars among the roses,  
While my heart like a dream-bird sang  
Quick in the dewy closes;  
And with a tone that sweetly thrill'd  
The while I held her hand,  
She whispered, 'I have loved you long,  
And now I understand.'

Robert Crawford

## Song #11.

The past is in us, and we find  
The burden of our being there,  
Who have been built up as the wind  
From dreamy air.

Still all we touch on near and far  
Has had an old beginning, and  
A flower is mystic as a star  
To understand.

Robert Crawford

## Song #12.

I have brought thee all the faith  
That a man can give,  
I have sheltered thee with love,  
O life's fugitive!  
Round thy feet in the dank night  
Death his snare had cast:  
Haply in the future thou  
Wilt forget the past.  
From the cruel thing that would  
E'en have ta'en thy breath  
I have lifted thee in love  
'Yond the doom of death.  
Lean thy breast upon my brain,  
Let thy faint heart beat  
Near me, near me, nearer now,  
my own, my sweet!

Robert Crawford

## Song #14.

Two words or three  
The bird sings in the tree:  
My love was all to me  
When life was young.  
I lie within the green:  
There is not heard or seen  
The light of what has been,  
The song that's sung.

Robert Crawford

## Song #2.

Have I not touched thy spirit?  
Have I not heard it sing?  
And can my love inherit  
A purer, sweeter thing?  
Alas! I am so earthy,  
Yet e'en God's love might be  
Less dear to thee, less worthy  
Than my humanity.

Robert Crawford

## Song #3.

Love's but to be had this way:  
Reverent you must be with her,  
Letting your heart night and day  
Dreamy in her beauty stir.  
God has set her to a tune  
You may never match until,  
Like the moonlight in the moon,  
You with her own passion fill.  
Is she worth this to you, worth  
All that you can think or say —  
The one flower of life on earth?  
If not, put your dream away!  
Close the portals of your speech,  
Let not e'en a fancy stir,  
If your rapture can but reach  
To her beauty — not to her.

Robert Crawford

## Song #4.

They have been here and had this light  
Who in their graves are lying,  
And e'en the youngest life to-night  
Is gradually dying.  
Our birth's a kind of death we have  
When we upon time waken,  
A step still nearer to the grave  
With every breath is taken.  
We are doomed being born, as 'twere  
Decay within us breeding,  
Or e'en as time did groan and bear  
But death's immortal seeding;  
For we are made of stuff that goes  
So easy to decaying,  
'Tis at the best the spirit's clothes  
In which it goes a-Maying.

Robert Crawford

## Song #5.

Never remember what love's been,  
That is the sorrow the world knows;  
Forget it, or the heart too keen  
Will ache and ache to the weary close.  
Harden the heart even to love,  
Or the change in the tender eyes  
Will more than hate or passion move  
The tears to fall, the wrath to rise.  
Once the change comes, dare to forget  
The sweetest truth you've dreamed of her,  
Or the heart will so fret and fret  
That it will have no comforter.  
Turn not on love in the heart's despair,  
For e'en her smiles were bitter then,  
When all her faith is light as air,  
And all her ways are hers again.

Robert Crawford

## Song #6.

We have this life, this love only —  
Kiss me on the mouth, my own!  
Dust we'll soon be through the ages,  
And who'll reck when we are gone?  
Let us take what love can give us;  
We'll find naught more sweet and true  
In this life-time and this love-time,  
In Time's dreamland, I and you.  
What is after's so uncertain,  
Love's the one thing Life has known;  
And, while we have its dream in us,  
Kiss me on the mouth, my own!

Robert Crawford

## Song #7.

You, too, shall know that I have prayed  
Beneath the mystic tree  
Whose branches at the first were made  
Out of God's memory.  
Beneath those boughs my soul has knelt,  
And each leaf bending down  
Stirred with my heart, as it had felt  
A rapture like its own.  
I dared not touch the holy thing,  
But made my prayer a breath  
Intense as is the passioning  
Of lover gone to death —  
Who sees the dark flood he must cross  
Without his love afar,  
And bears with him that bitter loss  
'Where the Eternal are.'

Robert Crawford

## Song #8.

I wonder if, when done with  
Is all earth's pain and care,  
When we at length are one with  
The Dead, and with them bear  
Our part in the new life that  
Is now beyond our ken —  
If we shall then remember  
Our loves, or love again.  
Will, when the flesh is over  
And all its needs are gone,  
The souls of loved and lover  
As in a dream love on?  
Or will they live, but mingle  
No more in the new sphere,  
As they had done for ever  
With all that they were here?  
Will father then and mother,  
Or lover then and friend,  
Be nothing to each other  
When here we make an end  
Of all that we have lived for?  
Or shall our sprites above  
Indeed attain themselves in  
The entity of love?

Robert Crawford

## Song #9.

In the hour when Day reposes  
Like a vision on the sea,  
When thought his tired pinion closes,  
One with hope and memory, —  
On the sand by the sea-roses  
My heart breathes of thee.  
I can gather then from sorrow  
And from joy what dreams may be  
Sweet as those which Love would borrow  
For the tender melody,  
Which like the light of to-morrow  
My heart breathes of thee.

Robert Crawford

## Spirit Fear.

I look with half unfriendly eyes  
Into the casual eyes I meet,  
As if my spirit feared surprise,  
Dim-remembered with some old defeat.  
In a far life it may be, when  
It breathed in a monastic cell,  
And found a fallacy in men  
More sad than any tongue can tell  
Or flashing in a warrior's fame  
A sword for friendship fiercely drew  
But turned to dust an honored name  
And made life's mead a bitter brew.  
And still like an ancestral stain  
The memory on the spirit lies,  
And still it fears to meet again  
The light of those accusing eyes

Robert Crawford

## Spiritual Education.

Within time's stress, amid the facts of life,  
Not in monastic solitudes, we find  
A way to that is higher than ourselves.

Robert Crawford

# Spring.

'Let the light rain on her, the sweet Spring, till  
She teems with greenery in the warm air,  
Flower-hued, and vocal with the tender joy  
Of bleating lambs and young birds on the wing.'  
Thus on the cold hill doth the herdsman pray  
Beneath his frozen star; the milkmaid, too,  
As her raw hands take up the milking-pail,  
And the wind freezes in the red dawn near: —  
'Come, Spring, earth's sap, and mount in me until  
I bloom, a rose of love: smile in mine eyes  
Till my love from his wintry hill shall see  
The star of youth, and leap into my arms!  
O Spring, sweet Spring! but hear my prayer, and I  
Shall build thee bowers of roses on the hill,  
And all the summer there with bird and bee  
Shall joy feast in the beauty of our love!'  
Thus do they chant the wintry time away  
In hill and vale, the two who look to when  
The warmth of beauty takes life's wonder on,  
And the rose of the flesh shall bloom for them.

Robert Crawford

## Summer Dawn.

Come with thy feet to the water, and bathe  
Thy beauty here in the stream that will not pass!  
The soft green leaves with their shadows swathe  
The either bank, and under the ferns and grass  
The dreamy crickets chirp in the dewy dawn,  
Now that the light of the stars has grown  
Into a thin pale mist in the night unknown;  
The small birds twitter, whose senses quite  
Have not yet out of their dreams withdrawn —  
Here where my heart too waits for the light  
Under the cloudy hills that soon will run  
With bright feet in the ways of the sun,  
As if they were but chained to the air:  
Come to me now so fresh and fair —  
Now that the reign of Sleep is done —  
With twinkling feet in the dewy dawn!  
O love, as grass comes to the lawn,  
As day comes to the East, come thou —  
Come to me now!

Robert Crawford

## Supernatural Discernment.

If we could spy into each other, ken  
The heathen aims and the familiar evils  
That in the seeming good and virtuous reign;  
If we could only pierce the fallacy  
Each of the other, strip convention off,  
And in our nakedness strut up and down  
For thought's perusal — what a world 'twould be,  
If then, like God all-seeing, we could come  
Straight to the truth of others and ourselves!

Robert Crawford

## The Blind Reader.

His blindness lends a magic to his fingers,  
As if his seeing subtlety were sensed  
In them, and his wits left his eyes to work  
In the nimble digits as they read for him.

Robert Crawford

## The Bond.

Love me for Love's sake till the dream is done,  
And when we waken let us part for aye!  
No bond but this; it is the better way,  
For life spun so may easy be unspun,  
The gain or loss directly reckoned on  
What is and was; since marriage is no more  
When either heart is like a sapless core  
That has no sense of the maturing sun.  
All comes at last to this, and surely we  
Shall never waken if the dream is true,  
Never put by the heart's reality,  
Nor either ever find another who  
Shall take from us the tender poesy  
Which you have found in me, and I in you.

Robert Crawford

## The Bride.

Her bridal dawn! her heart was fed  
Last night with eerie food,  
As, one by one, her lovers dead  
Came in the solitude,  
And shared the last sad feast with her  
In Beauty's grave, as if it were  
To-morrow, white and cold,  
The ghost of all that she had been  
Would pass away for e'er, as e'en  
Their dreams had died of old.  
Each, with his sigil of despair,  
Moved in the eerie room,  
For all were cognisant (as e'er  
All are beyond the tom  
That one night more the virgin tie  
Which had bound them would be put by,  
As she felt passion's stir  
Throb in her maidenhood, until  
All that she was, for good and ill,  
Became a dream to her.  
And so with mystic eyes and ears  
They came to say good-bye,  
Who had been her bright girlhood's peers  
And knew e'en love must die —  
That it must be a shadow, too,  
As life had long been in the blue  
And golden light above;  
And as each pledged her in the dim  
Remoteness, there came over him  
The last desire of love.

Robert Crawford

# The Bush Aboon Traquair

Hear me, ye nymphs, and every swain,  
I'll tell how Peggy grieves me;  
Though thus I languish and complain,  
Alas! she ne'er believes me.  
My vows and sighs, like silent air,  
Unheeded, never move her;  
At the bonnie Bush aboon Traquair,  
'Twas there I first did love her.

That day she smiled and made me glad,  
No maid seemed ever kinder;  
I thought myself the luckiest lad,  
So sweetly there to find her.  
I tried to soothe my amorous flame,  
In words that I thought tender;  
If more there passed, I'm not to blame,  
I meant not to offend her.

Yet now she scornful flies the plain,  
The fields we then frequented;  
If e'er we meet she shows disdain,  
She looks as ne'er acquainted.  
The bonnie bush bloomed fair in May,  
Its sweets I'll aye remember;  
But now her frowns make it decay,  
It fades as in December.

Ye rural powers, who hear my strains,  
Why thus should Peggy grieve me?  
Oh, make her partner in my pains,  
Then let her smiles relieve me.  
If not, my love will turn despair,  
My passion no more tender,  
I'll leave the Bush aboon Traquair,  
To lonely wilds I'll wander.

Robert Crawford

## The Charm.

O touch her with thy heavenly beams,  
Bright Moon! that she may know  
Within his paradise of dreams  
Love died not long ago.  
Though Helen's eyes are dust, and she  
No more in Ilion sighs,  
Love still is Love (tell her) and we  
Are but his late allies!  
We bear his burning shield and spear,  
True knights in Beauty's war —  
We who are women's offspring here,  
And made for women are.

Robert Crawford

## The Chase.

There is in us a hue and cry,  
The hart of Life is up;  
But when the chase is done, we'll lie  
Where we with Death shall sup.

Robert Crawford

## The Comic Preacher.

'What proof have you the good man is a fool,  
Or that the folly does not rather lie  
With those who mock him?'

'Common sense, sir, must  
Have some weight even in religious things;  
And when a prophet turns comedian,  
God's out of favour.'

Robert Crawford

## The Finer Spirit.

'Tis when the wits I have are gone  
The finer powers appear;  
The spirit of phantasy leads me on,  
And gives my heart her cheer.  
The all-licensed fool the mad king had  
Was but the light of Lear,  
His soul's familiar, motley clad,  
That told him no lies here.

Robert Crawford

# The Flower.

I.

The flower in its own scent breathes till it dies  
As if the scent its very birth-breath were  
(As love is life's) which, while it occupies  
Like a mesmeric light the living air,  
Feeds every portion of the tender hue  
In which it manifests so subtly fair  
The faery form, which as in a dream grew  
Out of the dark earth with ethereal power  
Quickening its limbs, as those of a babe who  
Draws from its mother's life a vital dower  
Of warmth and beauty, thrilling breast and brain  
Till it too comes to birth — a perfect flower  
With its own aura, like a subtle strain  
Which must vibrate to every joy and pain.

II.

The seeing eye and hearing ear are fed  
With nature's nurture, and the mind imbues  
Earth and all things within it, even the dead,  
With its own sap that with thought's mystic hues  
Bourgeons in every waking hour, and e'en  
When sleep does all the inner life transfuse  
With its own radiance, and the unseen  
Becomes a part of us too, as we were  
Back in some other sphere where we had been  
Before the new thought breathed in the old air,  
And the new body budded into birth,  
Making us all that we are now who bear  
The signs in us of all the woe and mirth  
That came and has gone on with man on earth.

III.

Far back in the unstoried past, whose rune  
No sage has ciphered and no bard has sung,  
In the beginning of the sun and moon  
When e'en the oldest hill was very young —  
Ah! then perchance the seed that was us first  
Took root in th' mystic soil whence we have (Unclear  
Under the very hand of God, and burst  
Into the secret being it has had,

All through the enchanted aeons strangely nursed  
From death to life between the good and bad;  
E'en as it were a spirit-germ that grew  
By some mysterious process, and was clad  
E'en like the flowers with varying form and hue,  
Till it ends in what all may end in too!

Robert Crawford

## The Fruit Of Love's Desire.

The fruit of love's desire is sweet  
For any man and maid to eat.  
However ripened in time's air,  
No other can with it compare.  
'Tis like those apples 'of such price,  
No tree can ever bear them twice;'  
And only two may share it, so  
That they would all its sweetness know.  
It is so fine and fair a thing  
And eaten with such passioning,  
The eaters seem themselves to be  
Fed on each other's mystery;  
And when they have the sweet thing ate  
Sigh for the lack of all things yet,  
For once 'tis bitten to the core  
The dearest dream of life is o'er,  
And man and maid within time's waste  
Another such may never taste.

Robert Crawford

# The Ghost Ship.

Behold her on the silent sea,  
Yon vessel like a spirit there!  
Moved in a dream's reality,  
As if she trod the air.  
None can tell from what creek or bay  
She sailed out, or by night or day;  
They watch her like a vision gone  
Over the sea's oblivion.  
And, lo! she fades a spectre thin,  
Part of the moonlight and the sea;  
As if the waves and stars met in  
A moment's phantasy!  
Or is it they stand hushed apart  
And listen to her breathing heart,  
As if the ghostly pulses stirred  
To the voice of a faery bird.  
A bird that chaunts somewhere between  
The waters and the starry skies  
A mystic song of what has been  
Seen not of human eyes  
Since when the world grew into birth,  
And the white Moon enamoured Earth:  
And she as in a vision gone  
Moves to the music on — and on.

Robert Crawford

## The Gleaners.

They sang, that were the young world's gleaners,  
Like birds on a bough,  
Reaping the first-fruits of love's sowing;  
The reapers now  
Are sad, as they to harvest going  
Voice love's vow.  
So much of thought has made us weary,  
We cannot sing  
Now only of the heart's sweet meaning  
In everything,  
As they who in the young world gleaning  
Went caroling.

Robert Crawford

## The Glove Of The Live Lady.

Her glove! It was rare Ben who sung it,  
That best of gloves of the lady dead!  
Another's here, as one had flung it  
In anger at her lover's head.  
Was it but this that it was made for,  
One of a pair perhaps he'd paid for,  
To have it favored in this fashion?  
But gloves are gloves, and passion's passion!  
And he, it may be, liked her better  
For her rich anger as she threw it:  
'Twas worth a glove to so upset her  
And know he had the power to do it,  
So he might kiss the white hands after  
Her passion turned to tears and laughter!

Robert Crawford

# The Hamadryad.

Last night I was like one who prayed  
Beneath a mystic tree  
Whose windless leaves a murmur made,  
As if it there might be  
A spirit in the sap that laid  
Its spell on them and me.  
A creature who, invisible,  
In sorrow and in mirth,  
Through summer's heat or when the chill  
Is on the dreaming Earth,  
Sings as in sleep divinely still  
The secret of its birth.  
(And as it sings, possessed, apart  
From all things far and near,  
The music of its own strange heart  
Is all it seems to hear,  
As if its ardour made an art  
Of its own atmosphere.  
Still none who come there hear the song  
Until their souls are bowed  
Beneath the mystic boughs, among  
Whose living leaves a crowd  
Of spirit voices, weak and strong,  
Sing all that God allowed).  
Oh! wondrous was that faery strain,  
Too holy to be heard  
But by the soul with no profane  
Imagination stirr'd —  
Like a seer when his heart and brain  
Are in the coming word,  
And he bows low before the breath  
Of that which, as a flame,  
All that he is illumineth  
And calls him as by name,  
When one to him are Life and Death,  
One honour and one shame.  
Ah! so possessed I heard them sing,  
The many voices who  
Were the sense of a secret thing

That with the tree-life grew,  
As it did from the same seed spring  
And a dream-breath from it drew —  
The mystic life which God had shut  
Within the dark seed's core,  
Diverse from all that He had put  
In others evermore —  
No hint of death behind it, but  
Of life that is before!  
The tree-life in more lives than this —  
Of that it sings for aye —  
And as I listened the world's hiss  
In silence died away,  
And the perfect life for all that is  
Like a dream on me lay.

Robert Crawford

## The Hill.

The holy lamps of Evening shine  
Sheer in the West — the air is still —  
As I sit with this heart of mine  
At the foot of Parnassus' hill.  
Through my life's day I've reached to this —  
To see where the immortals trod,  
Winding up the dark height, I wis,  
Till they came on the light of God.  
Ah! I, a pilgrim with tired feet,  
Have touched the verge of their renown,  
As I look up on Homer's seat  
And know the bards may not come down.  
Still on those peaks, as powers apart,  
They breathe the air now breathed by me,  
For each has climbed the human heart —  
The deathless hill of Poesy!

Robert Crawford

## The Isles Of Sleep.

The opiate isles upon time's sea  
In the dream-dark  
Rise with their harbours silently  
Before each day-abandoned bark,  
And the worn mariner anchors there  
Till thought, new-waked in the dewy air,  
Sings like a lark.  
The silent isles with their dream-shores  
On the waves float,  
Whereto the faint-eyed mariner oars  
Within the dusk his eerie boat;  
All care put by, like one who knows  
No tide there turns and no wind blows,  
Near or remote!  
From day to day upon time's main  
We sail on so,  
Sure every night some port to gain  
In the dream-dark where no winds blow;  
Until we too this sea have cross'd  
E'en like the galleons that were tost  
Here long ago.  
Some seem each day to sail so far,  
They reach that shore  
So very soon where all things are  
As they will be for evermore;  
Some for so many a night and day  
Have to drift on their lonely way  
Ere all is o'er.  
But all sails touch the land at last:  
The slowest come  
As in a mist out of the past —  
The last dream-isle fades on the foam,  
The last stars rise, the last stars set,  
And there is but the last day yet  
'Tween them and home.

Robert Crawford

# The Joy Of Life.

I have the man's-heart in me, and 'tis noble  
To be alive, to think, to feel, to have  
My part in all the precious come-and-go  
Of all things here. My very blood's a-tune  
With the sweet air; my brain is musical;  
And every appetite, a healthy maw,  
Is satisfied, not cloyed. It is so fair  
A world, so good to be alive. O Time!  
To dance unto the piping of desire,  
To feast each fancy with material fare,  
And then to heaven as in a wink, and be  
Immortal in the paradise of power!

Robert Crawford

## The Lyric Rose.

What other work in the world have I  
Than but to sing my song, and die?  
No other work of hate or love  
For hell below or heaven above!  
As if it were the one thing true  
For me, whatever others do,  
My days and nights to this tune set  
As Romeo to Juliet,  
I put all else within time by;  
For this do live — for this would die,  
If that but haply on my tomb  
A lyric rose should bud and bloom,  
The which some passer-by might swear  
Was precious in its beauty there,  
And, kneeling, might a petal take  
And love it for the Singer's sake!  
A Girl's Desire.

Robert Crawford

# The Old Gods.

O ye gods, if you could tell us  
What ye are — if banned or blest —  
Ye that reigned of old in Hellas!  
Ye that ruled the radiant West!  
Old-born gods! The Past still flashes  
In the eyes of Greece and Rome;  
Ye are not mere dust and ashes  
Urned for all the years to come.  
Ye that ruled in heavenly places,  
And the faith of mortals won!  
Gods created by old races  
Perished from beneath the sun;  
Born of faith, and with it blended,  
Ye shall yet the world inspire  
Till the last breath has ascended  
From the latest altar fire.  
All the hopes and invocations  
Breathed by lips of heroes dead,  
All the genius of the nations  
Who the march of Freedom led —  
Though your temples broke and fell as  
Dusty fanes of little worth —  
These will keep you, gods of Hellas!  
Still alive upon the earth.

Robert Crawford

## The Old Unrest.

That which made us seems to fret  
Like a pang within us yet,  
As if we unfinished were,  
Such blind gropings in us stir,  
As light in an eye grown dim  
That can no more finely limn  
All the senses would impart  
To the sad, mysterious heart,  
Or an ear grown taut that can  
No more tune the tones of man.  
We are still such troubled elves,  
As we were beside ourselves —  
One with Him, it may be, who  
Is as vexed as we are too  
With a mystic malady  
Running through Eternity!

Robert Crawford

## The Orator.

He has a charm that sets each thought to music,  
So rare an utterance, whoso hears him feels  
Even a prosy theme has poesy  
When a magician takes its study on.  
So setting every subject to the tune  
Of a due and endowed delivery,  
The matter and the manner seem to steal  
Like meeting music on the listening ear,  
And crowded benches lurk to linger on  
His latest note, as if a siren sung;  
So sweet a fascination has the power  
Of language when used by an orator.

Robert Crawford

## The Passion Of Love's Power.

Touch me, from out your breast of love,  
With such white hands that be  
As beautiful as a dream of  
Your lips' virginity;  
Or else look pity on my hope,  
And that sweet sorrow shall  
With the pang of departure cope,  
And make amends for all.

Robert Crawford

## The Poem.

These bones have life, and this heart knows  
The poem that this hand has writ  
The wind of God within it blows,  
The light of God, too, shines in it.  
Gather the words as sands, and cast  
Them in the silence of the sphere,  
The imaginary sound shall last  
Till thought grows deaf to all things here  
Ay! then regather, word by word,  
The wonder of the mystic pen,  
And ye shall hear a lonely bird  
Singing within the hearts of men.  
A form, a color, light and air,  
'Tis like the soul — a phantasy  
Which men may picture anywhere  
Till God becomes a memory!

Robert Crawford

## The Poet's Hope.

The wild hope of the poet finds a home  
In the immaterial, as he clothes himself  
In visionary raiment far off, where  
The echoes of eternity are heard  
And the immortal entities appear.

Robert Crawford

# The Poet's Songs.

The copse-wood merely sows  
Itself, not planted;  
And so it is with those  
Strange and enchanted  
Moods that have taken root,  
Bloomed, and e'en borne fruit,  
Or e'er the poet knew't,  
Beauty-haunted.  
The little songs that fly,  
When the lips parted  
Let dreams of ear and eye  
Forth, so warm-hearted:  
Be it a joy or pain,  
Each to chaunt is fain  
What in the parent brain  
Soothed or smarted.  
This is the poet's dower,  
None, none completer;  
As if 'twere Love's own flower,  
Than all flowers sweeter,  
Which, as the seer saith,  
Still breathes a faery breath  
Where Beauty smiles, though Death  
May come to meet her.

Robert Crawford

## The Re-Awakening.

Pan's not dead: the earth but waiteth  
The burst of new life through the old;  
In this way the God still createth  
The sparks that animate the mould,  
Though the dead be so cold.  
From Winter's womb the young year springeth  
When winds and rain away are rolled,  
As the sprite to the body wingeth  
It may be from the starry fold,  
Though the dead be so cold.

Robert Crawford

# The Recuperative Power Of Youth.

She has hope's remedy in being young:  
When age is on, and life has such a fall,  
The efficacy has left that medicine  
Which in youth is so vital.

Robert Crawford

## The Retreat.

Against my lonely latter years  
I'll build a faery home for me —  
Proof against sorrow with its fears,  
And age with its adversity.  
Within a region bosomed high  
Above the ways of worldly men,  
In a demesne where by-and-by  
I oft shall come and go again.  
Ah! there my home in a green nook  
Shall sweetly stand the siege of time,  
Where Thought may read his riddle-book  
As to the murmur of old rhyme.  
And faery footings still shall lead  
My feet among mesmeric ways,  
Where life is like a dream indeed,  
And all the days are summer days.  
But sylphs and fays and simple things  
Shall murmur in my pensive ear,  
Until the change shall come that brings  
Me and my world to ruin here.

Robert Crawford

## The Rustic Life.

Happy are ye who can put by the stress  
Of so much of the trouble worldlings know;  
Ye who seem almost creatures of the woods,  
Now animal and now bird-like amid  
The quiet pleasance of your leafy lives;  
Though sorrow may be yours, and Death will come  
Even like a pilgrim o'er the hills to you.

Robert Crawford

# The Sea Of Time.

On that strange sea  
Where Man's bark moves as toward eternity,  
What sails put forth that are not seen again!  
.... Joyous it may be, or in pain,  
The mariner doth drive still on and on  
Beneath no mortal star,  
And to no mortal port — as one  
Who may but anchor somewhere so afar,  
Not himself recks if he shall reach no more  
In that tremendous sea another shore:  
He is so like a wave himself at last,  
He would toss through the future as the past —  
But tethered as a whale is to a wave,  
So he might still the one life have  
Through all the changes that may be  
On that tremendous sea!

Robert Crawford

## The Song-God.

The Song-god helps me mightily, and runs  
Before life's purpose like a primal power,  
Spirit in sense of all that I am still;  
Whose flame burns in the heart, consuming there  
The growth of that desire whose grossness would  
Darken a dedicated soul, until  
Within a sensuous lethargy it grew  
Void of the God whose utterance is all.

Robert Crawford

## The Storm.

I can hear the great boughs swing  
Through the stormy night,  
Each a dryad-haunted thing  
With its dark delight,  
As within an old-world air  
When the Gods were everywhere.  
All the wood seems to be up  
At some eerie play,  
Wild as Bacchanals whose sup  
Had all through the day  
Been a deep one, as they roar  
With the waves upon the shore.  
'Tis in sooth as Pan, too, mad  
For fair Syrinx fled,  
Had from Hades come, and had  
Brought with him the dead  
Who of old had worshipped him  
To a midnight revel grim.  
Or is it that Syrinx too,  
From the reed restored,  
Romps it as the satyrs do  
With her now-loved lord?  
And is this the night of nights,  
And are these their marriage rites?  
Who shall say? The great boughs swing,  
As Time in a whirl  
Did to the dark forest bring  
The goat-god and his girl,  
With the earth-enamoured crew  
For a mystic hour or two.  
Till amid the tumult I  
Fall asleep, like one  
Who had put the ages by  
In a dream begun  
Far back in another sphere,  
Ere my 'wilderer soul came here!  
Ah! the dream that may indeed  
Outlive all I know,  
When like one whom Fate has freed

I through Hades go,  
And see the great vision cast  
On the future by the past.

Robert Crawford

## The Stream.

God but knows what path  
This small stream must take,  
Through what gleams and glooms  
Which the years shall make.  
In what ways austere  
May these waters glide  
Ere they have their part  
In the timeless tide!

Robert Crawford

## The Sundowner.

So He will at the last, too, gather all,  
As in the bush a traveller for his fire  
Sticks and dry leaves, as eerie the light fades;  
Till from those sticks and leaves there comes a flame,  
Beside which in a weird infinity  
The man will sit and gather lonely thoughts.  
So He will at the last, too, gather all,  
The great Sundowner in a painless sphere.

Robert Crawford

# The U.S. Air Force

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,  
Climbing high into the sun  
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder  
At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun!  
Down we dive, spouting our flame from under  
Off with one helluva roar!  
We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!  
Nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force!

Minds of men fashioned a crate of thunder  
Sent it high into the blue  
Hands of men blasted the world a-sunder  
How they lived God only knew!  
Souls of men dreaming of skies to conquer  
Gave us wings, ever to soar!  
With scouts before And bombers galore.  
Nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force!

Here's a toast to the host  
Of those who love the vastness of the sky,  
To a friend we send a message of his brother men who fly.  
We drink to those who gave their all of old  
Then down we roar to score the rainbow's pot of gold.  
A toast to the host of men we boast, the U.S. Air Force!

Off we go into the wild sky yonder,  
Keep the wings level and true  
If you'd live to be a grey-haired wonder  
Keep the nose out of the blue!  
Flying men, guarding the nation's border,  
we'll be there followed by more!  
In echelon we carry on, Hey!  
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Robert Crawford

## The Unborn.

Ah God! for those who are coming,  
The millions who yet must be!  
Thine Earth like a hive has been humming  
So long with anxiety:  
Such a deal of confusion and trouble,  
Thousands so poor and unfed ....  
They are coming to starve on the stubble  
Where hosts of the ages are dead!

Robert Crawford

## The Wind O' Death.

Oh! we hae a' to die, dear,  
We're a' to gang awa';  
We, when Death's wind blows by, dear,  
Like apples hae to fa';  
Howe'er we may be clinging,  
Be green or rosy hinging,  
When we hear the wind singing  
A glamour's over a'.  
We drap unto the ground, dear,  
Each frae the boughs we fa',  
When we hear the wind sound, dear,  
The voice in the wind ca'!  
It comes through leagues o' heaven,  
A dream-joy to it given,  
It comes at morn or even  
Wi' the glamour over a'.  
We'll wait for it to blow, dear —  
How sweet the birdies ca'!  
The flowers come and go, dear,  
There's peace atween us twa:  
The love-light round us clinging,  
'Tis sweet, together hinging,  
To wait for the wind's singing  
Wi' the glamour over a'.

Robert Crawford

## Theory And Practice.

He has ta'en on a theory, and into it  
Striven to work his life — a false affair;  
For every thought and feeling cannot be,  
Like a mosaic, cut and trimmed to suit  
Any particular design, however  
Grand or beautiful.

Robert Crawford

## This Life.

This life that glides away  
As in a night and day —  
This that is shade and shine from Night brought forth  
To Night returning on a cloudy wing,  
As if it took with it out of the earth  
Everything!  
A specimen of Time — a fact  
Which hope and fear have verified,  
Whate'er the after aeons may enact,  
Whate'er has been or will be thought of here;  
Something that must still in itself abide  
As if in its own sphere.  
Oh! who can sing it — the immaterial I,  
One with the earth, one with the sky?  
It is so brief, so everlasting too,  
So all apart from Him and You —  
This that within itself contains  
The first and last of all we hear and see,  
Time centred in Eternity  
With all its joys and pains,  
Its hopes and fears through all the years  
That still like an ethereal dew  
Fall on the senses, which therethrough  
Still gloom and gleam — This that is as apart  
As the Universal Heart,  
That re-absorbs itself, as if it were,  
Beyond all praise and prayer  
Within its own immensity —  
This patent, yet impalpable ME  
Like a divine thing in a mystic mart  
Trading on its own authenticity ...  
It cannot sing itself, self-dumb  
'Mid the world's hum,  
Though vocal in all else, as thought  
Embodied in itself all things,  
Yet left the Thinker by himself apart  
As in a region whose  
Shadows and lights confuse  
The semblances of his identity

With mystic movements, eerie vanishings;  
Until his being seems to be  
A very dream, imbued  
With some primeval mood  
In which weird pictures of the soul appear,  
Grotesque and crude  
As the first rude  
Conceits of the untutored eye and ear  
In prehistoric breathings fraught  
With all the little there was then  
Divine in thought.  
It cannot sing itself, and yet  
Pourtraying the world's heart  
It has, as if it were, command  
Of an interior land  
Untraced on any mortal chart,  
Beneath a sky whose sun has never set  
Since first Thought's eastern curtains drawn  
Let in the dawn  
Of the illusive light by which we know  
That we are here, and go  
To a most certain end not far away!

Robert Crawford

# Thought.

How mystical is thought! We do but think,  
Be it of heaven or hell, and we are there!  
Such feet has phantasy, more fleet than light,  
We flash ourselves away where'er we will,  
And in a wink return we know not how.  
It is our Genius haply makes it all —  
The vision of the things we seem to see,  
Which yet are not, or were not, had we not  
The miracle of thought within us still,  
Like Love's begetting, making all things new,  
And still unmaking all we have done with;  
So with creative joy as in a dream  
Folding us in ourselves, as if it were,  
Who are still one with all that we have made,  
Revisioning the mystic entities  
As each one reads as with undying eyes  
The hyacinthine wonder of the soul,  
As if alone in an enchanted isle  
On the meridian of his own desire.

Robert Crawford

## Thought's Assiduity.

Be not afraid of facts; they must be faced,  
And thought must in the affairs of circumstance  
Untangle many a knotty point, decide  
Grave issues, and so tend life's business that  
She runs not into debt with hope and fear,  
Doubt's brokers or emotion's merchants, and  
So bankrupt's her estate that, inly poor,  
Not all conceit or custom's bravery  
Can long ward off the wretched hour that gives  
Her beggary, like an evil odour, to  
The casual air, and taints the time with her.

Robert Crawford

## Thought's Austerity.

Alas! in this bare life thought is austere,  
And only when the dream-clouds cover us  
And we breathe phantasy's sweet airs, we take  
Contentment, though 'tis visionary, on,  
And find some miracle of beauty still  
To charm us from the savour of ourselves.

Robert Crawford

## Thought's Garden.

I have within Thought's garden sat  
And played with this sweet flower and that,  
And touched my lute till each soft string  
Was tuned to Love's remembering.  
Then in the grass I've laid me down  
And woven my heart a faery crown,  
As one who in a dream might be  
Intoxicate with poesy.  
Until I felt my being grow  
Pure as a flower, as white as snow,  
Though through it did a rosy streak  
The passion of my love bespeak.  
And I would feed on fancies then  
Till I came back to time again,  
Like one who on a fragrant way  
Had parted with the golden Day;  
And in the twilight wandering home  
Did then as to Love's cabin come,  
And found within a mate who made  
A glory of the coming shade!

Robert Crawford

## Three In A Shade.

Here we sit, and blind Desire  
Plays his spinet in the shade.  
How is it our fancies tire?  
Why is it our hearts afraid,  
Cower, as with trembling wing  
'Neath the grey hawk Time that flies  
Where the phantom colours cling  
To the ever-fading skies?  
Is it with all things but thus?  
In our hearts when we were born  
Young Desire laughed with us,  
So, so old now and forlorn  
As he sits, an eerie elf  
In the wizard airs that stir,  
With a man so like himself  
And the ghost of what you were.

Robert Crawford

## Threnody.

Dark Pine that moanest long,  
Sad, solitary tree!  
As if the world's wrong  
A tongue had found in thee,  
Sad as when Ariel  
Cursed by the witch's spell  
Endured his pitiable  
Period of misery.  
When will time's Prospero  
Come with his cure for thee?  
The world in weary woe  
Wails for its liberty.  
Till it shall look above  
Unto the heavenly Love  
Nothing the world may move,  
Sin-shut in Sorrow's tree!

Robert Crawford

# To A Baby.

I.

Two hands that hold the world in fee,  
So tender, yet so bold:  
Whatever life has now for me,  
Two hands that hold.  
What magic lies in them enroll'd —  
What wondrous alchemy  
Transmuting thus life's lead to gold!  
Until that thought shall cease to be,  
Until my heart is cold,  
I'd only clasp (how tenderly!)  
Two hands that hold.

II.

Two soft blue eyes whose light has lit  
Two hearts, as stars that rise —  
Love's lights within the infinite,  
Two soft blue eyes.  
No fancy may their charm surmise,  
But those who have felt it  
Breathe as it were in Paradise.  
Life's meanings there like shadows flit,  
As in a dream's disguise  
Two spirits lurked in them — to wit,  
Two soft blue eyes.

Robert Crawford

## To Lynette.

God knows that I love you, I love you, and yet  
He knows, too, I'm weary, Lynette, O Lynette!  
He gave me the love-feeling, the tired feeling, too;  
Will He take them together, and part me from you?  
Could I sleep for a hundred sun-seasons, and then  
Wake ... would you be waiting to kiss me again?  
To live still and love you, life-weary ... and yet  
Would even Death charm me without you, Lynette!

Robert Crawford

# Toward The Close

Time grows upon us until we exhaust  
Hope's possibilities, and then we die  
Who thus of life each make a holocaust  
Till all we have in nature is put by.  
No one survives himself, and none can so  
Reclaim the sentiment of youth that he  
Would like a fallen leaf re-budded grow  
On the bare bough of joy's mortality.  
Oh! in what charms may death himself reveal  
When the life-instinct turns at last to him  
For supreme succour, for the power to heal  
That sickness of our days when all grows dim!  
More fragrant than than roses, sweeter far,  
The airs that come from the old darkness are.

Robert Crawford

## True Love.

It is the very tune of hearts, and rhythms  
To all occasions truly musical.  
He sticks as fast to her each whim as does  
The scarabaeus to its curious ball,  
As if life's very destiny were in it;  
And as the thing would rather die than part  
With what occasions her so much turmoil,  
I swear by what I now of true love know,  
He'd dare even death rather than banished be  
From her who has become a part of him.

Robert Crawford

# Truth.

We sometimes hap on truth in a strange attire,  
As even the gods were wont for their designs  
To take on bestial forms; subduing so  
Their natures, even their divinity,  
To the achievement of a mortal thing.

Robert Crawford

## Urania's Lover.

O poet, thou art called to tread her ways,  
Hers, mistress of the soul, Urania fair.  
(Ah God! how fair, how all adorable,  
But those who have wooed her can tell!)  
All of thy nights and days,  
All of thy light and air,  
Hers only, so thy soul shall haply win  
Grace in those eyes  
That goddess-wise  
Smile in that heaven man's highest have enter'd in.  
Thou'rt called to Love's high hest, soul-wooer thou  
Of the divinest beauty man may know —  
Soul-wooer and soul-winner, so thy feet  
Fail not nor falter, so earth's cheat  
Clip not thy burning brow  
With its chill wreath, and so  
Darken the heavenly light within the brain;  
But let thy forehead be  
Starred with pure poesy,  
So thou to her high mystery attain.  
Thy love a Goddess and her heaven thy home!  
By the ethereal beauty in those eyes,  
O poet! bless the loss of all things here  
So but thy soul in that fine sphere,  
Beloved of her, may roam  
No more with wandering cries —  
At last may bow before her face, and be,  
Though woman-born, divine,  
When all of hers is thine,  
And thou a star of God's ascendancy.  
Ah! through that heaven shall not the wonder trail  
Of thy first worship, like a comet's hair  
Leagues on leagues floating from the flying star?  
Shall not thy first faint steps afar  
Move like a being pale  
Amid the glory there  
Up to the voiceless beauty of her brow,  
As thou dost see, as 'twere,  
Thy whole life with her there —

See from that height the depth where thou art now?

Robert Crawford

# Winged Words

The winged words, they pass  
Still everywhere,  
Seeds of the spirit-grass  
The dream-winds bear  
From that heart-field to this,  
Where thought as feeling is;  
There's not a seed will miss  
Life, once sown there.

They pass, the faery words,  
In shade and shine,  
As they were magic birds  
This heart of mine  
Gave shape and colour to,  
As in the light and dew  
The primal creatures grew  
From germs divine.

Robert Crawford

# Wisdom.

There are some things in life are very poor,  
And some unpriceable: our wisdom is  
To know our rubbish and our riches here;  
To, as it were, sort out ourselves, and blow  
The world's dust off the jewels that we have,  
Revealing them.

Robert Crawford

## Womanhood.

She feels the world, it touches her  
Like a weird thing she needs must know,  
While all her fears and fancies stir  
As in a death-dream long ago.  
She has passed from her youth to this —  
A woman grown with misty eyes,  
Knowing the world no nunnery is  
For the heart stripped of its disguise.  
Her feet now pace a thorny path  
Where mournful hopes like fiends confer,  
And e'en the power her beauty hath  
Seems one with what would ruin her.

Robert Crawford

## Women.

Alas! we women are the fools of you:  
You mould us and you mar us — we are yours,  
And ever have been since the birth of love,  
Flowers cherished for a while, soon to be cast  
As weeds away; and yet as weeds in the mire  
Our fading hues breathe to the last of you.

Robert Crawford

## Work.

For thyself work, not for another, so  
'Tis possible; else all thy worth is his  
Whose maybe paltry payment scarce serves to  
The base sufficing of thy bed and board:  
And all thy days to this sad use are given,  
Till age or sickness shall subdue thy pith,  
And put thee on the Jewish mercy of  
The monstrous world, ere like a brute's, alas!  
Thy poor remainder finds a burial.

Robert Crawford

## Youth And Age.

The last fruit off a tree is oft more sweet  
And finely flavoured than the first, and so  
Within life's autumn men may pleasures pluck  
As sweet as youth's, and more sufficing than  
The rank and rare enjoyments of the boy.

Robert Crawford

## Youth's Inexperience.

He is too young yet to know life's demands;  
Being no natural philosopher,  
He must from cause and custom draw that art  
Which some of Nature have, the primal gift  
Of all her treasury — the open thought  
That climates in all circumstances, and breathes  
A native ease in everything; fear-proof,  
Even as a wild bird's weather-proof, being born  
And bred light as the leaves he habits in;  
Unlike his brother housed and finely reared  
With magisterial care, whom every change  
Affects like a distemper, as if he  
Had lost his nature's ancient art, and grew  
Like an exotic with a borrowed life.

Robert Crawford