

## ABSENCE

JAMES NELSON GOWANLOCH

Just as a sailor, in an alien sea,  
Hears through his masts the impatient northern wind;  
Or, at the Pleiads' rising, turns to find  
The silver beauty of their charact'ry  
Barred by black mountain tops of Barbary;  
Quick longs he then for Cyprus and the lights  
That scarf her circled hills, the homing flights  
Of sunset ships to harbour, swift and free.

So long I, O Beloved, with thee again  
To watch the moon's broad silver on the hills,  
Or see her slenderest seaward crescent stand  
Sharp in the azure, while the slow surf fills  
Our pause of speech, and from the darkening land  
Comes, slow re-echoing, the sea's refrain.