

FROM THE SICK-ROOM

FRANCES BEATRICE TAYLOR

He is like a dark dream there in the doorway
Sworded and cloaked and spurred, and ready to ride:
And I hold for weapon my tired hands and eyelids,
And nothing beside.

But every night, with the long hush of the evening
He comes again by meadow and wood and lawn:
The white stars and the white moths fly over your garden
From dusk to dawn.

I have brought wild almond bloom to make you a pillow—
Have you no thought for yesterday at all
That you lie so still, listening, listening, listening,
Lest this stranger call?

O little Young Heart, Young Heart, like a broken flower,
Scarcely stirred by the old, sweet, passionate name,
Why do you turn to him, so arrayed against us
With your eyes aflame?

He is but a dark dream there in the shadows,
Lonely his road beyond an unknown gate:
I will lead you again on dear, familiar journeys,
O Young Heart, wait!

I know a wood where the golden birds are flying,
I know a wood of wise, unhurrying trees:
Lovelier than the clamorous songs of Eden,
The quiet of these.

Poor hands, be strong to guard this wavering taper;
Poor, naked hands, make no truce with the foe;
Till the white moths rest, till the white stars turn and falter,
Till the creak crow.

The sunrise clouds are a flight of irised pigeons;
Dark, by wood and lawn and meadow he goes.
And the young wind touches your mouth, as the early summer
Touches the rose.

Fold my hands, now, till the last tourney:
(Oh! Pitiful shield of kind, accustomed things).
Would God you had not heard, as he trod the morning,
The beat of wings.