

Mocking the shepherd's note or bold to sing  
Of Tityrus 'neath the broad and beechen shade.

Yet, O Apollo, witness, 'twas constraint  
Of heavenly passion led me in your train  
To be your priest and with the Muses move  
Rapt by the sacred secret of your rites,  
And colour of your mystic pageantry,  
Flush'd faces of the faithful, holy things  
Held high in reverent hands, rose-blossomed rods,  
And slender swaying lilies pure and tall !  
The poet's life may oft seem indolent,  
Inactive, uneventful, self-absorbed,  
But he must gain the mastery of his art  
Like other craftsmen by unsparing toil  
And steel himself to suffer, if he would see  
Fair offspring of his travail of the soul,  
Or skill to ken, what only quiet may,  
For still the Muses haunt the brooding mind,  
In noontide meditation, watch of night,  
The one in many that makes the many one,  
Something that underlies our rainbow dreams,  
The pattern of the web of all the world.

And I too in my shy sequestered life  
Have suffered, and known many and mighty haps,  
Persons, events, and watched in signal scenes  
The tragi-comedy of history,  
Brawls, feuds, strifes, plots, traps, stabs, intrigues, revolts,  
Intestine agony, civil and foreign war,  
Rule of the basest, murder of the best,  
Famine and rapine, and 'mid sign and portent  
The universe convulsed, and East and West  
In immemorial duel ranged once more  
Disturb and drench with blood and havoc new  
The bleaching bones of their old battlefields ;