

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 ;