

## THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL

### VI

**I**N Reading gaol by Reading town  
There is a pit of shame,  
And in it lies a wretched man  
Eaten by teeth of flame,  
In a burning winding-sheet he lies,  
And his grave has got no name.

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,  
In silence let him lie :  
No need to waste the foolish tear,  
Or heave the windy sigh :  
The man had killed the thing he loved,  
And so he had to die.

And all men kill the thing they love,  
By all let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word,  
The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword !