

With a glance, that night watches at sea for friends or foes in the darkness,
 As perilous one well nigh as the other—descried in the distance,
 Spark faintly following spark, and he knew that their quest was accomplished,
 Not so his mayhap—for the fearful heart of a lover
 Dreams a thousand mishaps that shall wither his joy, as he grasps it.

Even then an hour had well nigh passed ere they reached it,
 And tore down the snow from the door, while the mighty heart, that in battle
 And peril of reef or storm, faced death like a pastime, was drumming
 The trembling ribs of a coward at the stillness of death in the house-hold.

Bolted fast was the door from the weather's wrath, and the summons
 Rapped out once, twice, thrice, brought no answer; and batter the door down
 None dare on such a night for they knew they should need it thereafter.
 Rap on, thunder, Despair! and thunder again! Then listen!
 Listen for all your lives, not so much as a shiver to rustle,
 Lest ye should miss the stir that tells of the half-aroused sleeper!
 Listen! thunder! listen! Ah joy! for a trembling footstep,—
 These be weak hands that are too weak for drawing a doorbolt!
 Hark! another tremble! Another tremulous footstep—
 The creak of a wooden bolt—then bliss—and dread—and a meeting!
 An old man swaddled in rags—he had slept in his rags to foster
 The spark of vital warmth that starvation and stinting of blankets
 Sucked from his veins, a spectre with wild blue eyes, and its features,
 The resolute clear cut features of Jonathan Sherwood, crumpled