

Home to his barrack afar, and the stolen dog to his master,
 Told him the road that night: for the trees were uncut save a stray one
 Standing midway in an opening that Nature had left for a roadway;
 And the Stars were muffled in storm, and the wheel-ruts lost in the snow-
 drift;

And strong men began to murmur "we have lost the road! we have passed it!
 We have our wives and children! for us too life has its promise."
 But the carter swore "not yet have we traversed the distance, and surely
 This is the way."

And Lester, his great love burning within him,
 The love which had been his beacon for ten long years on the waters,
 Through all his battles and storms, had pictured the love of his boyhood
 Buried alive in a snow-whelmed house with her soft cheeks paling
 With terror and harsh, coarse food—the pork and the beans and potatoes,—
 And swore that the sleighs should go on; and that he who would forward no
 further

Must stop in the snow—swift, certain death—and when he, who was loathest
 Snatched the reins in an open place from the carter, to turn them,
 Seized him with one strong hand, and swung him into the snowdrift,
 Twelve good feet from the sleigh, and, drawing a well-primed pistol,
 "This" he said "for the next who lays hands on the reins, or the carters."
 So they toiled against hope, and hoped against Fate, until midnight
 Slipped past them toiling still, and barely three leagues from their halting,
 Though the storm had passed, and the sky was unclouded amethyst darkness.
 Still they toiled—then joy—for, shading his eye, the ship-captain,