

Oh, little song whose melody
Walks in my heart and stumbles so;
I cannot bear the level nights,
And all the days are over-long,
And all the hours from dark to dark
Turn to a little song — ”

“Like the beat of the falling rain,
Until there seems no roof at all,
And my heart is washed with pain — ”

“Why is a woman’s throat a bird,
White in the thicket of the years? — ”

Sheila suddenly thrust back the leaves at him, hid her face, and fell to crying bitterly. Dickie let fall his poems; he hovered over her, utterly bewildered, utterly distressed.

“Sheila — h-how could they possibly hurt you so? It was your song — your song — Are you angry with me —? I could n’t help it. It kept singing in me — It — it hurt.”

She thrust his hand away.

“Don’t be kind to me! Oh — I am ashamed! I’ve treated you *so*! And — and snubbed you. And — and condescended to you, Dickie. And shamed you. You —! And you can write such lines — and you are great — you will be very great — a poet! Dickie, why could n’t I see? Father would have seen. Don’t touch me, please! I can’t bear it. Oh, my dear, you must have been through such long, long misery — there in Millings, behind that desk — all stifled and cramped and shut in. And when I came, I might have helped