

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

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BLACK shadows fall
From the lindens tall,
That lift aloft their massive wall
Against the southern sky;

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And from the realms
Of the shadowy elms
A tide-like darkness overwhelms
The fields that round us lie.

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But the night is fair,
And everywhere
A warm, soft vapour fills the air,
And distant sounds seem near;

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And above, in the light
Of the star-lit night,
Swift birds of passage wing their flight
Through the dewy atmosphere.

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I hear the beat
Of their pinions fleet,
As from the land of snow and sleet
They seek a southern lea.

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I hear the cry
Of their voices high
Falling dreamily through the sky,
But their forms I cannot see.

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O, say not so!
Those sounds that flow
In murmurs of delight and woe
Come not from wings of birds.