

And now the mother satisfied, as one  
With strongest wine, rose up, and ope'd the door.  
She looked abroad a moment, then went out  
Into the silent air. The deep ravine  
Was glorious white. The mighty pines were robed  
As if prepared to sing in heaven's choir  
On earth, when strong the northern tempest blew.  
The widow, vigour getting for a little  
From the frosty air, admired the scene,  
And lifting up her eyes to sparkling worlds  
Above, she felt assured, though human help  
And pity wholly failed, that somewhere, sometime,  
There was plenteous rest.

And yet she thanked  
And praised the Power that good and evil gave,  
For one brief cup of pleasure, if no more—  
Her pleasure in her darling boy. "Take him,  
O Lord, whatever portion mine."

The tension loosed,  
The stricken widow turned, yet ere she turned  
She scanned the northern shore of brilliant night,  
And, lo, a mountain mass of tempest clouds  
Lined up for battle with the sleeping south.  
The woman, fearless, smiled as if in kinship  
With the coming storm.

But having struggled, spoken,  
Pleaded strong, her transient vigour gone,  
She stumbled to the door and entered in.  
Beside the bed, she saw the letters written  
On the board, as if the sacred writing  
On the wall. She saw the slender lovely hand  
Exposed that wrote them, and she bowed and kissed it,  
But she could not weep.