

Was he deluded, he that seemed so sane,
That life so noble, was it lived in vain?
Who doubts the sanity of Socrates
Might fitly deem the whole wide world insane.

A FIG TREE grew outside a city wall,
A stately tree, with massive trunk and tall,
Whose noble branches spread athwart the road,
And gave their wealth of welcome shade to all.

Beneath that tree a goodly stranger strayed,
And on its kindly growth his curse he laid,
With awful ban he cursed each quivering limb,
His followers heard, astonied and dismayed.

Why should the Master curse that helpless tree
That grew beside the road to Calvary?
Why should the voice, so oft in blessing heard,
Pronounce so strange and ruthless a decree?

Did he, the Seer, foresee that lonely way
Thick with the Roman legion's stern array?
Mark, as they paused to fell the lifeless tree,
And shape the cross whereon in death he lay?

We know not, but we know that Jesus died,
And—claiming godhead—he was crucified:
Was it a man, who hanged on Calvary,
Or very God, whom doubting Jews denied?

And still across the distant years we see
The twilight garden of Gethsemane;
And still we hear that last pathetic cry
Of him who died upon the fatal tree.

The everlasting drama lives again;
The agony of more than human pain,
The sweat that fell in blood drops to the ground,
Are these the tale of some disordered brain?