

Why need I make an answer? Ah, that I
Might only let those questions pass me by!
But no, the fatal riddle of the Sphinx
Rings in my ears and haunts me night and day.
I am a slave to every mystery,
I am not free until I understand.
As one who, dreaming, finds himself alone,
Standing upon the vast mid-ocean's wave,
Nor land, nor log, nor any sail in sight,
And knows his puny steps toward any land
Would be as nought on those long leagues of Sea
That touch the empty sky on every side—
So, many a time find myself alone
Upon the strange and all-mysterious sea
Of this existence—wondering whence I came
And whither I shall go, in fear the while
Lest the waves whereon I stand should suck me down.
And then I think this too is but a dream,
And I shall wake at last and know the Truth.
I seek in Happiness the Why of life,
To find my quest is all in vain, for what
Is Happiness but that beyond our reach?
I look to Nature for man's destiny,
And there I learn that like the little flower
He fade and perishes, his season o'er,
Or passes like a drifting summer-cloud
Which leaves no mark upon the heaven's blue.
And yet again this answer comes to me:
As when beneath a woodland waterfall
Bubbles are formed, to float upon the pool,
Some sparkling in the sunshine down, and some
Drifting within the shadow of a bank—