

Alexander Search
THE MAIDEN

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A form of Beauty came once to me,
A sweeter thing than earth or sea
Or anything that is Time's contains
Or shows to our heart that has pains.

It went and I rose to seek it afar,
I walked wide and long in my lofty care,
And I asked the passers-by on the way:
«Have ye seen this maiden? oh, say! oh, say!»

And they cried all: «No, we have felt the wind
Breathe in the blossom things undefined,
We have seen the soft leaves tremble and kiss
As memories thrilled of a vanished bliss.»

I asked a wanderer by the road:
«Hast thou seen the maiden I seek abroad'?»
«No; I have seen the moonlight», he said,
«Rest like a thought on the graves of the dead.»

And I asked of others: «Know ye the maid
Whose beauty but ignored can fade?»
«No», said they; «than skies and flowers
We know naught fairer that is ours.»

And far I went and I asked of all:
None knew her on whom I did call;
They had felt the breathing of lone winds low
Tremble like lips in loves first glow.

They had seen the grass and the trees and flowers
Bloom as things whose life is but hours;
And they had looked back on their little way
And trees and flowers were in decay.

Then I asked a madman who had no home,
And he said: «Alas for thee who dost roam!
Thou must become as I am now
For her thou seekest none can know.

She lives in a region beyond all love
All human sighing far above;
In a palace there on a dream-wrought throne
She reigns eternally alone.

She maketh the poet's mind to pine,
She seeketh him once with a kiss divine,
And longing eternal follows that kiss
And pain is the blessing of her caress.»

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