

## *Gift of the Heart*

*Upon a mounted glass transfixed, exposed  
to beak-filled eyes, I search the morning dark.  
My precious Muse somnolent, languorous, reposed  
in feathered bed, while crowfoot age lines stark  
as cracks upon my haggard visage grow.*

*No gift of worth can I afford this day,  
if worth be judged by that which worth would buy.  
Yet Heaven gave to me to give away  
a steadfast heart and never wav'ring eye,  
like mangroves planted fast within the flow.*

*The State of Empty Pockets my demesne,  
with countless paupers govern impecune,  
my want to share with wretches and the mean,  
and with the wan of every jealous moon,  
Does likewise fade 'til aught of wealth is left.*

*No precious coins I own, nor silver spilt  
To overflow, or miser'd in a vault.  
Though conscience never far nor free of guilt,  
No arbitrage I count in lists of fault.  
Of earthly wealth I stand at most bereft.*

*The strife of time and life imparts rude shocks.  
Our youthful play turns withered gray with care.  
Where once embraced by birthright care of flocks,  
now weights we shoulder, joyless burdens bear,  
To Predator consign the ingrate weak.*

*The color of the heart is red, the hue  
Of blood and fire, and hence of passion hot.  
Yet oft' does febrile passions burn untrue  
as tawdry lust or hate, to blight the rose  
that solitary bloomed on landscape bleak.*

*But She, to me the mirror, lens and glass,  
To span the Heavens' skiey distance there,  
As to my eye the sun on polished brass,  
The brilliance of the angels I can bear  
And heartened thus once more take up my staff.*

*The barbed wire fences wrought of pain we share.  
To her alone my eyes are fast affixed.  
To her, the avatar of love and care,  
a blessed bridge placed earth and sky betwixt  
on which we dare to fail or fall, yet laugh.*

*Though still to solid flesh and earth is bound,  
in sleep, and prayer, and love does skyward yearn  
this signal pulse, by tender touch and sound  
expressed, the Apollonian flames that starlike burn  
in darkest night, or scorching of the day.*

*Thus, worthless heart is priceless heart; for heart  
is where my earthbound spirit dwells until  
the light of Heaven calls for it to part,  
to homeward wing upon the aether still,  
emerging Gift from carapace of clay.*