

To A Lady Vanished

Set true the arching lever to
Vault my cry over the bar of heaven
So heart may fly where image fled
And deliver me from blank oblivion

This sudden poverty of earth
That robs sure footed Achilles of his post
and sends him stumbling blind
Like old Tiresias
Shorn of prophecies,

A mere bumbling fool, no longer sage
In bluff assault on love's poor wage,
So now, not just blind but deaf and mute
A poor pensioner of dreams
In love's repute

How pale appears the brow where fevered dreams
sickly flailed the heart's disrepair
And stole monuments upon the air
And grasped the empty spaces from whence she fled
Informing them with her fair visage
Poor counterfeits of that sweet scrimmage
That in too brief ascent upon the air,
Gains no purchase there
And words, unwinged, drop in sick despair.

Where once they stood before the wall
All hopes arrayed, host on host
Now stand they confused before vanished Ilium's ghost
Its high parapet offering no impediment.
No fortress now, no clarion call
Banished beyond the grasp
Of memory and sight
And the echo all evaporate.

Yet still I stand before that vanished gate
Wherein her sweet form did teach
my duty in faithful pedagogy, and my ache,
this sea of sorrow to break
upon a vanished shore.

No athlete, no sage, no warrior fleet
of form and strong of limb
Can prize her to this meet
Where contests have grown dim
And love conspires in memory's defeat.
To banish love and not memories deceit

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