

“*Ne Me Tangito*” [Don’t touch Me]

“This man . . . Would have known who and what manner of woman this is: for she is a sinner.”—*S. Luke* vii.39

Odd, *You* should fear the touch,  
The first that I was ever ready to let go,  
I, that have not cared much  
For any toy I could not break and throw  
To the four winds when I had done with it. You need not fear the touch,  
Blindest of all the things that I have cared for very much  
In the whole gay, unbearable, amazing show.

True—for a moment—no, dull heart, you were too small,  
Thinking to hide the ugly doubt behind that hurried puzzled little smile:  
Only the shade, was it, you saw? but still the shade of something vile:  
Oddest of all!

So I will tell you this. Last night, in sleep,  
Walking through April fields I heard the far-off bleat of sheep  
And from the trees about the farm, and not very high,  
A flight of pigeons fluttered up into an early evening mackerel sky.  
Someone stood by and it was you:  
About us both a great wind blew.  
My breast was bared  
But sheltered by my hair  
I found you, suddenly, lying there,  
Tugging with tiny fingers at my heart, no more afraid:  
The weakest thing, the most divine  
That ever yet was mine,  
Something that I had strangely made,  
So then it seemed —  
The child for which I had not looked or ever cared,  
Of whom, before, I had never dreamed.