

“Pêcheresse”

Down the long quay the slow boats glide,
While here and there a house looms white
Against the gloom of the waterside,
And some high window throws a light
As they sail out into the night.

At dawn they will bring in again
To women knitting on the quay
Who wait for him, their man of men;
I stand with them, and watch the sea
Which may have taken mine from me.

Just so the long days come and go.
The nights, ma Doué! the nights are cold!
Our Lady's heart is as frozen snow,
Since this one sin I have not told;
And I shall die or perhaps grow old

Before he comes. The foreign ships
Bring many a one of face and name
As strange as his, to buy your lips,
A gold piece for a scarlet shame
Like mine. But mine was not the same.

One night was ours, one short grey day
Of sudden sin, unshrived, untold.
He found me, and I lost the way
To Paradise for him. I sold
My soul for love and not for gold

He bought my soul, but even so,
My face is all that he has seen,
His is the only face I know,
And in the dark church, like a screen.
It shuts God out; it comes between;

While in some narrow foreign street
Or loitering on the crowded quay,
Who knows what others he may meet
To turn his eyes away from me?

Many are fair to such as he!

There is but one for such as I
 To love, to hate, to hunger for;
I shall, perhaps, grow old and die,
 With one short day to spend and store,
 One night, in all my life, no more.

Just so the long days come and go,
 Yet this one sin I will not tell
Though Mary's heart is as frozen snow
And all nights are cold for one warmed too well.
 But, oh! ma Doué! *the nights of Hell!*

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