Song

How many times do I love thee, dear?
Tell me how many thoughts there be
In the atmosphere
Of a new-fall’n year,
Whose white and sable hours appear
The latest flake of Eternity—
So many times do I love thee, dear.
How many times do I love again?
Tell me how many beads there are
In a silver chain
Of evening rain,
Unraveled from the tumbling main,
And threading the eye of a yellow star—
So many times do I love again.

1824

Song

Old Adam, the carrion crow,
The old crow of Cairo;
He sat in the shower, and let it flow
Under his tail and over his crest;
And through every feather
Leaked the wet weather;
And the bough swung under his nest;
For his beak it was heavy with marrow.
Is that the wind dying? O no;
It’s only two devils, that blow
Through a murderer’s bones, to and fro,
In the ghosts’ moonshine.

Ho! Eve, my gray carrion wife,
When we have supped on kings’ marrow,¹
Where shall we drink and make merry our life?
Our nest it is queen Cleopatra’s skull,
‘Tis cloven and cracked,
And battered and hacked,
But with tears of blue eyes it is full:
Let us drink then, my raven of Cairo.
Is that the wind dying? O no;
It’s only two devils, that blow

¹. I.e., the king’s bone marrow.
Through a murderer’s bones, to and fro,
    In the ghosts’ moonshine.

The Phantom Wooer

A ghost, that loved a lady fair,
    Ever in the starry air
    Of midnight at her pillow stood;
And, with a sweetness skies above
    The luring words of human love,
    Her soul the phantom wooed.
Sweet and sweet is their poisoned note,
The little snakes of silver throat,
In mossy skulls that nest and lie,
Ever singing, “Die, oh! die.”

Young soul put off your flesh, and come
    With me into the quiet tomb,
    Our bed is lovely, dark, and sweet;
The earth will swing us, as she goes,
Beneath our coverlid of snows,
    And the warm leaden sheet.
Dear and dear is their poisoned note,
The little snakes of silver throat,
In mossy skulls that nest and lie,
Ever singing, “Die, oh! die.”