

Night and Rain

By Madison Cawein

The night has set her outposts there
Of wind and rain;
And to and fro, with ragged hair,
At intervals they search the pane.

The fir-trees, creepers redly climb,—
That seem to bleed, —
Like old conspirators in crime,
Drip, whispering of some desperate deed.

'Tis as if wild skirts, flying fast,
Besieged the house;
The wittol grass, bent to the blast,
Whines as if witches held carouse.

And now dark feet steal to the door
And tap and tip,
Shuffle, and then go on once more —
The eaves keep a persistent drip.

And then a skurry, and a bound;—
Wild feet again? —
A wind-wrenched tree that to the ground
Sweeps instantly its weight of rain.

What is it, finger on its lip,
That up and down
Treads, with dark raiment all a-drip,
Trailing a tattered leaf of gown?

“O father, I am frightened! See!
There, at the pane!” —
“Hush! hush! my child, 'tis but a tree
That tosses in the wind and rain.”

A rumble, as it were, of hoofs,
And hollow call:
“O father, what rolls on the roofs,
That sounds like some dark funeral?”

“Hush! hush! my child; it is the storm
The autumn wind.”—

“But, father, see! what is that form?
There! wild against the window-blind.”

“It is the firelight in the room.” —
The father sighed.—

And then the child: “‘Twas dark as doom,
And had the face of her who died.”