

The Death-Child

By William Sharp

She sits beneath the elder-tree
And sings her song so sweet,
And dreams o'er the burn that darksome
Runs by her moonwhite feet.

Her hair is dark as starless night,
Her flower-crown'd face is pale,
But oh, her eyes are lit with light
Of dread ancestral bale.

She sings an eerie song, so wild
With immemorial dule—
Though young and fair Death's mortal child
That sits by that dark pool.

And oft she cries an eldritch scream
When red with human blood
The burn becomes a crimson stream,
A wild, red, surging flood

Or shrinks, when some swift tide of tears—
The weeping of the world—
Dark eddying 'neath man's phantom-fears,
Is o'er the red stream hurl'd.

For hours beneath the elder-tree
She broods beside the stream;
Her dark eyes filled with mystery,
Her dark soul rapt in dream.

The lapsing flow she heedeth not
Though deepest depths she scans
Life is the shade that clouds her thought,
As Death's the eclipse of man's.

Time seems but as a bitter thing
Remember'd from of yore
Yet ah (she thinks) her song she'll sing
When Time's long reign is o'er.