

# Dying Hope

By Ian B. Stoughton Holborn

A lover sees his own reflection in the glass that covers  
his lady's portrait.

Mine eyes still see her portrait, as of old,  
The same sweet face—oh, would I saw it yet!—  
While Love's warm breath plays o'er my features cold  
And these my bloodless hands, that trembling hold  
What no desire-fraught passion can forget.

And as I gaze mine image in the glass  
Blends with her peerless image there below,  
Our lips more close than when the kisses pass—  
Herself in me, myself in her. Alas!  
A mockery of a joy not mine to know.

O Love, O bitter Love, why weepst thou,  
And with thy long wings shadowest thy head?  
While, through the slender fingers 'neath thy brow,  
I see the shining drops close stealing now.  
Oh, tell me not that even Hope is dead!

So spent and wan thou art, thy silvern wings  
Droop sadly, and my heart scarce seems to know  
Thy boyish tones in that sad voice that sings;  
And the white thigh, 'gainst which the quiver swings,  
Has lost the supple grace of long ago.

Sing me a happier song, let one note tell  
Clear 'mid the echoing wail; one hope be left,  
Anon returning, as some tolling bell  
Sounds a wild note above the organ swell:  
'Hope on, hope on, not yet of all bereft.'

And lift away thine hands, and once again  
Let me gaze deep within those deathless eyes;  
Once wast thou wont to let me see them plain,  
Not hidden, as for some, and I would fain  
Know the old Love, lost 'neath this piteous guise.

Bear her one kiss across the cold grey tide;  
Perchance she yet recalls some once loved day:  
The burning talk this wind-swept shore beside,  
The silent commune o'er a world spread wide  
Beneath us in yon city far away.

O Love, fly quickly, ere the last spark fails,  
Ere that Too Late, whose name I dare not say,  
Steals her away, and Hope no more avails  
To stay the searching wind that shrilly wails  
Round this bare heart's tower desolate and grey.

Love, thou art gone, and through the open door  
I watch thy coming o'er the pain-tossed sea.  
The white spray strives to kiss the stony shore,  
The mocking winds but fling it back once more.  
Love—I am dying—Bring her back to me.