

# Never-to-be

By Walter de la Mare

Down by the waters of the sea  
Reigns the King of Never-to-be.  
His palace walls are black with night;  
His torches star and moon's light,  
And for his timepiece deep and grave  
Beats on the green unhastening wave.

Windswept are his high corridors;  
His pleasance the sea-mantled shores;  
For sentinel a shadow stands  
With hair in heaven, and cloudy hands;  
And round his bed, king's guards to be,  
Watch pines in iron solemnity.

His hound is mute; his steed at will  
Roams pastures deep with asphodel;  
His queen is to her slumber gone;  
His courtiers mute lie, hewn in stone;  
He hath forgot where he did hide  
His sceptre in the mountain-side.

Grey-capped and muttering, mad is he—  
The childless King of Never-to-be;  
For all his people in the deep  
While the dew of evening drips,  
Coldly and silently.  
Keep, everlasting, fast asleep;  
And all his realm is foam and rain,  
Whispering of what comes not again.