

*Excerpt from Rooftop Soliloquy*

*The narrator's "Ode to Spring"*

*...composed at the Parc Monceau in Paris*

(8<sup>th</sup> Soliloquy)

*Not to waste the spring  
I threw down everything,  
And ran into the open world  
To sing what I could sing...  
To dance what I could dance!  
And join with everyone!  
I wandered with a reckless heart  
beneath the newborn sun.*

*First stepping through the blushing dawn,  
I crossed beneath a garden bower,  
counting every hermit thrush,  
counting every hour.*

*When morning's light was ripe at last,  
I stumbled on with reckless feet;  
and found two nymphs engaged in play,  
approaching them stirred no retreat.*

*With naked skin, their weaving hands,  
in form akin to Calliope's maids,  
shook winter currents from their hair  
to weave within them vernal braids.*

*I grabbed the first, who seemed the stronger  
by her soft and dewy leg,  
and swore blind eyes,  
Lest I find I,  
before Diana, a hunted stag.*

*But the nymphs they laughed,  
and shook their heads.  
and begged I drop beseeching hands.  
For one was no goddess, the other no huntress,  
merely two girls at play in the early day.*

*"Please come to us, with unblinded eyes,  
and raise your ready lips.  
We will wash your mouth with watery sighs,  
weave you springtime with our fingertips."*

*So the nymphs they spoke,  
we kissed and laid,*

*by noontime's hour,  
our love was made,  
Like braided chains of crocus stems,  
We lay entwined, I laid with them,  
Our breath, one glassy, tideless sea,  
Our bodies draping wearily.  
We slept, I slept so lucidly,  
with hopes to stay this memory.*

*I woke in dusty afternoon,  
Alone, the nymphs had left too soon,  
I searched where perched upon my knees  
Heard only larks' songs in the trees.  
"Be you, the larks, my far-flung maids?  
With lilac feet and branchlike braids...  
Who sing sweet odes to my elation,  
in your larking exaltation!"*

*With these, my clumsy, carefree words,  
The birds they stirred and flew away,  
"Be I, poor Actaeon," I cried, "Be dead...  
Before they, like Hippodamia, be gone astray!"  
Yet these words, too late, remained unheard,  
By lark, that parting, morning bird.*

*I looked upon its parting flight,  
and smelled the coming of the night;  
desirous, I gazed upon its jaunt,  
as Leander gazes Hellespont.*

*Now the hour was ripe and dark,  
sensuous memories of sunlight past,  
I stood alone in garden bowers  
and asked the value of my hours.  
Time was spent or time was tossed,  
Life was loved and life was lost.  
I kissed the flesh of tender girls,  
I heard the songs of vernal birds.  
I gazed upon the blushing light,  
aware of day before the night.  
So let me ask and hear a thought:  
Did I live the spring I'd sought?  
It's true in joy, I walked along,  
took part in dance,  
and sang the song.  
and never tried to bind an hour  
to my borrowed garden bower;  
nor did I once entreat  
a day to slumber at my feet.*

*Yet days aren't lulled by lyric song,  
like morning birds they pass along,  
o'er crests of trees, to none belong;  
o'er crests of trees of drying dew,  
their larking flight, my hands, eschew  
Thus I'll say it once and true...*

*From all that I saw,  
and everywhere I wandered,  
I learned that time cannot be spent,  
It only can be squandered.*

*(end of excerpt)*