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AWAKENING OF THE BACCHÆ

WE were asleep in sleepy fields,
In summer-scented fields of hay,
Or where that heavy oak-copse shields
Pale bracken from the light of day—
We were asleep and dreaming endlessly.
No breath of May or June us from our dreams could sever—
Dreams like long furrows in a crested sea.
We were asleep, but now are awake for ever.

And as we woke we saw the stars
Stream overhead across the night,
Till all the East was streaked with bars
Of swiftly-growing milky light.
And when the dawn had swept across the sky,
Ah, past all hoping and past all endeavour,
We felt new life at every pulse-beat cry.
We were asleep, but now are awake for ever.

So it was nowise strange to see,
When we leapt up, the dappled skin,
The thyrsus twining wondrously,
The wine we steeped our faces in.
We felt the Bulls' breath burning on our brows,
The branding god-mark that will leave us never,
Strong in the wisdom which that touch endows ;
We were asleep, but now are awake for ever.