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THE PHANTOM

By CRISTEL HASTINGS

Last night the wind blew fitfully against
Wet window-panes, and tapped a pallid hand
In sudden bravery upon my door,
Seeking admittance with a shrill demand.

My candles flickered in a sudden draft
As from the opening of a hidden door
Silent upon its hinges, and I felt
The cold, wet touch of winds from down the moor.

Somewhere a dog howled dismally and long
To midnight skies, and branches brushed my roof
Like groping fingers seeking entrance where
Something once lived and held itself aloof.

The long night through, dead leaves tapped here and there,
Seeking for entrance long denied their kin
Save in the logs that blazed upon my grate,
Old driftwood bits the raging tide brought in.

It must be these old things from out the brine
And kelp of oceans have their bluish souls
That wail at night in winds that haunt the marsh
When driftwood logs are burned to dying coals.