

A BIRD came down the walk:
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew 5
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes 10
That hurried all abroad,—
They looked like frightened beads, I thought
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger; cautious,
I offered him a crumb, 15
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, plashless, as they swim. 20

I started Early - Took my Dog -
And visited the Sea -
The Mermaids in the Basement
Came out to look at me -

And Frigates - in the Upper Floor 5
Extended Hempen Hands -
Presuming Me to be a Mouse -
Aground - upon the Sands -

But no Man moved Me - till the Tide 9
Went past my simple Shoe -
And past my Apron - and my Belt
And past my Bodice - too -

And made as He would eat me up - 13
As wholly as a Dew
Upon a Dandelion's Sleeve -
And then - I started - too -

And He - He followed - close behind - 17
I felt His Silver Heel
Upon my Ankle - Then my Shoes
Would overflow with Pearl -

Until We met the Solid Town - 21
No One He seemed to know
And bowing - with a Mighty look -
At me - The Sea withdrew -

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple host 5
Who took the flag to-day
Can tell the definition,
So clear, of victory!

As he, defeated, dying, 9
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Burst agonized and clear!