

thought him dead. I stole it. I found you on this spot a year ago entranced with his work."

Geraldine's pulses seemed to stop. The shock caused her physical pain. Not only the woman but the artist had given him allegiance, and both woman and artist had been tricked.

In the silence that followed a bird seemed to call from a sweet briar:

"Sweet, sweet, sweet! I knew it, knew it, knew it!" Then in a tone of expostulation, "Joey! Joey! Joey!"

She laughed mockingly.

"*You!*" she said at last, and covered her face with her hands as though to shut the sight of him out.

He remembered another time when turning to him with longing and pride, delight and outstretched hands, she had exclaimed:

"You!"

That word had elected him—this banished.

She was crying. That was an awful thing.

"Oh, damn the birds!" he muttered, for their singing was sacrilege, then out loud: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

She turned upon him with wet eyes.

"Sometimes," she said, "the loss is not great. There are souls and souls!"

"Don't weep," he said. "I am not worthy of tears."

"I am not weeping for you," she answered. "My tears are for my loss—my belief. No other man came half so near. But it was not you—it was the man I thought you. Women, you know, from dairymaids to the Queen, love to be ruled by a man. Every true woman submits when recognising the right, 'He shall rule over thee.' You talk to me of love," she continued, drawing herself up in pride, her beauty enhanced by her emotion, "to an artist who was humble to you because of your art. How you have shamed me!"

He would not remind her of anything to which he had claim before or after the day by which she judged him. It seemed she did not credit him with anything save his dishonour.

"He who steals my purse steals trash . . . but he who robs me of my good name—"

She turned away.

"Then there *is* no pardon? You can't forgive me?" she heard Howard say. She turned, merciless in her scorn.

"Can't I make you understand, I shall not suffer; shall not even blame you? Mine was the fault for having mistaken a craven for a king! Despise I do. Pity may follow in a softer mood, and if I never see your face again, I may learn even gratitude that you yourself have saved me from the madness which you taught."

Failing . Time !

Old Time has tramped a weary length,
And tears his scythe have rusted,
While since he lost his pristine strength,
His hour-glass can't be trusted.

How oft the sands will choke and stop,
As though some unseen finger
Would count by ones the grains that drop,
The while our sorrows linger.

Or starting up with sudden dread,
Lest maybe he was sleeping,
Time's palsied hand the grains have sped,
And joy has left our keeping.