ON THE VERGE

Here begins the sea that ends not till the world’s end.
Where we stand,
Could we know the next high sea-mark set beyond these
waves that gleam,
We should know what never man hath known, nor eye
of man hath scanned.
Nought beyond these coiling clouds that melt like fume
of shrines that steam
Breaks or stays the strength of waters till they pass our
bounds of dream.
Where the waste Land’s End leans westward, all the seas
it watches roll
Find their border fixed beyond them, and a worldwide
shore’s control:
These whereby we stand no shore beyond us limits:
these are free.
Gazing hence, we see the water that grows iron round
the Pole,
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all
the sea.
Sail on sail along the sea-line fades and flashes; here on land
Flash and fade the wheeling wings on wings of mews that plunge and scream.
Hour on hour along the line of life and time’s evasive strand
Shines and darkens, wanes and waxes, slays and dies:
and scarce they seem
More than motes that thronged and trembled in the brief noon’s breath and beam.
Some with crying and wailing, some with notes like sound of bells that toll,
Some with sighing and laughing, some with words that blessed and made us whole,
Passed, and left us, and we know not what they were, nor what were we.
Would we know, being mortal? Never breath of answer ing whisper stole
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.

Shadows, would we question darkness? Ere our eyes
and brows be fanned
Round with airs of twilight, washed with dews from sleep’s eternal stream,
Would we know sleep’s guarded secret? Ere the fire consume the brand,
ON THE VERGE

Would it krow if yet its ashes may requicken? yet we deem
Surely man may know, or ever night unyoke her starry team,
What the dawn shall be, or if the dawn shall be not: yea, the scroll
Would we read of sleep's dark scripture, pledge of peace or doom of dole.
Ah, but here man's heart leaps, yearning toward the gloom with venturous glee,
Though his pilot eye behold nor bay nor harbour, rock nor shoal,
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.

Friend, who knows if death indeed have life or life have death for goal?
Day nor night can tell us, nor may seas declare nor skies unroll
What has been from everlasting, or if aught shall alway be.
Silence answering only strikes response reverberate on the soul
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.