

## LIEBESTOD

I WHO, conceived beneath another star,  
Had been a prince and played with life, instead  
Have been its slave, an outcast exiled far  
From the fair things my faith has merited.  
My ways have been the ways that wanderers tread  
And those that make romance of poverty—  
Soldier, I shared the soldier's board and bed,  
And Joy has been a thing more oft to me  
Whispered by summer wind and summer sea  
Than known incarnate in the hours it lies  
All warm against our hearts and laughs into our eyes.

I know not if in risking my best days  
I shall leave utterly behind me here  
This dream that lightened me through lonesome ways  
And that no disappointment made less dear;  
Sometimes I think that, where the hilltops rear  
Their white entrenchments back of tangled wire,  
Behind the mist Death only can make clear,  
There, like Brunhilde ringed with flaming fire,  
Lies what shall ease my heart's immense desire:  
There, where beyond the horror and the pain  
Only the brave shall pass, only the strong attain.

Truth or delusion, be it as it may,  
Yet think it true, dear friends, for, thinking so,  
That thought shall nerve our sinews on the day  
When to the last assault our bugles blow:  
Reckless of pain and peril we shall go,  
Heads high and hearts aflame and bayonets bare,  
And we shall brave eternity as though  
Eyes looked on us in which we would seem fair—  
One waited in whose presence we would wear,  
Even as a lover who would be well-seen,  
Our manhood faultless and our honor clean.