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In the Still, Star-Lit Night

Elizabeth Drew Stoddard

In the still, star-lit night,
By the full fountain and the willow-tree,
I walked, and not alone—
A spirit walked with me!



A shade fell on the grass;
Upon the water fell a deeper shade:
Something the willow stirred,
For to and fro it swayed.

The grass was in a quiver,
The water trembled, and the willow-tree
Sighed softly; I sighed loud—
The spirit taunted me.

All the night long I walked
By the full fountain, dropping icy tears;
I tore the willow leaves,
I tore the long, green spears!

I clutched the quaking grass,
And beat the rough bark of the willow-tree;
I shook the wreathèd boughs,
To make the spirit flee.

It haunted me till dawn,
By the full fountain and the willow-tree;
For with myself I walked—
How could the spirit flee?

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