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Mildew

Charlotte Dacre

Behold, within that cavern drear and dank,
Whose walls in rainbow tints so dimly shine,
A wretch, with swollen eyes and tresses lank,
Does on a heap of mould'ring leaves recline.



Unwholesome dews for ever him surround,
From his damp couch he scarcely ever hies,
Save when blue vapours, issuing from the ground,
Lure him abroad, to catch them as they rise.

Or else at eve the dripping rock he loves,
Or the moist edge of new-dug grave, full well;
To get the sea spray too at night he roves,
And, gem'd with trickling drops, then seeks his cell.

Such his delights, his green and purple cheek,
His bloated form, his chill, discolour'd hand
He would not change; and if he guests would seek,
He steals among the church-yard's grisly hand.

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