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The Hour and the Ghost

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O love, love, hold me fast,
He draws me away from thee;
I cannot stem the blast,
Nor the cold strong sea:
Far away a light shines
Beyond the hills and pines;
It is lit for me.

Bridegroom

I have thee close, my dear,
No terror can come near;
Only far off the northern light shines clear.

Ghost

Come with me, fair and false,
To our home, come home.
It is my voice that calls:
Once thou wast not afraid
When I woo'd, and said,
'Come, our nest is newly made'—
Now cross the tossing foam.

Bride

Hold me one moment longer!
He taunts me with the past,
His clutch is waxing stronger;
Hold me fast, hold me fast.
He draws me from thy heart,
And I cannot withhold:
He bids my spirit depart
With him into the cold:—
Oh bitter vows of old!



Bridegroom

Lean on me, hide thine eyes:
Only ourselves, earth and skies,
Are present here: be wise.

Ghost

Lean on me, come away,
I will guide and steady:
Come, for I will not stay:
Come, for house and bed are ready.
Ah sure bed and house,
For better and worse, for life and death,
Goal won with shortened breath!
Come, crown our vows.

Bride

One moment, one more word,
While my heart beats still,
While my breath is stirred
By my fainting will.
O friend, forsake me not,
Forget not as I forgot:
But keep thy heart for me,
Keep thy faith true and bright;
Through the lone cold winter night
Perhaps I may come to thee.

Bridegroom

Nay peace, my darling, peace:

Let these dreams and terrors cease:
Who spoke of death or change or aught but ease?

Ghost

O fair frail sin,
O poor harvest gathered in!
Thou shalt visit him again
To watch his heart grow cold:
To know the gnawing pain
I knew of old;
To see one much more fair
Fill up the vacant chair,
Fill his heart, his children bear;
While thou and I together,
In the outcast weather,
Toss and howl and spin.

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