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The Murderess

Alice Cary

Along the still cold plain o'erhead,
In pale embattled crowds.
The stars their tents of darkness spread,
And camped among the clouds;

Cinctured with shadows, like a wraith,
Night moaned along the lea;
Like the blue hungry eye of Death,
Shone the perfidious sea;

The moon was wearing to the wane,
The winds were wild and high,
And a red meteor's flaming mane
Streamed from the northern sky.

Across the black and barren moor,
Her dainty bosom bare;
And white lips sobbing evermore,
Rides Eleanor the fair.



So hath the pining sea-maid plained
For love of mortal lips,
Riding the billows, silver-reined.
Hard by disastrous ships.

Why covers she her mournful eyes?
Why do her pulses cease,
As if she saw before her rise
The ghost of murdered Peace?

From out her path the ground-bird drifts
With wildly startled calls,
The moonlight snake its white fold lifts
From where her shadow falls.

Ah me! I that delicate hand of hers,
Now trembling like a reed.
Like to the ancient mariner's
Hath done a hellish deed;

And full of mercy were the frown
Which might the power impart
To press the eternal darkness down
Against her bleeding heart.

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