

## **The Explorer**

You shed your father's hearth and beam  
For clay of foreign lands  
To sweat the fugue of buried dreams  
And still your quaking hands

So set a course beyond the line  
Where pen or scope may draw  
And find within the tempest's eye  
That fear gives way to awe

What thrill amidst a thunder's roll  
To hear the rainstorm keen  
And judge the span from soul to soul  
A thousand miles between

Recall the crowd you left ashore  
The mocking dispossessed  
Though formed against you seven score  
They matter all the less

When last you break beneath the stars  
And see your journey through  
Heed well the pale and time worn scars  
That built this world anew

## **The Lady and the Rose**

Askance her eyes perceive his guile  
Reposed in arbored shade  
He mute and wild, receives her smile  
Aloof in sunlit glade

She rises now, her feet compelled  
In answer to his call  
This handsome suitor's visage held  
Amidst his comrades tall

Green vestments long, festooned for war  
with sword and spur to harm  
And silken blouse, her sense implore  
With perfumed crimson charm

In sudden ardor, plays her part  
And plucks him to her breast  
For such as she, with willing heart  
His verdant throne divest

## The Painter

At last arrives the twilight hour  
My sisters tucked in bed  
The sun with loss of sultry power  
Begins to duck his head

My steps are soft, upon the stairs  
I dare not let them creak  
Before I reach the open air  
Outside to have a peek

It's Autumn's eve, and through the square  
Each window casts a glow  
From pumpkin heads, with eyes that stare  
Assembled in a row

A whispered breeze with cold rapport  
Is drifting down the lane  
And gossiping with shuttered doors  
And nervous weathervanes

The patchwork shadows linger long  
And follow my ascent  
To Founder's Hill above the throng  
Of crowded tenements

As road gives way, I reach the crest  
And find myself alone  
A tattered windmill marks the west  
As ancient as the stones

Two ravens croak to claim this field  
And usher in the night  
I wrap my cloak to form a shield  
And ward the dying light

A crescent moon on bright display  
My fingers trace its curve  
Upon that hand, to my dismay  
A spot of white transfers

A rustle makes me step aside  
And look to find the source  
A scarecrow walks with jerking stride  
Determined in its course

Bound sticks for limbs, black button eyes  
Ten stitches form a grin  
A can of liquid, shouldered high  
Is dripping from the brim

It shambles through the waves of grass  
An artist's brush in hand  
And seeks a place beyond the path  
Where fixed to earth I stand

For now I watch with senses taut  
A sight my thoughts deny  
With graceful strokes of paint is wrought  
Polaris in the sky

The creature travels row by row  
Imparting marks with care  
The lights above by dozens grow  
Each glinting proud and fair

A gasp escapes against my will  
The scarecrow turns its head  
And feet which ambled up this hill  
Now hasten me to bed

Just eight short years I've lived so far  
Yet this I can advise  
Before you reach to touch the stars  
It's best to let them dry