

21

Silently she's combing,
 Combing her long hair,
Silently and graciously,
 With many a pretty air.

The sun is in the willow leaves
 And on the dappled grass
And still she's combing her long hair
 Before the lookingglass.

I pray you, cease to comb out,
 Comb out your long hair,
For I have heard of witchery
 Under a pretty air,

That makes as one thing to the lover
 Staying and going hence,
All fair, with many a pretty air
 And many a negligence.

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Notes

This was No. 24 in the 1907 edition.

Written (according to Ellmann) on 8 April 1904, and published by Arthur Symons in the *Saturday Review* two weeks later.

Here we have another 'hair' song.

The appearance of the mirror, as so often in artistic discourse, signals a problem of some kind: why is she looking at herself in the mirror rather than at her lover? What's this talk of 'witchery' and 'negligence'? Is she also beginning to feel a post-coital cooling of passion?

Compare Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach' (echoes of which will also be heard in No. 36) in which nature is being gazed upon from an indoor location. Tindall compares this lyric with Jonson's 'Still to be Neat' in theme and atmosphere.

'The lover' rather than 'Love' – their situation is being universalised; this is an old story.

The image of 'dappled grass' is borrowed from Yeats's 'The Song of Wandering Aengus', from *The Wind Among the Reeds* – and the association with a poem about lost love is ominous.

'Negligence' jumps out as an important, problematic word.