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Of that so sweet imprisonment

My soul, dearest, is fain –

Soft arms that woo me to relent

And woo me to detain.

Ah, could they ever hold me there,

Gladly were I a prisoner!

Dearest, through interwoven arms

By love made tremulous,

That night allures me where alarms

Nowise may trouble us

But sleep to dreamier sleep be wed

Where soul with soul lies prisoned.

*

Notes

This was No. 22 in the 1907 edition.

‘Fain’: willing under the circumstances.

A change of mood, here: love as imprisonment, albeit one (apparently) willingly accepted.

Love is a prison in which both parties are trapped.

The setting is night, and the talk is of dreams and allures. ‘Relent’ and ‘detain’ are far removed from the passionate, committed language of the earlier cycle.

The word ‘detain’ will feature importantly in *A Portrait*.

Note how much of the language and imagery invoked in the first stanza (prison, soul, dearest, arms) are repeated in the second with different emphasis.

The rhythm calls for the final syllable to be emphasised – i.e. *prisonéd*.

The syntax of Ls. 5 and 6 is ambiguous; *if they could, but they probably can't*. The obscure syntax carries on in the second stanza.