

“See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
Sister Helen, 30
Shines through the thinned wax red as blood!”
“Nay now, when looked you yet on blood,
Little brother?”
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven!) 35

“Now close your eyes, for they’re sick and sore,
Sister Helen,
And I’ll play without the gallery door.”
“Aye, let me rest,—I’ll lie on the floor,
Little brother.” 40
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What rest to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

“Here high up in the balcony,
Sister Helen,
The moon flies face to face with me.” 45
“Aye, look and say whatever you see,
Little brother.”
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What sight to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

“Outside it’s merry in the wind’s wake, 50
Sister Helen;
In the shaken trees the chill stars shake.”
“Hush, heard you a horse-tread as you spake,
Little brother?”
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,* 55
What sound to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

“I hear a horse-tread, and I see,
Sister Helen,
Three horsemen that ride terribly.”
“Little brother, whence come the three, 60

Little brother?"
 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Whence should they come, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They come by the hill-verge from Boyne Bar,
 Sister Helen, 65
 And one draws nigh, but two are afar."
 "Look, look, do you know them who they are,
 Little brother?"
 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Who should they be, between Hell and Heaven?) 70

"Oh, it's Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,
 Sister Helen,
 For I know the white mane on the blast."
 "The hour has come, has come at last,
 Little brother!" 75
 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He has made a sign and called Halloo!
 Sister Helen,
 And he says that he would speak with you." 80
 "Oh tell him I fear the frozen dew,
 Little brother."
 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Why laughs she thus, between Hell and Heaven?)

"The wind is loud, but I hear him cry, 85
 Sister Helen,
 That Keith of Ewern's like to die."
 "And he and thou, and thou and I,
 Little brother."
 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,* 90
And they and we, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,

Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!

“Here’s Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white plume on the blast.”
“The hour, the sweet hour I forecast, 130
Little brother!”
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven?)*

“He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,
Sister Helen; 135
But his words are drowned in the wind’s course.”
“Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,
Little brother!”
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven?)* 140

“Oh he says that Keith of Ewern’s cry,
Sister Helen,
Is ever to see you ere he die.”
“In all that his soul sees, there am I,
Little brother!” 145
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The soul’s one sight, between Hell and Heaven!)*

“He sends a ring and a broken coin,
Sister Helen,
And bids you mind the banks of Boyne.” 150
“What else he broke will he ever join,
Little brother?”
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
No, never joined, between Hell and Heaven!)*

“He yields you these and craves full fain, 155
Sister Helen,
You pardon him in his mortal pain.”

“What else he took will he give again,
Little brother?”
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,* 160
Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven!)

“He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen,
That even dead Love must weep to see.”
“Hate, born of Love, is blind as he, 165
Little brother!”
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven!)

“Oh it’s Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
Sister Helen, 170
For I know the white hair on the blast.”
“The short short hour will soon be past,
Little brother!”
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven!) 175

“He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,
But oh! his voice is sad and weak!”
“What here should the mighty Baron seek,
Little brother?” 180
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven?)

“Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,
The body dies but the soul shall live.” 185
“Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother!”
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven!)

Is it in the sky or in the ground?" 255
"Say, have they turned their horses round,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have raised the old man from his knee, 260
Sister Helen,
And they ride in silence hastily."
"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,* 265
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,
Sister Helen,
But the lady's dark steed goes alone."
"And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown, 270
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen, 275
And weary sad they look by the hill."
"But he and I are sadder still,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!) 280

"See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!" 285
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven!)

“Ah! what white thing at the door has cross’d
Sister Helen?

Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?” 290

“A soul that’s lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!”

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!*)

?1853-80

(From *The Collective Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. Ed.
with Preface and Notes by William M. Rossetti. 2 vols.
London: Ellis and Elvey, 1890)