O sad man, now a long dead man,  
To whom it was so real,  
I picture, as 'twere yesterday,  
How you would tell the tale!

Just wived were you, you sad dead man,  
And “settling down,” you'd say,  
And had rigged the house you had reared for yourself  
And the mate now yours alway.

You had eyed and tried each door and lock,  
And cupboard, and bell, and glass,  
When you glanced across to the road without,  
And saw a carriage pass.

It bowled along from the old town-gate;  
Two forms its freight, and those  
Were a just-joined pair, as you discerned  
By the favours and the bows.

And one of the pair you saw was a Fair  
Whom you had wooed awhile,  
And the other you saw, with a creeping awe,  
Was yourself, in bridegroom style.

“And there we rode as man and wife  
In the broad blaze of the sun,”  
Would you aver: yea, you with her  
You had left for another one.

“The morning,” you said, my friend long dead,  
“Was ordinary and fine:  
And yet there gleamed, it somehow seemed,  
At moments, a strange shine.”
You hailed a boy from your garden-plot,
    And sent him along the way
To the parish church: whence word was brought
    No marriage had been that day.

You mused, you said: till you heard anon
    That at that hour she died
Whom once, instead of your living wife,
    You had meant to make your bride. . . .

You, dead man, dwelt in your new-built house
    With no great spirit or will,
And after your soon decease your spouse
    Re-mated: she lives there still.

Which should be blamed, if either can,
    The teller does not know
For your mismatch, O weird-wed man,
    Or what you thought was so.

*From an old draft (1925)*

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