TO EMILY DICKINSON

You who desired so much—in vain to ask—
Yet fed your hunger like an endless task,
Dared dignify the labor, bless the quest—
Achieved that stillness ultimately best,

B eing, of all, least sought for: Emily, hear!
O sweet, dead Silencer, most suddenly clear
When singing that Eternity possessed
And plundered momently in every breast;

—Truly no flower yet withers in your hand,
The harvest you descried and understand
Needs more than wit to gather, love to bind.
Some reconcilement: of remotest mind—

Leaves Ormus rubyless, and Ophir chill.
Else tears heap all within one clay-cold hill.

[1927]

KEY WEST

Here has my salient faith annealed me.
Out of the valley, past the ample crib
To skies impartial, that do not disown me
Nor claim me, either, by Adam's spine—nor rib.

The oar plash, and the meteorite's white arch
Concur with wrist and bicep. In the moon
That now has sunk I strike a single march
To heaven or hades—to an equally frugal noon.

Because these millions reap a dead conclusion
Need I presume the same fruit of my bone
As draws them towards a doubly mocked confusion
Of apish nightmares into steel-strung stome?

O, steel and stone! But gold was, scarcity before.
And here is water, and a little wind. . .
There is no breath of friends and no more shore
Where gold has not been sold and conscience timned.

[1933]
first coll. in CP, p. 117 (where “marble into” was substituted for “marble only into” [line 1] and “In dusk it” substituted for “In dusk, it” [line 8]). The poem is the first of a group of five appearing together in transition, no. 9, pp. 132–36, under the collective title of “East of Yucatan”; “Island Quarry,” “Royal Palm,” “Overheard” [“Bacardi Spreads the Eagle’s Wings”], “El Idiot” [“The Idiot”], and “The Hour” [“The Hurricane”]. Present text taken from a typescript page (Key West) which revises the transition version in line 1 (“Flat prison slabs” instead of “Flat slabs”) and line 8 (“In dusk, as though” instead of “In dusk, it is at times as though”).

old song
First pub. in The New Republic, 51 (August 10, 1927), p. 309; first coll. in CP, p. 139. Text from a typescript page (Key West), which conforms in all details but one minor punctuation variant (“rose,” instead of “rose—” [line 1]) with the first published version; bears the typed notation of “New Republic / Aug. ’27”; and corrects the version in CP by giving “Thy absence” instead of “Thine absence” (line 1), “the dream” instead of “the dream” (line 4), and “burden of the” instead of “burden on the” (line 9).

the idiot
First pub. in transition, no. 9 (December 1927), p. 135 (see note for “Island Quarry”); first coll. in CP, p. 119. Text from a typescript page (Key West) with holograph emendations entitled “The Idiot,” which also furnished text in CP (except that “see” was substituted in CP for “see—” [line 1], “That boy” substituted for “The boy” [line 2], and “kite string” substituted for “kite string,” [line 9]).

A NAME FOR ALL
First pub. in The Dial, 86 (April 1929), p. 297; first coll. in CP, p. 120.

bacardi spreads the eagle’s wings
First pub. as “Overheard” in transition, no. 9 (December 1927), p. 134 (see note for “Island Quarry”); first pub. as “Bacardi Spreads the Eagle’s Wings” in Contempo, 2 (July 5, 1932), p. 1; first coll. in CP, p. 126. Text from Contempo, to which HC sent the poem on March 11, 1932; it differs from text in CP (apparently an erroneous transcription of the Contempo version combined with some of the punctuation in the earlier transition version).

imperator victus
First pub. in Poetry, 41 (January 1933), p. 180; first coll. in CP, p. 123. Text from a typescript page (Key West) with holograph emendations, which also provided text for CP (where lines 11, 12, and 13 were omitted).

royal palm
First pub. in transition, no. 9 (December 1927), p. 133 (see note for “Island Quarry”); first coll. in CP, p. 121. The text has been taken from transition, which apparently also furnished text in CP (except that “more than regal” was substituted for “more-than-regal” [line 1] and “aetheral” for “aetherial” [line 8]).

the air plant
First pub. in The Dial, 84 (January 1928), p. 140. First coll. in CP, p. 122, whose text is taken from a typescript page (Key West) bearing notation “Hart Crane, / RFD-Patterson, N.Y. / as sent to Criterion / July 16th.” The present text conforms to that in CP.

the hurricane
First pub. as “The Hour” in transition, no. 9 (December 1927), p. 136 (see note for “Island Quarry”); first pub. as “The Hurricane” in The New Republic, 67 (July 29, 1931), p. 276. First coll. in CP, pp. 124–25, where the text is based on a typescript page (Key West) with holograph emendations that precedes the New Republic version, from which the present text has been taken.

to emily dickinson
First pub. in The Nation, 124 (June 29, 1927), p. 718. First coll. in CP, p. 128, whose text is based on a typescript page (Key West) with a holograph emendation (“Needs” instead of “Takes” in line 11) that provides the only variation from the Nation text. The present text conforms to that in CP.