**On the Way to the Mission**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| They dogged him all one afternoon,Through the bright snow,Two whitemen servants of greed;He knew that they were there,But he turned not his head;  | 5 |
| He was an Indian trapper;He planted his snow-shoes firmly,He dragged the long tobogganWithout rest. The three figures drifted  | 10 |
| Like shadows in the mind of a seer;The snow-shoes were whisperersOn the threshold of awe;The toboggan made the sound of wings,A wood-pigeon sloping to her nest.  | 15 |
| The Indian’s face was calm.He strode with the sorrow of fore-knowledge,But his eyes were jewels of contentSet in circles of peace. They would have shot him;  | 20 |
| But momently in the deep forest,They saw something flit by his side:Their hearts stopped with fear.Then the moon rose.They would have left him to the spirit,  | 25 |
| But they saw the long tobogganRounded well with furs,With many a silver fox-skin,With the pelts of mink and of otter.They were the servants of greed;  | 30 |
| When the moon grew brighterAnd the spruces were dark with sleep,They shot him.When he fell on a shield of moonlightOne of his arms clung to his burden;  | 35 |
| The snow was not melted:The spirit passed away. Then the servants of greedTore off the cover to count their gains;They shuddered away into the shadows,  | 40 |
| Hearing each the loud heart of the other.Silence was born. There in the tender moonlight,     As sweet as they were in life,Glimmered the ivory features,  | 45 |
|      Of the Indian’s wife. In the manner of Montagnais women     Her hair was rolled with braid;Under her waxen fingers     A crucifix was laid.  | 50 |
| He was drawing her down to the Mission,     To bury her there in spring,When the bloodroot comes and the windflower     To silver everything. But as a gift of plunder  | 55 |
|      Side by side were they laid,The moon went on to her setting     And covered them with shade. |  |