I had a dream, which was not all a dream.   
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars   
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,   
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth   
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;   
Morn came and went--and came, and brought no day,   
And men forgot their passions in the dread   
Of this their desolation; and all hearts   
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:   
And they did live by watchfires--and the thrones,   
The palaces of crowned kings--the huts,   
The habitations of all things which dwell,   
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consumed,   
And men were gathered round their blazing homes   
To look once more into each other's face;   
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye   
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:   
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;   
Forests were set on fire--but hour by hour   
They fell and faded--and the crackling trunks   
Extinguish'd with a crash--and all was black.   
The brows of men by the despairing light   
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits   
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down   
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest   
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled;   
And others hurried to and fro, and fed   
Their funeral piles with fuel, and looked up   
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,   
The pall of a past world; and then again   
With curses cast them down upon the dust,   
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd,   
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,   
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes   
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd   
And twined themselves among the multitude,   
Hissing, but stingless--they were slain for food.   
And War, which for a moment was no more,   
Did glut himself again;--a meal was bought   
With blood, and each sate sullenly apart   
Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;   
All earth was but one thought--and that was death,   
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang   
Of famine fed upon all entrails--men   
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;   
The meagre by the meagre were devoured,   
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,   
And he was faithful to a corse, and kept   
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,   
Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead   
Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,   
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,   
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand   
Which answered not with a caress--he died.   
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two   
Of an enormous city did survive,   
And they were enemies: they met beside   
The dying embers of an altar-place   
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things   
For an unholy usage; they raked up,   
And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands   
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath   
Blew for a little life, and made a flame   
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up   
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld   
Each other's aspects--saw, and shriek'd, and died--   
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,   
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow   
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,   
The populous and the powerful--was a lump,   
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless--   
A lump of death--a chaos of hard clay.   
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,   
And nothing stirred within their silent depths;   
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,  
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropp'd   
They slept on the abyss without a surge--   
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,   
The moon their mistress had expir'd before;   
The winds were withered in the stagnant air,   
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need   
Of aid from them--She was the Universe.