

After the First Loss

Then serve the living with a steadier hand.

When death has stilled the room, let reason mind
The wound that grief would name your shame at night;
Hold first the fact, then test what thoughts you find,
Lest pride make guilt your only surgeon's light.

What fate has brought may leave the heart in pain,
But do not make your wounded pride your guide;
Turn grief to justice, let the lesson remain,
And seek the truth, though self-defence may chide.

The present is the field where duties stay;
Let every act be just beneath your hand;
Death is no verdict on the soul's array,
For all are fellow-workers in one band.

If error speaks, revise; let truth command;
Then serve the living with a steadier hand.