

**"The Grocery"** ([http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/amy\\_lowell/poems/20049](http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/amy_lowell/poems/20049))

*Lowell, Amy, 1874-1925*

"Hullo, Alice!"  
"Hullo, Leon!"  
"Say, Alice, gi' me a couple  
O' them two for five cigars,  
Will yer?"  
"Where's your nickle?"  
"My! Ain't you close!  
Can't trust a feller, can yer."  
"Trust you! Why  
What you owe this store  
Would set you up in business.  
I can't think why Father 'lows it."  
"Yer Father's a sight more neighbourly  
Than you be. That's a fact.  
Besides, he knows I got a vote."  
"A vote! Oh, yes, you got a vote!  
A lot o' good the Senate'll be to Father  
When all his bank account  
Has run away in credits.  
There's your cigars,  
If you can relish smokin'  
With all you owe us standin'."  
"I dunno as that makes 'em taste any diff'rent.  
Yer ain't fair to me, Alice, 'deed yer ain't.  
I work when anythin's doin'.  
I'll get a carpenterin' job next Summer sure.  
Cleve was tellin' me to-day he'd take me on come Spring."  
"Come Spring, and this December!  
I've no patience with you, Leon,  
Shilly-shallyin' the way you do.  
Here, lift over them crates o' oranges  
I wanter fix 'em in the winder."  
"It riles yer, don't it, me not havin' work.  
You pepper up about it somethin' good.  
You pick an' pick, and that don't help a mite.  
Say, Alice, do come in out o' that winder.  
Th' oranges c'n wait,  
And I don't like talkin' to yer back."  
"Don't you! Well, you'd better make the best o' what

you can git.  
Maybe you won't have my back to talk to soon.  
They look good in pyramids with the 'lectric light on 'em,  
Don't they?  
Now hand me them bananas  
An' I'll string 'em right acrost."  
"What do yer mean  
'Bout me not havin' you to talk to?  
Are yer springin' somethin' on me?"  
"I don't know 'bout springin'  
When I'm tellin' yerright out.  
I'm goin' away, that's all."  
"Where? Why?  
What yer mean -- goin' away?"  
"I've took a place  
Down to Boston, in a candy store  
For the holidays."  
"Good Land, Alice,  
What in the Heavens fer!"  
"To earn some money,  
And to git away from here, I guess."  
"Ain't yer Father got enough?  
Don't he give yer proper pocket-money?"  
"He'd have a plenty, if you folks paid him."  
"He's rich I tell yer.  
I never figured he'd be close with you."  
"Oh, he ain't. Not close.  
That ain't why.  
But I must git away from here.  
I must! I must!"  
"You got a lot o' reason in yer  
To-night.  
How long d' you cal'late  
You'll be gone?"  
"Maybe for always."  
"What ails yer, Alice?  
Talkin' wild like that.  
Ain't you an' me goin' to be married  
Some day."  
"Some day! Some day!  
I guess the sun'll never rise on some day."  
"So that's the trouble.  
Same old story.  
'Cause I ain't got the cash to settle right now.

You know I love yer,  
An' I'll marry yer as soon  
As I can raise the money."  
"You've said that any time these five year,  
But you don't do nothin'."  
"Wot could I do?  
Ther ain't no work here Winters.  
Not fer a carpenter, there ain't."  
"I guess you warn't born a carpenter.  
Ther's ice-cuttin' a plenty."  
"I got a dret'ful tender throat;  
Dr. Smiles he told me  
I mustn't resk ice-cuttin'."  
"Why haven't you gone to Boston,  
And hunted up a job?"  
"Have yer forgot the time I went expressin'  
In the American office, down ther?"  
"And come back two weeks later!  
No, I ain't."  
"You didn't want I should git hurted,  
Did yer?  
I'm a sight too light fer all that liftin' work.  
My back was commencin' to strain, as 'twas.  
Ef I was like yer brother now,  
I'd ha' be'n down to the city long ago.  
But I'm too clumsy fer a dancer.  
I ain't got Arthur's luck."  
"Do you call it luck to be a disgrace to your folks,  
And git locked up in jail!"  
"Oh, come now, Alice,  
'Disgrace' is a mite strong.  
Why, the jail was a joke.  
Art's all right."  
"All right!  
All right to dance, and smirk, and lie  
And then in the end  
For a livin',  
Lead a silly girl to give you  
What warn't hers to give  
By pretendin' you'd marry her --  
And she a pupil."  
"He'd ha' married her right enough,  
Her folks was millionaires."  
"Yes, he'd ha' married her!

Thank God, they saved her that."  
"Art's a fine fellah.  
I wish I had his luck.  
Swellin' round in Hart, Schaffner & Marx fancy suits,  
And eatin' in rest'rants.  
But somebody's got to stick to the old place,  
Else Foxfield'd have to shut up shop,  
Hey, Alice?"  
"You admire him!  
You admire Arthur!  
You'd be like him only you can't dance.  
Oh, Shame! Shame!  
And I've been like that silly girl.  
Fooled with your promises,  
And I gave you all I had.  
I knew it, oh, I knew it,  
But I wanted to git away 'fore I proved it.  
You've shamed me through and through.  
Why couldn't you hold your tongue,  
And spared me seein' you  
As you really are."  
"What the Devil's the row?  
I only said Art was lucky.  
What you spitfirin' at me fer?  
Fergit it, Alice.  
We've had good times, ain't we?  
I'll see Cleve 'bout that job agin to-morrer,  
And we'll be married 'fore hayin' time."  
"It's like you to remind me o' hayin' time.  
I've good cause to love it, ain't I?  
Many's the night I've hid my face in the dark  
To shut out thinkin'!"  
"Why, that ain't nothin'.  
You ain't be'n half so kind to me  
As lots o' fellers' girls.  
Gi' me a kiss, Dear,  
And let's make up."  
"Make up!  
You poor fool.  
Do you suppose I care a ten cent piece  
For you now.  
You've killed yourself for me.  
Done it out o' your own mouth.  
You've took away my home,

I hate the sight o' the place.  
You're all over it,  
Every stick an' stone means you,  
An' I hate 'em all."  
"Alice, I say,  
Don't go on like that.  
I can't marry yer  
Boardin' in one room,  
But I'll see Cleve to-morrer,  
I'll make him ----"  
"Oh, you fool!  
You turrible fool!"  
"Alice, don't go yet,  
Wait a minute,  
I'll see Cleve ----"  
"You terrible fool!"  
"Alice, don't go.  
Alice ----" (Door slams)