

Flotsam

Lowell, Amy, 1874-1925

She sat in a Chinese wicker chair Wide at the top like a spread peacock's tail, And toyed with a young man's heart which she held lightly in her fingers. She tapped it gently, Held it up to the sun and looked through it, Strung it on a chain of seed-pearls and fastened it about her neck,

Tossed it into the air and caught it,
Deftly, as though it were a ball.

Before her on the grass sat the young man.
Sometimes he felt an ache where his heart had been,
But he brushed it aside.

He was intent on gazing, and had no time for anything else. Presently she grew tired and handed him back his heart, But he only laid it on the ground beside him And went on gazing.

When the maidservant came to tidy up,
She found the heart on the grass.

"What a pretty thing," said the maidservant,
"It is red as a ruby!"

So she picked it up,
And carried it into the house,
And ran a ribbon through it,
And hung it on the looking-glass in her bedroom.
There it hung for many days,
Banging back and forth as the wind blew it.