ON A SUBWAY EXPRESS

Firkins, Chester, 1882-1915

I, who have lost the stars, the sod,
   For chilling pave and cheerless light,
Have made my meeting-place with God
   A new and nether Night —
Have found a fane where thunder fills
   Loud caverns, tremulous; — and these
Atone me for my reverend hills
   And moonlit silences.

A figment in the crowded dark,
   Where men sit muted by the roar,
I ride upon the whirring Spark
   Beneath the city's floor.

In this dim firmament, the stars
   Whirl by in blazing files and tiers;
Kin meteors graze our flying bars,
   Amid the spinning spheres.

Speed! speed! until the quivering rails
   Flash silver where the head-light gleams,
As when on lakes the Moon impales
   The waves upon its beams.

Life throbs about me, yet I stand
   Outgazing on majestic Power;
Death rides with me, on either hand,
   In my communion hour.

You that 'neath country skies can pray,
   Scoff not at me — the city clod; —
My only respite of the Day
   Is this wild ride — with God.