

## 6

Lean out of the window,  
    Goldenhair,  
I heard you singing  
    A merry air.

My book is closed,  
    I read no more,  
Watching the fire dance  
    On the floor.

I have left my book:  
    I have left my room,  
For I heard you singing  
    Through the gloom.

Singing and singing  
    A merry air.  
Lean out of the window,  
    Goldenhair.

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### Notes

This was No. 5 in the 1907 edition.

One of the most anthologised poems from the cycle.

The Lover leaves his studies to visit his singing beloved.

This slight lyric assumes extra resonance in view of its author's status as an artist torn between books and music; the latter is usually associated with love in Joyce.

Goldenhair's song, calling the hero from his duties, anticipates the Sirens in *Ulysses*. The 'golden' hair relates to the yellow keys of No. 4.

One of the things about 'golden hair', as Dowland suggests in the song 'His Golden Locks', is that it will in time turn to silver.

References to hair will recur throughout *Chamber Music*, in which usage the suite closely follows *The Wind Among the Reeds* which is peppered with images of hair. In his notes to *Exiles*, his play of 1918, Joyce wrote of one of the female leads:

Hair: the mind turning again to this without adverting to its colour, adverting only to a distinctive sexual mark and to its growth and mystery ... The softly growing symbol of her girlhood ... Ivy and roses: she gathered ivy often when out in the evening with girls. Roses grew then a sudden scarlet note in the memory which may be a dim suggestion of the roses of the body. The ivy and the roses carry on and up, out of the idea of growth, through a creeping vegetable life into ardent perfumed flower life the symbol of mysteriously growing girlhood, her hair.

According to Brenda Maddox Nora Barnacle's most striking feature was her hair. References to hair feature prominently in Molly Bloom's monologue at the end of *Ulysses*.

The predominant atmosphere seems summery, but note the 'fire' dancing on the floor in L. 7 – suggesting winter darkness – and the 'gloom' of L. 12.

The 'merry air' points to Elizabethan England.

On one of the MS versions of the suite, an unidentified hand has written two lines from Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott':

She left the web, she left the loom  
She made three paces thro' the room.