

The Lost Mistress

by Robert Browning

All 's over, then: does truth sound bitter,
As one at first believes?
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter,
About your cottage eaves!

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,
I noticed that, to-day;
One day more bursts them open fully,
-You know the red turns gray.

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest?
May I take your hand in mine?
Mere friends are we,—well, friends the merest,
Keep much that I resign:

For each glance of the eye so bright and black,
Though I keep with heart's endeavor,—
Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back,
Though it stay in my soul forever!—

Yet I will but say what mere friends say,
Or only a thought stronger;
I will hold your hand but as long as all may,
Or so very little longer!