

Dover Beach Main Text

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Dover Beach

By Matthew Arnold
The sea is calm tonight. The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;
on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand, Glimmering and
vast, out in the tranquil bay. Come to the window, sweet is the night-air! Only, from the long
line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land, Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, At their return, up the high strand, Begin,
and cease, and then again begin, With tremulous cadence slow, and bring The eternal note of
sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we Find also in the sound a thought, Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore Lay like the folds of a bright
girdle furled. But now I only hear Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, Retreating, to the
breath Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems To lie before us like a land
of dreams, So various, so beautiful, so new, Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, Nor
certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain; And we are here as on a darkling plain Swept with
confused alarms of struggle and flight, Where ignorant armies clash by night.