

NEUTRAL TONES

WE stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though
chidden of God,
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod,
—They had fallen from an ash, and were
gray.

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles solved years ago ;
And some words played between us to and
fro—
On which lost the more by our love.

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The smile on your mouth was the deadest
thing

Alive enough to have strength to die;
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing. . . .

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

1867.