Meeting at Night

By Robert Browning

I
The grey sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i’ the slushy sand.

II
Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro’ its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, England, and his education mostly took place among his father’s 6,000-book library. As a writer, Browning was regarded as a failure for many years, living in the shadow of his wife Elizabeth Barrett Browning. However, late in life Browning’s brilliant use of dramatic monologue made him a literary icon. Today, his most widely read work is Men and Women, a collection of dramatic monologues dedicated to his wife.

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