To Helen
by Edgar Allan Poe

*Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those *Nicean *barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long *wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy *Naiad airs have brought me home
To the *glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The *agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, *Psyche, from *the regions which
Are Holy Land!

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Niquean: Of or from Nicea (also spelled Nicaea), a
city in ancient Bithynia (now part of present-day
Turkey) near the site of the Trojan War.
barks: small sailing vessels.
wont: accustomed to
Naiad airs: Peaceful, gentle breezes or qualities,
alluding to minor nature goddesses in Greek and
Roman mythology who inhabited and presided
over rivers, lakes, streams, and fountains.
the glory that was Rome: These last two lines,
beginning with the glory that was, are among the
most frequently quoted lines in world literature.
Writers and speakers quote these lines to evoke
the splendor of classical antiquity.
agate lamp: burning lamp made of agate, which
is a semiprecious translucent stone with colored
stripes or bands
Psyche: In Greek and Roman mythology, Psyche
was a beautiful princess dear to the god of love,
Eros (Cupid), who would visit her in a darkened
room in a palace. One night she used an agate
lamp to discover his identity. Later, at the urging
of Eros, Zeus gave her the gift of immortality.
Eros then married her.
from the regions which are Holy Land: from
ancient Greece and Rome

Helen
by H.D. (Hilda Doolittle)

All Greece hates
the still eyes in the white face,
the lustre as of olives
where she stands,
and the white hands.

All Greece reviles
the wan face when she smiles,
hating it deeper still
when it grows wan and white,
remembering past enchantments
and past ills.

Greece sees unmoved,
God's daughter, born of love,
the beauty of cool feet
and slenderest knees,
could love indeed the maid,
only if she were laid,
white ash amid funereal cypresses.