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The Coin Speaks

Singers sing for Coin: but I,
Struck in Rome's last agony,
Shut the lips of Melody.

Many years my thin white face
Peered in every market-place
At the Doomed Imperial Race

Warmed against and worn between
Hearts uncleaned and hands unclean -
What is there I have not seen?

Not an Empire dazed and old -
Smitten blind and stricken cold -
Bartering her sons for gold.

Not the Plebs her rulers please
From the public treasuries
With the bread and circuses

PUCK OF POOK'S HILL

Not her hard-won fields restored,
On the Egregious Senate's word,
To the Savage and the Sword.

Not the People's God-like Voice
As it welcomes or destroys
Month-old Idols of its choice

Not the Legions they disband,
Not the oar-less ships unmanned,
Not the ruin of the land.
These I know and understand: