Antiope, by Michael Field

NOONTIDE'S whiteness of full sun
 Illumes her sleep ;
Its heat is on her limbs and one
 White arm with sweep
Of languor falls around her head :
She cuddles on the lap of earth ;
 While almost dead
Asleep, forgetful of his mirth,
A dimpled Cupid at her side
 Sprawls satisfied.

Conquered, weary with the light,
 Her eyelids orb :
Summer's plenitude of might
 Her lips absorb,—
Uplifted to the burning air
And with repletion fallen apart.
 Her form is bare,
But her doe-skin binds each dart
Of her woodland armory,
 Laid idle by.

She is curled beyond the rim
 Of oaks that slide
Their lowest branches, long and slim,
 Close to her side ;
Their foliage touches her with lobes
Half-gay, half-shadowed, green and brown :
 Her white throat globes,
Thrown backward, and her breasts sink down
With the supineness of her sleep,
 Leaf-fringed and deep.

Where her hand has curved to slip
 Across a bough,
Fledged Cupid's slumberous fingers grip
 The turf and how
Close to his chin he hugs her cloak !
His torch reversed trails on the ground
 With feeble smoke ;
For in noon's chastity profound,
In the blank glare of mid-day skies,
 Love's flambeau dies.

But the sleepers are not left
 To breathe alone ;
A god is by with hoofs deep-cleft,
 Legs overgrown
With a rough pelt and body strong :
Yet must the head and piercing eyes
 In truth belong
To some Olympian in disguise ;
From lawless shape or mien unkempt
 They are exempt.

Zeus, beneath these oaken boughs,
 As satyr keeps
His watch above the woman's brows
 And backward sweeps
Her cloak to flood her with the noon ;
Curious and fond, yet by a clear
 Joy in the boon
Of beauty franchised—beauty dear
To him as to a tree's bent mass
 The sunny grass.

*Take a look at the last stanza of the poem, and answer the following questions in partners*:

1. What words are used to describe Zeus in this stanza? How would you describe his attitude toward the sleepers?
2. What does the phrase “joy in the boon of beauty franchised” mean? Who is the rightful “owner” of this beauty? Use the following simile, “beauty dear to him as to a tree’s bent mass the sunny grass” to guide your response.