THE SCISSORS-MAN

As I was busy with the tools
That make my garden neat,
I heard a little crooked tune
Come drifting up the street.

It didn’t seem to have an end
Like others that are plain:
You always felt it going on
Till it began again.

It came quite near: I heard it call,
And dropped my tools and ran
To peer out through the garden-gate:
I thought it might be Pan.

But it was just the scissors-man
Who walked along and played
Upon a little instrument
He told me he had made.

He cut it out of box-wood when
The hours were long at home,
With small round holes to blow into
And make the music come.
Like penny-whistles in a row
   But cut a different way,
The long ones all went slanting down
   To shorter ones than they.

Now, if you hope to see a god
   As hard to find as Pan,
It's sad when it turns out to be
   A plain old scissors-man.

But when I called Her out to hear
   The crooked tune he made,
She said his instrument was like
   Some pipes that Pan had played:

And I must ask the scissors-man
   If he had ever known
Or met a queer old god who played
   On pipes much like his own?

He would not tell: and when I asked
   Who taught him how to play,
He made that crooked tune again,
   And laughed—and went away.