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EYES OF YOUTH

A Book of Verse by Padraic Colum—Shane
Leslie—Viola Meynell—Ruth Lindsay—
Hugh Austin—Judith Lytton—Olivia
Meynell—Maurice Healy—Monica
Saleeby—Francis Meynell—With
four early Poems by Francis
Thompson, & a Foreword by
Gilbert K. Chesterton.

"He has eyes of youth, he writes verses"

The Merry Wives of Windsor.

The four early poems of Francis
Thompson are here published,
for the first time in book form, by the
permission of his Literary Executor.

We have also to thank the Editors
of *The Station*, *The Tablet*, *The Outlook*,
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to re-publish other Verses.

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FOREWORD

My office on this occasion is one which I may well carry as lightly as possible. In our society, I am told, one needs an introduction to a beautiful woman; but I have never heard of men needing an introduction to a beautiful song. Prose before poetry is an unmeaning interruption; for poetry is perhaps the one thing in the world that explains itself. The only possible prelude for songs is silence; and I shall endeavour here to imitate the brevity of the silence as well as its stillness.

This collection contains four new poems by one whom all serious critics now class with Shelley and Keats and those other great ones cut down with their work unfinished. Yet I would not speak specially of him, lest modern critics should run away with their mad notion of a one-man influence; and call this a "school" of Francis Thompson. Francis Thompson was not a schoolmaster. He would have said as freely as Whitman (and with a far more consistent philosophy), "I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free." The modern world has this mania about plagiarism because the modern world cannot comprehend the idea of communion. It thinks that men must steal ideas; it does not understand that men may share them. The saints did not imitate each other; not always even study each other; they studied the Imitation of Christ. A real religion is that in which any two solitary people might suddenly say the same thing at any moment. It would therefore be most misleading to give to this collection an air of having been inspired by its most famous contributor. The little lyrics of this little book must surely be counted individual, even by those who may count them mysterious. A variety verging on quaintness is the very note of the assembled bards.

Take, for example, Mr. Colum's stern and simple rendering of the bitter old Irish verses:

"O woman, shapely as the swan,
On your account I shall not die."

Like Fitzgerald's Omar and all good translations, it leaves one wondering whether the original was as good; but to an Englishman the note is not only unique, but almost hostile. It is the hardness of the real Irishman which has been so skilfully hidden under the softness of the stage Irishman. The words are ages old, I believe; they come out of the ancient Ireland of Cairns and fallen Kings: and yet the words might have been spoken by one of Bernard Shaw's modern heroes to one of his modern heroines. The curt, bleak words, the haughty, heathen spirit are certainly as remote as anything can be from the luxuriant humility of Francis Thompson.

If the writers have a real point of union it is in a certain instinct for contrast between their shape and subject matter. All the poems are brief in form, and at the same time big in topic. They remind us of the vivid illuminations of the virile thirteenth century, when artists crowded cosmic catastrophes into the corner of an initial letter; where one may find a small picture of the Deluge or of the flaming Cities of the Plain. One of the specially short poems sees the universe overthrown and the good angels conquered. Another short poem sees the newsboys in Fleet Street shouting the news of the end of the world, and the awful return of God. The writers seem unconsciously to have sought to make a poem as large as a revelation, while it was nearly as short as a riddle. And though Francis Thompson himself was rather in the Elizabethan tradition of amplitude and ingenuity, he could write separate lines that were separate poems in themselves:—

"And thou, what needest with thy tribe's black tents,
Who hast the red pavilion of my heart?"

A mediaeval illuminator would have jumped out of his sandals in his eagerness to illustrate that.

G.K. CHESTERTON.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

Threatened Tears

Do not loose those rains thy wet
Eyes, my Fair, unsurely threat;
Do not, Sweet, do not so;
Thou canst not have a single woe,
But this sad and doubtful weatlier
Overcasts us both together.
In the aspect of those known eyes

My soul's a captain weatherwise.
Ah me! what presages it sees
In those watery Hyades.

Arab Love Song

The hunchèd camels of the night*
Trouble the bright
And silver waters of the moon.
The Maiden of the Morn will soon
Through Heaven stray and sing,
Star gathering.

Now while the dark about our loves is strewn,
Light of my dark, blood of my heart, O come!
And night will catch her breath up, and be dumb.

Leave thy father, leave thy mother
And thy brother;
Leave the black tents of thy tribe apart!
Am I not thy father and thy brother,
And thy mother?

And thou—what needest with thy tribe's black tents
Who hast the red pavilion of my heart?

* The cloud-shapes often observed by travellers in the East.

Buona Notte

Jane Williams, in her last letter to Shelley, wrote: "Why do you talk of never enjoying moments like the past? Are you going to join your friend Plato, or do you expect I shall do so soon? Buona Notte." This letter was dated July 6th, and Shelley was drowned on the 8th. The following is his imagined reply from, another world:—

Ariel to Miranda:—hear
This good-night the sea-winds bear;
And let thine unacquainted ear
Take grief for their interpreter.

Good-night; I have risen so high
Into slumber's rarity,
Not a dream can beat its feather
Through the unsustaining ether.
Let the sea-winds make avouch
How thunder summoned me to couch,
Tempest curtained me about
And turned the sun with his own hand out:
And though I toss upon my bed
My dream is not disquieted;
Nay, deep I sleep upon the deep,
And my eyes are wet, but I do not weep;
And I fell to sleep so suddenly
That my lips are moist yet—could'st thou see
With the good-night draught I have drunk to thee.
Thou can'st not wipe them; for it was Death
Damped my lips that has dried my breath.
A little while—it is not long—
The salt shall dry on them like the song.

Now know'st thou, that voice desolate,
Mourning ruined joy's estate,
Reached thee through a closing gate.
"Go'st thou to Plato?" Ah, girl, no!
It is to Pluto that I go.

The Passion of Mary

O Lady Mary, thy bright crown
Is no mere crown of majesty;
For with the reflex of His own
Resplendent thorns Christ circled thee.

The red rose of this passion tide
Doth take a deeper hue from thee,
In the five Wounds of Jesus dyed,
And in Thy bleeding thoughts, Mary.

The soldier struck a triple stroke
That smote thy Jesus on the tree;
He broke the Heart of hearts, and broke
The Saint's and Mother's hearts in thee.

Thy Son went up the Angels' ways,
His passion ended; but, ah me!
Thou found'st the road of further days
A longer way of Calvary.

On the hard cross of hopes deferred
Thou hung'st in loving agony,
Until the mortal dreaded word,
Which chills our mirth, spake mirth to thee.

The Angel Death from this cold tomb
Of life did roll the stone away;
And He thou barest in thy womb
Caught thee at last into the day—
Before the living throne of Whom
The lights of heaven burning pray.

L'ENVOY.

O thou who dwellest in the day,
Behold, I pace amidst the gloom:
Darkness is ever round my way,
With little space for sunbeam room.

Yet Christian sadness is divine,
Even as thy patient sadness was:
The salt tears in our life's dark wine
Fell in it from the saving Cross.

Bitter the bread of our repast;
Yet doth a sweet the bitter leaven:
Our sorrow is the shadow cast
Around it by the light of Heaven.
O Light in light, shine down from Heaven!

PADRAIC COLUM

"I shall not die for you"

(From the Irish)

O woman, shapely as the swan,
On your account I shall not die.
The men you've slain—a trivial clan—
Were less than I.

I ask me shall I die for these:
For blossom-teeth and scarlet lips?
And shall that delicate swan-shape
Bring me eclipse?

Well shaped the breasts and smooth the skin,

The cheeks are fair, the tresses free;
And yet I shall not suffer death,
God over me.

Those even brows, that hair like gold,
Those languorous tones, that virgin way;
The flowing limbs, the rounded heel
Slight men betray.

Thy spirit keen through radiant mien,
Thy shining throat and smiling eye,
Thy little palm, thy side like foam—
I cannot die.

O woman, shapely as the swan,
In a cunning house hard-reared was I;
O bosom white, O well-shaped palm,
I shall not die.

An Idyll

You stay at last at my bosom, with your beauty
young and rare,
Though your light limbs are as limber as the
foal's that follows the mare,
Brow fair and young and stately where thought
has now begun—Hair
bright as the breast of the eagle when he
strains up to the sun!

In the space of a broken castle I found you on
a day
When the call of the new-come cuckoo went
with me all the way.
You stood by the loosened stones that were
rough and black with age:
The fawn beloved of the hunter in the panther's
broken cage!

And we went down together by paths your
childhood knew—
Remote you went beside me, like the spirit of
the dew;
Hard were the hedge-rows still: sloe-bloom
was their scanty dower—
You slipped it within your bosom, the bloom
that scarce is flower.

And now you stay at my bosom with you
beauty young and rare,
Though your light limbs are as limber as the
foal's that follows the mare;
But always I will see you on paths your childhood
knew,
When remote you went beside me like the
spirit of the dew.

Christ the Comrade

Christ, by thine own darkened hour
Live within my heart and brain!
Let my hands not slip the rein.

Ah, how long ago it is
Since a comrade rode with me!
Now a moment let me see

Thyself, lonely in the dark,
Perfect, without wound or mark.

Arab Songs (I)

Saadi the Poet stood up and he put forth his
living words.
His songs were the hurtling of spears and
his figures the flashing of swords.
With hearts dilated our tribe saw the creature
of Saadi's mind;
It was like to the horse of a king, a creature
of fire and of wind.

Umimah my loved one was by me: without
love did these eyes see my fawn,
And if fire there were in her being, for me
its splendour had gone;
When the sun storms up on the tent, he makes
waste the fire of the grass—
It was thus with my loved one's beauty: the
splendour of song made it pass.

The desert, the march, and the onset—these
and these only avail,
Hands hard with the handling of spear-shafts,
brows white with the press of the mail!
And as for the kisses of women—these are
honey, the poet sings;
But the honey of kisses, beloved, it is lime
for the spirit's wings.

Arab Songs (II)

The poet reproaches those who have affronted him.

Ye know not why God hath joined the horse
fly unto the horse
Nor why the generous steed is yoked with
the poisonous fly:
Lest the steed should sink into ease and lose
his fervour of nerve
God hath appointed him this: a lustful and
venomous bride.

Never supine lie they, the steeds of our folk,
to the sting,
Praying for deadness of nerve, their wounds
the shame of the sun;
They strive, but they strive for this: the fullness
of passionate nerve;
They pant, but they pant for this: the speed
that outstrips the pain.

Sons of the dust, ye have stung: there is
darkness upon my soul.
Sons of the dust, ye have stung: yea, stung
to the roots of my heart.
But I have said in my breast: the birth
succeeds to the pang,
And sons of the dust, behold, your malice
becomes my song.

SHANE LESLIE

A Dead Friend (J.S., 1905)

I drew him then unto my knee, my friend who
was dead,
And I set my live lips over his, and my heart
by his head.

I thought of an unrippled love and a passion
unsaid,
And the years he was living by me, my friend
who was dead;

And the white morning ways that we went,
and how oft we had fed
And drunk with the sunset for lamp—my friend
who was dead;

Now never the draught at my lips would thrill
to my head—
For the last vintage ebbed in my heart; my
friend he was dead.

Then I spake unto God in my grief: My wine
and my bread
And my staff Thou hast taken from me—my
friend who is dead.

Are the heavens yet friendless to Thee, and
lone to Thy head,
That Thy desolate heart must have need of my
friend who is dead?

To God then I spake yet again: not Peter
instead
Would I take, nor Philip nor John, for my
friend who is dead.

Forest Song

All around I heard the whispering larches
Swinging to the low-lipped wind;
God, they piped, is lilting in our arches,
For He loveth leafen kind.

Ferns I heard, unfolding from their slumber,
Say confiding to the reed:
God well knoweth us, Who loves to number
Us and all our fairy seed.

Voices hummed as of a multitude
Crowding from their lowly sod;
'Twas the stricken daisies where I stood,
Crying to the daisies' God.

The Bee

Away, the old monks said,
Sweet honey-fly,
From lilting overhead
The lullaby
You heard some mother croon
Beneath the harvest moon.
Go, hum it in the hive,
The old monks said,
For we were once alive
Who now are dead.

Outside the Carlton

The death of the grey withered grass
Of man's is a sign,
And his life is as wine
That is spilt from a half-shivered glass.
At a quarter to nine
Went Dives to dine ...

(Man, it is said, is as grass.)

Riches and plunder had met
To furnish his feast—
Both succulent beast
And fish from the fisherman's net;
While he tasteth of dishes
And all his soul wishes—
Nor knoweth his hour hath been set.

The death of the pale-sodden hay
'Neath the feet of the kine
Is to man for a sign;
At the striking of ten he was grey,
And they carried him out
Stiff-strangled with gout.
(Man, it is said, is as hay.)

The Pater of the Cannon

Father of the thunder,
Flinger of the flame,
Searing stars asunder,
Hallowed be Thy Name!

By the sweet-sung quiring
Sister bullets hum,
By our fiercest firing,
May Thy Kingdom come!

By Thy strong apostle
Of the Maxim gun,
By his pentecostal
Flame, *Thy Will be done!*

Give us, Lord, good feeding
To Thy battles sped—Flesh,
white grained and bleeding,
Give for daily bread!

Fleet Street

I never see the newsboys run
Amid the whirling street,
With swift untiring feet,
To cry the latest venture done,
But I expect one day to hear
Them cry the crack of doom
And risings from the tomb,
With great Archangel Michael near;
And see them running from the Fleet
As messengers of God,
With Heaven's tidings shod
About their brave unwearied feet.

Nightmare

I dreamt that the heavens were beggared
And angels went chanting for bread,
And the cherubs were sewed up in sackcloth,
And Satan anointed his head.
I dreamt they had chalked up a price
On the sun and the stars at God's feet,
And the Devil had bought up the Church,
And put out the Pope in the street.

I do remember thee so blest and filled
With all life offered thee,
Yet unsurprised I learn that thou hast willed
To share or lose her fee.

It seems a very great and stalwart thing
To toss defence away,
To tear the golden feathers from thy wing
And lie with shards of clay.

To some far vision's light thine eyes are set
That mock life's treasure trove,
And see the changing woof not woven yet
As God would have it wove.

The red thou flauntest bravely, friend, for me
Hast lost alarming power;
For who but guilty men will quake their knee,
And who but robbers cower?

For many hallowed things are symbolled red,
Live fire and cleansing war,
And the bright sealing Blood that Christ once shed,
And Martyrs yet must pour.

O friend, choose one of these ourselves to link;
For how could friendship be
If from the foaming cup thou hast to drink
The dregs come not to me?

Dividing much, thou makest little thine
Except the gain of loss;
Yet haply Christ's true peer hath better sign
Than coronet—the Cross.

St. George-in-the-East

'Mid the quiet splendour of a pennoned crowd,
Gently proud,
Moved in armour, silvered in celestial forge,
Great Saint George,
Stands he in the crimson-woven air of fight
Speared with light—
Hell is harried by the holy anger poured
From his sword.

Where the sweated toilers of the river slum
Shiver dumb,
Passed to-day a poorly clad and poorly shod
Knight of God;
Where the human eddy smears with shame and rags
Paving flags,
Hell shall weakly wail beneath the words he cries
Piteous-wise.

VIOLA MEYNELL

The Ruin

I led thy thoughts, having them for my own,
To where my God His head to thee did bend.
I bore thee in my bosom to His throne.
O, the blest labour, and the treasured end!

Now like a ruined aqueduct I go
Unburdened; thou by more fleet ways hast been
With Him. Since thou thine own swift road dost know,
Thou canst not brook such slow and devious mean.

The Dream

I slept, and thought a letter came from you—
You did not love me any more, it said.
What breathless grief!—my love not true, not true ...
I was afraid of people, and afraid
Of things inanimate—the wind that blew,
The clock, the wooden chair; and so I strayed
From home, but could not stray from grief, I knew.
And then at dawn I woke, and wept, and prayed,
And knew my blessed love was still the same;—
And yet I sit and moan upon the bed
For that dream-creature's loss. For when I came
(I came, perhaps, to comfort her) she fled.
I would be with her where she wanders now,
Fleeing the earth, with pain upon her brow.

The Wanderer

All night my thoughts have rested in God's fold;
They lay beside me here upon the bed.
At dawn I woke: the air beat sad and cold.
I told them o'er—Ah, God, one thought had fled.

Into what dark, deep chasm this wayward one
Has sunk, I scarcely know; I will not chide.
O Shepherd, leave me! Seek this lamb alone.
The ninety-nine are here. They will abide.

"Nature is the living mantle of God" —Goethe

O for the time when some impetuous breeze
Will catch Thy garment, and, like autumn trees,
Toss it and rend it till Thou standest free,
And end Thy long secluded reverie!

Still now its beauty folds Thee, and—as she
Who kissed Thy garment and had health from Thee—
I feel the sun, or hear some bird in bliss,
And Thou hast then my sudden, humble kiss.

Secret Prayer

Since that with lips which moved in one we prayed,
So that God ceased to hear us speak apart,
What law irrevocable have we made?
How shall He hear a solitary heart

When He did need that we, to have His ear,
Should go aside and pray together there
With urgent breath? Ah, now I pause and fear—
How shall I uprise my lonely, separate prayer?

The Unheeded

Upon one hand your kisses chanced to rest:
I smiled upon the other hand and said
"Poor thing," when you had gone: and then in quest
Of pity rose a clamour from the dead—
Some way of mine, some word, some look, some jest
Complained they too went all uncoveted ...
That night I took these troubles to my breast,
And played that you and I, my own, were wed;
Those troubles were our child, with eyes of fear,—
A wailing babe, whom I, his mother dear,
Must soothe to quiet rest and calm relief,

And urge his eyes to sleeping by and by.
"O hush," I said, and wept to see such grief;
"Hush, hush, your father must not hear you cry."

Dream of Death

In sleep my idle thoughts were sadly led
By wild dark ways: it strangely seemed that I
Must join the number of the silent dead,
And with my young and fearful heart must die.

But ah, what drew my bitter moans and sighs,
And pierced my sleeping spirit, was that she
Who with the saddest tears would close these eyes
And with maternal passion mourn for me,

She on some pleasure-errand stayed away.
Ah, bitter, bitter thought! Ah, lonely death
To seek me in the night! And not till day
Had come and soothed my fear, and calmed my breath,

And in the sun my new life I could kiss,
And look with prayer and hope to future years,
Did I discern God's mercy still in this—
That I was spared the anguish of her tears.

RUTH TEMPLE LINDSAY

Mater Salvatoris

Ah, wilt thou turn aside and see
The little Child on Mary's knee?
Enter the stable bleak and cold,
Grove through the straw and myrrh and gold;
Seek in the darkness near and far—
Lift up the lantern and the Star.
Rough shepherds came to love and greet,
There knelt three kings at Mary's feet.
Ah! draw thee nigh the holy place—
He sleepeth well in her embrace,
The little Saviour of thy race—
Then raise thine eyes to Mary's face.

But wilt thou come in years to be?
She held Him dead across her knee.
Stretch Him aloft on planks of wood;
Offer Him gall for tears and blood.
Blazon thy hatred far and near:
Lift up the hammer and the spear.
Red thorns about his head were wound—
There lay three nails upon the ground.
Yea I Heed the Lover of thy race—
He lieth dead in her embrace.
Ah! scourge thy soul with its disgrace:
Then raise thine eyes to Mary's face.

To Choose

Thou canst choose the eastern Circle for thy part,
And within its sacred precincts thou shalt rest;
Thou shalt fold pale, slender hands upon thy breast,
Thou shalt fasten silent eyes upon thy heart.
If there steal within the languor of thine ark
The thunder of the waters of the earth,
The human, simple cries of pain and mirth,
The wails of little children in the dark,

Thou shalt contemplate thy Circle's radiant gleam,
Thou shalt gather self and God more closely still:
Let the Piteous and the Foolish moan at will,
So thou shelter in the sweetness of thy dream.

Thou canst bear a bloodstained Cross upon thy breast,
Thou shalt stand upon the common, human sod,
Thou shalt lift unswerving eyes unto thy God,
Thou shalt stretch torn, rugged hands to east and west
Thou shalt call to every throne and every cell—
Thou shalt gather all the answers of the Earth,
Thou shalt wring repose from weariness and dearth,
Thou shalt fathom the profundity of Hell—
But thy height shall touch the height of God above,
And thy breadth shall span the breadth of pole to pole,
And thy depth shall sound the depth of every soul,
And thy heart the deep Gethsemane of Love.

The Hunters

*"The Devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about
seeking whom he may detour"*

The Lion, he prowleth far and near,
Nor swerves for pain or rue;
He heeded nought of sloth nor fear,
He prowleth—prowleth through
The silent glade and the weary street,
In the empty dark and the full noon heat;
And a little Lamb with aching Feet—
He prowleth too.

The Lion croucheth alert, apart—
With patience doth he woo;
He waiteth long by the shuttered heart,
And the Lamb—He waiteth too.
Up the lurid passes of dreams that kill,
Through the twisting maze of the great Untrue,
The Lion followeth the fainting will—
And the Lamb—He followeth too.

From the thickets dim of the hidden way
Where the debts of Hell accrue,
The Lion leapeth upon his prey:
But the Lamb—He leapeth too.
Ah! loose the leash of the sins that damn,
Mark Devil and God as goals,
In the panting love of a famished Lamb,
Gone mad with the need of souls.

The Lion, he strayeth near and far;
What heights hath he left untrod?
He crawleth nigh to the purest star,
On the trail of the saints of God.
And throughout the darkness of things unclean,
In the depths where the sin-ghouls brood,
There prowleth ever with yearning mien—
A lamb as white as Blood!

HUGH AUSTIN

The Astronomers Prayer

Night. O Thou God! who rulest Heaven and earth,
The terraced atmospheres, the bounded seas;
Who knowest equally both death and birth,
Frail human men, strong divine mysteries,
Whose unencumbered thought sways all the spheres,
In all their turning, snake-like, perfect ways;

Now that the season of my labour nears,
Grant me an insight to Thy larger days!

To Thee all things create and unborn yield,
Being of Thee, the secret of their souls—
The traversed elements, the azure field
Whereo'er eternal each huge star-world rolls.
There is no tiny insect but does know
Itself within Thy Presence visual:
From us too swiftly years and seasons go,
To Thee all change is a thing gradual.

E'en as at nightfall, when the lights come in,
The moth attracted woos and meets her death,
So do I seek Thy light to wander in,
Though fearfully and with half-bated breath.
So do I seek all knowledge of Thy stars,
Which move in and without my vision's reach;
Maybe yet burning with internal wars,
Or shaking as this world with human speech.

Stars which perhaps ten thousand years ago
Waned and grew cold at Thy almighty word
Waft their light hitherward. I do not know—
Thy recreating voice I have not heard.
Maybe, e'en at this hour Thine accents shake
Some chaos into order, into life;
Perchance some great creation now doth break
Into new form beneath Thy wisdom's knife.

Ah, Lord! The night appals me. Give me strength
Within myself to search this planet's dome:
O Supreme Architect, give me at length
Some clearer knowledge of Thy spaceless home!
My spirit seethes within me; in the sky
Thy constellations shine; for me begin
My labours until night-time passes by—
And before dawn I must or fail or win.

The Moon

Cirqued with dim stars and delicate moonflowers,
Silent she moves among the silent hours—
Watching the spheres that glow with golden heat
Under her feet.

Then, when the sunrise tints the east with light,
She fades to westward, with the dreamy night
And all her starry train—in faint disguise
Of twilight skies.

To Yvonne

Such things have been, Yvonne; but you and I,
Can we touch lips again across the years?
Re-order what is past? Forget—or try
Not to remember what through mists of tears
Is still too memorable? Dare we two
Start both our lives again, as we were young
And happy, in such love as falls to few?
Nay, for our violins are all unstrung.

Yet it is well that memory should hold
Some few pale rose-leaves plucked in bygone days,
That still are sweet, despite those pains untold
Which throng the marges of life's winding ways.
Yea, these will stay when nearer things are gone;
I shall keep mine. Will you keep yours, Yvonne?

The Burial of Scald

A long, low wail of harps across the snow,
Falling and rising with the whistling wind;
A shifting glare of lights that come and go,
As if men searched for what they could not find.
And then the music thrilled out loud and well
Over the waste and barren dunes of sand—
Solemn and stately as a passing bell
Heard dimly in some weary twilight land.

Then slipped the moon behind a dusky cloud,
And each bright star its silver visage hid;
Mystery 'gan the darkness to enshroud;
Across the sky a blood-red message slid.

Sudden the ship blazed up, the dark was light;
Lo! Scald is dead! his pyre was lit to-night.

JUDITH LYTTON

A Day Remembered

Oh, Love, what fate is ours? No summer morning
Shall give us joy, no sunrise bring relief;
No end—no end is there unto our sorrow,
No measure to our grief.

You looked at me, and all your living beauty
Swept to my heart in flame a moment's space,
A sudden mist of tears in darkness veiling
The glory of your face.

You spoke: I seemed to hear the wild doves cooing—
The rain upon the hills, sweet falling rain;
And all my soul was filled with joy and anguish,
In ecstasy of pain.

I saw as in a mist celestial visions
Beyond the bitter seas whence hope has fled,
Heard the wind blow among the trees in summer,
But knew not what you said.

It matters not what words the lips have spoken
When heart shall speak to heart, for love can hear
Unspoken words, and see as in reflection
His own thoughts mirrored there.

You came to me, the sun arose in splendour;
I saw the roses spread their petals sweet,
And thought that all the world must see in wonder
The wings upon our feet.

You touched me, and a wave of passionate longing
Flooded my soul until it swooned away,
And knew no more the sunlight from the shadow—
If it were night or day.

We wandered in the shadow of the woodland,
Mute while we looked into each other's eyes,
And saw as in still pools of darkened water
The wonder of the skies.

No word we spoke. We knew that love had silenced
All that we wished to speak yet left unsaid;
The bees were humming in the wild-rose blossoms
Which clustered overhead.

And all that summer day we were together,
Alone with love, yet with a sword between—

The flaming sword that stands between us ever,
And all that might have been.

Mist gathered white at evening in the valleys,
And slowly grew the dusk from gold to grey,
While rain-clouds gathered on the low horizon
Dark at the close of day.

And softly rose a wind from out the darkness,
With scent of flower and fern and herb and tree,
And in its breath there came a sound of thunder,
Storm-laden from the sea.

And thus we reached the wicket of the garden;
The wood was full of sound, the sound of wings;
The scent of lavender brought back remembrance
Of long-forgotten things.

Though heaven and earth and sky should be forgotten,
Yet of that hour my soul should bear the trace:
For night fell fast, and in the deepening shadow
You turned and kissed my face.

Childhood

A stranger come I to the festival
Thou holdest in the regions of romance,
Where dragons lurk and elfin spirits dance,
And pearls lie hid within each rose petal.
What magic changes in life's crystal ball
Shall thus transform earth's dullness at thy glance!
Ride then the wind, a feather for thy lance,
A pool thy sea, thy heaven a waterfall.
So shall thy soul to fairy worlds belong,
Where dust is gold and dew-drops turn to wine;
Remember still the visions that are thine
When sorrow shall disperse that phantom throng;
And dream once more that thou hast found divine
Love in a flower, and kingdoms in a song.

Love in Idleness

To look at thee, and see the sunlight move
The shadow of the leaves upon thy face,
Lighting the glory of thy youth and grace
With golden rays wind-stirred from trees above;
To listen to the rustling of the grove,
The warblers in the reeds which interlace
The waters of the pool, and dream a space,
Forgetful of the hours ... this then is love!
Thy passion and thy strength, thy gentleness,
All these are mine. Who then shall dispossess
My soul of paradise? In truth I learn
More than the world can teach. Oblivion waits,
And distance parts, and Death annihilates:
But now thy love is all my love's concern.

Love's Counterfeit

By what false spell of what enchanter's wand
Should thy gross fibre be with love allied?
Unhappy youth, thou callest to thy side
An unknown shade from some far spirit land;
Thou canst not guess, nor shalt thou understand,
The waters that thy soul from his divide.
In place of Love, what alien spirits glide
About thy sleep to answer thy command?
What blasphemy is this? Thou hast no spell
To call that heaven-born spirit from the deep,

Or move the stars. What cometh in his place?
This monstrous fraud which thou hast raised from hell,
Whose arms about thee in the darkness creep?
Light not thy torch, lest thou shouldst see
his face.

OLIVIA MEYNELL

A Grief without Christ

I sought Him in the trees, and Him I found
In every colour, and in every sound.

I sought Him in the sky, and He was there,
A living God, breathing the living air.

I sought Him in my soul—oh, passionate loss!
All that I found was a forsaken Cross.

The Crowning

Whenas we wandered in the summer hours,
My kind love crowned me with a crown of flowers.

Softly they touched my forehead and my hair;
Gay, sunny, yellow, and sweet-breathed they were—

Soft flowers and tender hands, gay sun, soft skies;
And sweeter, tenderer yet, his loving eyes.

Ah! but it should have been with thorns he crowned me,
Who follow Christ, while cold skies blackened round me.

Dear love, I will accept from you cold frown,
Sharp words, hard touch, as symbols of His crown.

MAURICE HEALY

In Memoriam

"Lord, teach us how to pray," they said;
And Jesus raised His weary head,
Bowed by the sorrows of the way,
And taught His children how to pray.

"Lord, teach me how to pray," I cried;
And Jesus sent you to my side
To make your own the soul I wear
And mould it purer into prayer.

And since your love first lit the way
I find that I have learned to pray;
For, that my soul may benefit,
I pray that you may pray for it.

A Ballad of Friendship

for two most dear Children

Soured and dimmed and chilled with senility
Hobbled the year to its uttermost day;
I gave the best of a slender ability,

Seeking to make a short afternoon gay.
You were both claimed ere the sky was grey
Over the tips of the western towers;
Yet, as you went, you had time to say,
"This is no stranger: we name him ours!"

Slaves and serfs have woes in abundance—
Clashing of manacle, whistling of thong,
Tales of terror and tears to redundancy;
What is the score of my slavery's wrong?
Surely where pleasures so freely throng
Some sad fiend of unhappiness lowers;
Or is the refrain of Good Fortune's song,
"This is no stranger: we name him ours"?

When you enfranchised me into your mystery,
Lovingly stealing the sorrows I had,
Wisdom came with you; the old sad history
Glowed; and I knew in my heart why the sad
And outcast Lord grew suddenly glad
As the children thronged to crown Him with flowers,
When their cry was voiced by some tiny lad,
"This is no Stranger: we name Him ours!"

L'ENVOI.

So do I thank you; and if some day
You in your gained Paradisal bowers
Hear me knocking, be bold to pray,
"This is no stranger: we claim him ours!"

In the Midst of Them

*"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look on me, a little child.
Pity my simplicity
And suffer me to come to Thee."*

Now prevails a creed which tells
Us to seek no miracles.
Reason by discovered lore
Reigns where Faith was found before.
God, Who set our world aspin,
Now is weary of its din;
He, Who for our fathers' sake
Conjured lightning and earthquake,
Vanquished sorrow, sickness, death,
Deems we are not worth the Breath
That blessed the trusting prophet's rod
When Moses called upon his God.
How dare *we* expect Him give
Miracles to help us live?

Yet I build on Him Who saith,
"Move the mountains with your faith"—
Doubt the lips that falter, wan,
"The age of miracles is gone!"
I have learned to read the grim
Testimony unto Him
Printed with starvation's hand
On every hove! through the land;
I have swung the crazy door
To find huddled on a floor
Rat-gnawed and riddled, with never a clout
To keep the eager winter out,
Some six or seven of our kind
Shivering beneath the wind,
Foodless, fireless, hungry-eyed,
Crouched round one who just had died,
Hopeless that the dawn would bring
Friendly aid and comforting.

And after prayer for the parted soul,

They have thanked the slender dole,
And spoken of hope of days to come,
And have forgotten their martyrdom.
The anguished grief of motherhood
Has firmly whispered "God is good
And can in His Eternity
Repay this present loss"; till I
Have almost turned my head to see
If Christ has not come in with me!

*Gentle Jesus, mild and meek,
These the simple words I speak
Are the faith Thou gavest me;
Suffer me to come to Thee!*

Sic Transit

They camped in the meadow at sunrise,
And their crests gleamed bright in the sun,
And the breeze that blew sighed soft, for it knew
Their fate e'er the day was done.
They lay in the meadow at sunset,
As the sky in anger blushed red;
For the host of the dawn lay still on the lawn—
The host was a host of dead.

Let the gardener but pass his scythe o'er the grass—
And the life of a daisy is sped!

MONICA SALEEBY

Retrospect

You loved the child of fifteen years.
I knew not this vast thing.
Your great heart shrank beneath your fears;
You left me wondering.

Now fourteen years have passed us by;
Our souls meet once again;
And, meeting, I have asked you why
Our ways apart have lain?

And now your answer comes at last:—
"I loved you in that day."
Oh, strange reply! Oh, tender past!
Oh, long love locked away!

And now, yes, I have climbed Love's hill;
My heart is bound, yet free.
And is there not some young child still
For you to love in me?

You have the right to love her yet,
For he who loves me grown
Knew not the child you'll ne'er forget;
I give her for your own.

Oh, keep her young within your breast,
Allow her to survive;
For love of you *I'll* do my best
To keep your child alive.

FRANCIS MEYNELL

Any Stone

A myriad years God toiled to mould
A nerveless stone to His intent—
From peace to war, from heat to cold,
It triumphed against the Omnipotent:
God strove until His strength grew old,
Then cried "Thy help, My firmament!"

The stars in succour gave their light,
The aiding moon her ocean-sway;
At dawn and dusk the hosts of night
Watched round the battle-fires of day ...
To set the dust He loved aright
God called His winds to that array,

And all the burden of the world,
And all the tears from all men's eyes,
Drought, dew, and every flower unfurled,
The priest, the fire, the sacrifice,
The pillared cloud, His thunder hurled—
Victor, He held as nought the price!

Thus loved, thus wrought, God deemed the stone
Fit bed for beasts to lie upon.

O God of Gods, make short my days
Of blind approach to her and Thee;
Life-long upon Thy rugged ways
Her heart has danced: she calls to me.
Hast Thou forgotten me alone,
O Watcher where the wild beast lies?—
Mould to Thy will this other stone
—A stone, yet precious in her eyes.

Lux in Tenebris

Spirit of smiles and tears, you came to me in the night,
The golden moon aglow in your hair, and the spear-driven
light
Of an army of stars in your eyes, weary with truant sleep.
O little skilled in self, who thought you came to weep!

Out of the darkness, light; flame in the virgin dew!
Love came unto her own, and knew him not, who knew.
O understood! O known! O apprehended bliss!
O self unskilled in self! O taught of my one kiss!

Mater Inviolata

A maiden's love most nuptial is,
Innocent of his nuptial kiss;
And only after marriage call
Her lips, her passion, virginal!

For when she dreams, who is beloved,
The ancient miracle stands proved—
Virginity's much Motherhood!
For O, the unborn babes she keeps,
The unthought glory, lips unwooded!—
And O, the quickening of her sleeps
Whose dreams, dreamed over, do repeat
The echoes of Love's falling feet!
For his, her young inviolate mouth
Longs with the longing of long drouth:
And, lacking substance for such feast,
She clasps a dream-baby to breast,
And kisses, where her head has place,
The dream-lips of her love's dream-face!

On the decked bridal bed of Night
She knows the Moon shows maiden light—
The Sun's kiss urged in marriage-rite!
So, when her very night shall come,
Virginal, in her virgin home
When stars show unfamiliar faces,
Laughing for love in their high places—
When her essential lips are dumb
In a thronged panic of embraces—
Her maiden heart, her spousal breast,
Shall throb, surrendered and possessed,
Throb, passion-sweet and ungainsaid—
"Now at the last am I a Maid!"

Song-burden

I do confess I have no art
To tell the tale of my own heart.

Of lips and tears, of hearts and eyes,
I rhyme my rhymes and fear my fears;
And if of these I make you wise,
These pictured hearts, these lips, these tears,
There is nought to do; I have played my part.

And I, a captain of much guile,
Within your ranks dissensions preach
Till all are jealous, each of each—
Your eyes, lips, heart, a tear, a smile!

So, when you turn your eyes away
From mirrored eyes, and when you stay
Love-hearing with reluctant hand,
Straight then your heart-throbs will betray
That you have read, and understand!

And should your maiden heart uprising
Against fain ears and full-fain eyes,
Upon your lips, that cannot err,
I set my kiss-interpreter!

Or hold you steadfast as allies
Your heart, hand, lips, your smiles, your all,
Your faithful eyes are traitrous eyes—
Out-steals a tear to your downfall!

Your heart, your eyes, the lips of you
—Hesitant and full-fain your eyes!—
Make all my song; have I sung true?
Make all my song; are you song-wise?

Gifts

My given gifts have been, ah me!
Sorrow, and superfluity.

You needed primal force, and this
Was all my giving—emphasis.

For your mute voice more mute I made,
And at your singing proffered song;
You trembled, and I was afraid—
Were pierced, I fell on the same blade—
Triumphed, and then my arm was strong.
For peace I builded on your peace,
And on your weakness mine up-piled;
Of too fond hope I made increase,
And at your smilings, as a child,
Ignorant of their cost, I smiled.

Always I fear at sight of fears,

And always weep at weeping eyes;
O my Belovéd, take my tears,
Take my sighs!

And these, and these, alas! shall be
Sorrow, and superfluity.

Wraith

Mine was not equal of her trust—
As whose, my friend, as whose should be?—And
now, a panic dream of dust,
She comes to haunt the heart of me;

She comes to haunt my heart for this,
And lo, a glory of my sighs!
For still her phantom lips I kiss,
Who cannot meet her phantom eyes.

A Dedication

I took the universe for theme,
And all young eyes, and all old stars;
A thousand angels of my dream
I sang, and a thousand of love's wars.

Blind then my eyes, that now can see
The narrowness of infinity!

For these my songs sing but her eyes,
And all my song one star apart,
One angel's dream-soliloquies,
One conquered, one triumphant, heart.

Yea, one is all, and all is one;
My songs, O love, are sung, and I have done.

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