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A Dark Month

By

Algernon Charles Swinburne

Taken from The Collected Poetical Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne (Vol. V)

THE COLLECTED POETICAL WORKS
OF ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

VOL. V

STUDIES IN SONG : A
CENTURY OF ROUNDELS :
SONNETS ON ENGLISH
DRAMATIC POETS : THE
HEPTALOGIA : ETC.

SWINBURNE'S POETICAL WORKS

- I. POEMS AND BALLADS (First Series).
II. SONGS BEFORE SUNRISE, and SONGS OF TWO NATIONS.
III. POEMS AND BALLADS (Second and Third Series), and SONGS OF THE SPRING TIDES.
IV. TRISTRAM OF LYONESSE, THE TALE OF BALEN, ATALANTA IN CALYDON, ERECHTHEUS.
V. STUDIES IN SONG, A CENTURY OF ROUNDELS, SONNETS ON ENGLISH DRAMATIC POETS, THE HEPTALOGIA, ETC.
VI. A MIDSUMMER HOLIDAY, ASTROPHEL, A CHANNEL PASSAGE AND OTHER POEMS.

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

**STUDIES IN SONG : A CENTURY OF ROUNDELS :
SONNETS ON ENGLISH DRAMATIC POETS : THE
HEPTALOGIA : ETC.**

By

Algernon Charles Swinburne

1917

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A DARK MONTH

"La maison sans enfants!"—VICTOR HUGO.

I

A month without sight of the sun
Rising or reigning or setting
Through days without use of the day,
Who calls it the month of May?
The sense of the name is undone
And the sound of it fit for forgetting.

We shall not feel if the sun rise,
We shall not care when it sets:
If a nightingale make night's air
As noontide, why should we care?
Till a light of delight that is done rise,
Extinguishing grey regrets;

Till a child's face lighten again
On the twilight of older faces;
Till a child's voice fall as the dew
On furrows with heat parched through
And all but hopeless of grain,
Refreshing the desolate places—

Fall clear on the ears of us hearkening
And hungering for food of the sound
And thirsting for joy of his voice:
Till the hearts in us hear and rejoice,
And the thoughts of them doubting and darkening
Rejoice with a glad thing found.

When the heart of our gladness is gone,
What comfort is left with us after?
When the light of our eyes is away,
What glory remains upon May,
What blessing of song is thereon
If we drink not the light of his laughter?

No small sweet face with the daytime
To welcome, warmer than noon!
No sweet small voice as a bird's
To bring us the day's first words!
Mid May for us here is not Maytime:
No summer begins with June.

A whole dead month in the dark,
A dawn in the mists that o'ercome her
Stifled and smothered and sad—
Swift speed to it, barren and bad!
And return to us, voice of the lark,
And remain with us, sunlight of summer.

II

Alas, what right has the dawn to glimmer,
What right has the wind to do aught but moan?
All the day should be dimmer
Because we are left alone.

Yestermorn like a sunbeam present
Hither and thither a light step smiled,
And made each place for us pleasant
With the sense or the sight of a child.

But the leaves persist as before, and after
Our parting the dull day still bears flowers;
And songs less bright than his laughter
Deride us from birds in the bowers.

Birds, and blossoms, and sunlight only,
As though such folly sufficed for spring!
As though the house were not lonely
For want of the child its king!

III

Asleep and afar to-night my darling
Lies, and heeds not the night,
If winds be stirring or storms be snarling;
For his sleep is its own sweet light.

I sit where he sat beside me quaffing
The wine of story and song
Poured forth of immortal cups, and laughing
When mirth in the draught grew strong.

I broke the gold of the words, to melt it
For hands but seven years old,
And they caught the tale as a bird, and felt it
More bright than visible gold.

And he drank down deep, with his eyes broad beaming,
Here in this room where I am,
The golden vintage of Shakespeare, gleaming
In the silver vessels of Lamb.

Here by my hearth where he was I listen
For the shade of the sound of a word,
Athirst for the birdlike eyes to glisten,
For the tongue to chirp like a bird.

At the blast of battle, how broad they brightened,
Like fire in the spheres of stars,
And clung to the pictured page, and lightened
As keen as the heart of Mars!

325

At the touch of laughter, how swift it twittered
The shrillest music on earth;
How the lithe limbs laughed and the whole child glittered
With radiant riot of mirth!

Our Shakespeare now, as a man dumb-stricken,
Stands silent there on the shelf:
And my thoughts, that had song in the heart of them, sicken,
And relish not Shakespeare's self.

And my mood grows moodier than Hamlet's even,
And man delights not me,
But only the face that morn and even
My heart leapt only to see.

That my heart made merry within me seeing,
And sang as his laugh kept time:
But song finds now no pleasure in being,
And love no reason in rhyme.

IV

326

Mild May-blossom and proud sweet bay-flower,
What, for shame, would you have with us here?
It is not the month of the May-flower
This, but the fall of the year.

Flowers open only their lips in derision,
Leaves are as fingers that point in scorn
The shows we see are a vision;
Spring is not verily born.

Yet boughs turn supple and buds grow sappy,
As though the sun were indeed the sun:
And all our woods are happy
With all their birds save one.

But spring is over, but summer is over,
But autumn is over, and winter stands
With his feet sunk deep in the clover
And cowslips cold in his hands.

His hoar grim head has a hawthorn bonnet,
His gnarled gaunt hand has a gay green staff
With new-blown rose-blossom on it:
But his laugh is a dead man's laugh.

The laugh of spring that the heart seeks after,
The hand that the whole world yearns to kiss,
It rings not here in his laughter,
The sign of it is not this.

327

There is not strength in it left to splinter
Tall oaks, nor frost in his breath to sting:
Yet it is but a breath as of winter,
And it is not the hand of spring.

V

328

Thirty-one pale maidens, clad
All in mourning dresses,
Pass, with lips and eyes more sad
That it seems they should be glad,
Heads discrowned of crowns they had,
Grey for golden tresses.

Grey their girdles too for green,
And their veils dishevelled:
None would say, to see their mien,
That the least of these had been
Born no baser than a queen,
Reared where flower-fays revelled.

Dreams that strive to seem awake,
Ghosts that walk by daytime,
Weary winds the way they take,
Since, for one child's absent sake,
May knows well, whate'er things make
Sport, it is not Maytime.

VI

329

A hand at the door taps light
As the hand of my heart's delight:
It is but a full-grown hand,
Yet the stroke of it seems to start
Hope like a bird in my heart,
Too feeble to soar or to stand.

To start light hope from her cover
Is to raise but a kite for a plover
If her wings be not fledged to soar.
Desire, but in dreams, cannot ope
The door that was shut upon hope
When love went out at the door.

Well were it if vision could keep
The lids of desire as in sleep
Fast locked, and over his eyes
A dream with the dark soft key
In her hand might hover, and be
Their keeper till morning rise;

The morning that brings after many
Days fled with no light upon any
The small face back which is gone;
When the loved little hands once more
Shall struggle and strain at the door
They beat their summons upon.

VII

330

If a soul for but seven days were cast out of heaven and its mirth,
They would seem to her fears like as seventy years upon earth.

Even and morrow should seem to her sorrow as long
As the passage of numberless ages in slumberless song.

Dawn, roused by the lark, would be surely as dark in her sight
As her measureless measure of shadowless pleasure was bright.

Noon, guilt but with glory of gold, would be hoary and grey
In her eyes that had gazed on the depths, unamazed with the day.

Night hardly would seem to make darker her dream never done,
When it could but withhold what a man may behold of the sun.

For dreams would perplex, were the days that should vex her but seven,
The sight of her vision, made dark with division from heaven.

331

Till the light on my lonely way lighten that only now gleams,
I too am divided from heaven and derided of dreams.

A twilight fire-fly may suggest
 How flames the fire that feeds the sun:
 "A crooked figure may attest
 In little space a million."

But this faint-figured verse, that dresses
 With flowers the bones of one bare month,
 Of all it would say scarce expresses
 In crooked ways a millionth.

A fire-fly tenders to the father
 Of fires a tribute something worth:
 My verse, a shard-borne beetle rather,
 Drones over scarce-illuminated earth.

Some inches round me though it brighten
 With light of music-making thought,
 The dark indeed it may not lighten,
 The silence moves not, hearing nought.

Only my heart is eased with hearing,
 Only mine eyes are soothed with seeing,
 A face brought nigh, a footfall nearing,
 Till hopes take form and dreams have being.

IX

As a poor man hungering stands with insatiate eyes and hands
 Void of bread
 Right in sight of men that feast while his famine with no least
 Crumb is fed,

Here across the garden-wall can I hear strange children call,
 Watch them play,
 From the windowed seat above, whence the goodlier child I love
 Is away.

Here the sights we saw together moved his fancy like a feather
 To and fro,
 Now to wonder, and thereafter to the sunny storm of laughter
 Loud and low—

Sights engraven on storied pages where man's tale of seven swift ages
 All was told—
 Seen of eyes yet bright from heaven—for the lips that laughed were seven
 Sweet years old.

X

Why should May remember
 March, if March forget
 The days that began with December
 The nights that a frost could fret?

All their griefs are done with
 Now the bright months bless
 Fit souls to rejoice in the sun with,
 Fit heads for the wind's caress;

Souls of children quickening
 With the whole world's mirth,
 Heads closelier than field-flowers thickening
 That crowd and illuminate earth,

Now that May's call musters
 Files of baby bands
 To marshal in joyfuller clusters
 Than the flowers that encumber their hands.

Yet morose November
 Found them no less gay,

With nought to forget or remember
Less bright than a branch of may.

All the seasons moving
Move their minds alike
Applauding, acclaiming, approving
All hours of the year that strike.

So my heart may fret not,
Wondering if my friend
Remember me not or forget not
Or ever the month find end.

Not that love sows lighter
Seed in children sown,
But that life being lit in them brighter
Moves fleeter than even our own.

May nor yet September
Binds their hearts, that yet
Remember, forget, and remember,
Forget, and recall, and forget.

XI

As light on a lake's face moving
Between a cloud and a cloud
Till night reclaim it, reproving
The heart that exults too loud,

The heart that watching rejoices
When soft it swims into sight
Applauded of all the voices
And stars of the windy night,

So brief and unsure, but sweeter
Than ever a moondawn smiled,
Moves, measured of no tune's metre,
The song in the soul of a child;

The song that the sweet soul singing
Half listens, and hardly hears,
Though sweeter than joy-bells ringing
And brighter than joy's own tears;

The song that remembrance of pleasure
Begins, and forgetfulness ends
With a soft swift change in the measure
That rings in remembrance of friends

As the moon on the lake's face flashes,
So haply may gleam at whiles
A dream through the dear deep lashes
Whereunder a child's eye smiles,

And the least of us all that love him
May take for a moment part
With angels around and above him,
And I find place in his heart.

XII

Child, were you kinless and lonely—
Dear, were you kin to me—
My love were compassionate only
Or such as it needs would be.

But eyes of father and mother
Like sunlight shed on you shine:
What need you have heed of another
Such new strange love as is mine?

It is not meet if unruly

Hands take of the children's bread
And cast it to dogs; but truly
The dogs after all would be fed.

On crumbs from the children's table
That crumble, dropped from above,
My heart feeds, fed with unstable
Loose waifs of a child's light love.

Though love in your heart were brittle
As glass that breaks with a touch,
You haply would lend him a little
Who surely would give you much.

XIII

339

Here is a rough
Rude sketch of my friend,
Faint-coloured enough
And unworthily penned.

Fearlessly fair
And triumphant he stands,
And holds unaware
Friends' hearts in his hands;

Stalwart and straight
As an oak that should bring
Forth gallant and great
Fresh roses in spring.

On the paths of his pleasure
All graces that wait
What metre shall measure
What rhyme shall relate

Each action, each motion,
Each feature, each limb,
Demands a devotion
In honour of him:

Head that the hand
Of a god might have blest,
Laid lustrous and bland
On the curve of its crest:

340

Mouth sweeter than cherries,
Keen eyes as of Mars,
Browner than berries
And brighter than stars.

Nor colour nor wordy
Weak song can declare
The stature how sturdy,
How stalwart his air.

As a king in his bright
Presence-chamber may be,
So seems he in height—
Twice higher than your knee.

As a warrior sedate
With reserve of his power,
So seems he in state—
As tall as a flower:

As a rose overtowering
The ranks of the rest
That beneath it lie cowering,
Less bright than their best.

And his hands are as sunny
As ruddy ripe corn
Or the browner-hued honey
From heather-bells borne.

When summer sits proudest,
 Fulfilled with its mirth,
 And rapture is loudest
 In air and on earth,

The suns of all hours
 That have ripened the roots
 Bring forth not such flowers
 And beget not such fruits.

And well though I know it,
 As fain would I write,
 Child, never a poet
 Could praise you aright.

I bless you? the blessing
 Were less than a jest
 Too poor for expressing;
 I come to be blest,

With humble and dutiful
 Heart, from above:
 Bless me, O my beautiful
 Innocent love!

This rhyme in your praise
 With a smile was begun;
 But the goal of his ways
 Is uncovered to none,

Nor pervious till after
 The limit impend;
 It is not in laughter
 These rhymes of you end.

XIV

Spring, and fall, and summer, and winter,
 Which may Earth love least of them all,
 Whose arms embrace as their signs imprint her,
 Summer, or winter, or spring, or fall?

The clear-eyed spring with the wood-birds mating,
 The rose-red summer with eyes aglow,
 The yellow fall with serene eyes waiting,
 The wild-eyed winter with hair all snow?

Spring's eyes are soft, but if frosts benumb her
 As winter's own will her shrewd breath sting:
 Storms may rend the raiment of summer,
 And fall grow bitter as harsh-lipped spring.

One sign for summer and winter guides me,
 One for spring, and the like for fall:
 Whichever from sight of my friend divides me,
 That is the worst ill season of all.

XV

Worse than winter is spring
 If I come not to sight of my king:
 But then what a spring will it be
 When my king takes homage of me!

I send his grace from afar
 Homage, as though to a star;
 As a shepherd whose flock takes flight
 May worship a star by night.

As a flock that a wolf is upon
 My songs take flight and are gone:
 No heart is in any to sing
 Aught but the praise of my king.

Fain would I once and again
Sing deeds and passions of men:
But ever a child's head gleams
Between my work and my dreams.

Between my hand and my eyes
The lines of a small face rise,
And the lines I trace and retrace
Are none but those of the face.

XVI

344

Till the tale of all this flock of days alike
All be done,
Weary days of waiting till the month's hand strike
Thirty-one,
Till the clock's hand of the month break off, and end
With the clock,
Till the last and whitest sheep at last be penned
Of the flock,
I their shepherd keep the count of night and day
With my song,
Though my song be, like this month which once was May,
All too long.

XVII

345

The incarnate sun, a tall strong youth,
On old Greek eyes in sculpture smiled:
But trulier had it given the truth
To shape him like a child.

No face full-grown of all our dearest
So lightens all our darkness, none
Most loved of all our hearts hold nearest
To far outshines the sun,

As when with sly shy smiles that feign
Doubt if the hour be clear, the time
Fit to break off my work again
Or sport of prose or rhyme,

My friend peers in on me with merry
Wise face, and though the sky stay dim
The very light of day, the very
Sun's self comes in with him.

XVIII

346

Out of sight,
Out of mind!
Could the light
Prove unkind?

Can the sun
Quite forget
What was done
Ere he set?

Does the moon
When she wanes
Leave no tune
That remains

In the void
Shell of night
Overcloyed
With her light?

Must the shore
At low tide

Feel no more
Hope or pride,

No intense
Joy to be,
In the sense
Of the sea—

In the pulses
Of her shocks
It repulses,
When its rocks

Thrill and ring
As with glee?
Has my king
Cast off me,

Whom no bird
Flying south
Brings one word
From his mouth?

Not the ghost
Of a word.
Riding post
Have I heard,

Since the day
When my king
Took away
With him spring,

And the cup
Of each flower
Shrivelled up
That same hour,

With no light
Left behind.
Out of sight,
Out of mind!

XIX

Because I adore you
And fall
On the knees of my spirit before you—
After all,

You need not insult,
My king,
With neglect, though your spirit exult
In the spring,

Even me, though not worth,
God knows,
One word of you sent me in mirth,
Or one rose

Out of all in your garden
That grow
Where the frost and the wind never harden
Flakes of snow,

Nor ever is rain
At all,
But the roses rejoice to remain
Fair and tall—

The roses of love,
More sweet
Than blossoms that rain from above
Round our feet,

When under high bowers
We pass,
Where the west wind freckles with flowers
All the grass.

But a child's thoughts bear
More bright
Sweet visions by day, and more fair
Dreams by night,

Than summer's whole treasure
Can be:
What am I that his thought should take pleasure,
Then, in me?

I am only my love's
True lover,
With a nestful of songs, like doves
Under cover,

That I bring in my cap
Fresh caught,
To be laid on my small king's lap—
Worth just nought.

Yet it haply may hap
That he,
When the mirth in his veins is as sap
In a tree,

Will remember me too
Some day
Ere the transit be thoroughly through
Of this May—

Or perchance, if such grace
May be,
Some night when I dream of his face.
Dream of me.

Or if this be too high
A hope
For me to prefigure in my
Horoscope,

He may dream of the place
Where we
Basked once in the light of his face,
Who now see

Nought brighter, not one
Thing bright,
Than the stars and the moon and the sun,
Day nor night.

XX

Day by darkling day,
Overpassing, bears away
Somewhat of the burden of this weary May.

Night by numbered night,
Waning, brings more near in sight
Hope that grows to vision of my heart's delight.

Nearer seems to burn
In the dawn's rekindling urn
Flame of fragrant incense, hailing his return.

Louder seems each bird
In the brightening branches heard
Still to speak some ever more delightful word.

All the mists that swim
Round the dawns that grow less dim

Still wax brighter and more bright with hope of him.

All the suns that rise
Bring that day more near our eyes
When the sight of him shall clear our clouded skies.

All the winds that roam
Fruitful fields or fruitless foam
Blow the bright hour near that brings his bright face home.

XXI

352

I hear of two far hence
In a garden met,
And the fragrance blown from thence
Fades not yet.

The one is seven years old,
And my friend is he:
But the years of the other have told
Eighty-three.

To hear these twain converse
Or to see them greet
Were sweeter than softest verse
May be sweet.

The hoar old gardener there
With an eye more mild
Perchance than his mild white hair
Meets the child.

I had rather hear the words
That the twain exchange
Than the songs of all the birds
There that range,

Call, chirp, and twitter there
Through the garden-beds
Where the sun alike sees fair
Those two heads,

353

And which may holier be
Held in heaven of those
Or more worth heart's thanks to see
No man knows.

XXII

354

Of such is the kingdom of heaven,
No glory that ever was shed
From the crowning star of the seven
That crown the north world's head,

No word that ever was spoken
Of human or godlike tongue,
Gave ever such godlike token
Since human harps were strung.

No sign that ever was given
To faithful or faithless eyes
Showed ever beyond clouds riven
So clear a Paradise.

Earth's creeds may be seventy times seven
And blood have defiled each creed:
If of such be the kingdom of heaven,
It must be heaven indeed.

XXIII

355

The wind on the downs is bright
As though from the sea:
And morning and night
Take comfort again with me.

He is nearer to-day,
Each night to each morning saith,
Whose return shall revive dead May
With the balm of his breath.

The sunset says to the moon,
He is nearer to-night
Whose coming in June
Is looked for more than the light.

Bird answers to bird,
Hour passes the sign on to hour,
And for joy of the bright news heard
Flower murmurs to flower.

The ways that were glad of his feet
In the woods that he knew
Grow softer to meet
The sense of his footfall anew.

He is near now as day,
Says hope to the new-born light:
He is near now as June is to May,
Says love to the night.

XXIV

356

Good things I keep to console me
For lack of the best of all,
A child to command and control me,
Bid come and remain at his call.

Sun, wind, and woodland and highland,
Give all that ever they gave:
But my world is a cultureless island,
My spirit a masterless slave.

And friends are about me, and better
At summons of no man stand:
But I pine for the touch of a fetter,
The curb of a strong king's hand.

Each hour of the day in her season
Is mine to be served as I will:
And for no more exquisite reason
Are all served idly and ill.

By slavery my sense is corrupted,
My soul not fit to be free:
I would fain be controlled, interrupted,
Compelled as a thrall may be.

For fault of spur and of bridle
I tire of my stall to death:
My sail flaps joyless and idle
For want of a small child's breath.

XXV

357

Whiter and whiter
The dark lines grow,
And broader opens and brighter
The sense of the text below.

Nightfall and morrow
Bring nigher the boy
Whom wanting we want not sorrow,
Whom having we want no joy.

Clearer and clearer
The sweet sense grows
Of the word which hath summer for hearer,
The word on the lips of the rose.

Duskily dwindles
Each deathlike day,
Till June rearising rekindles
The depth of the darkness of May.

XXVI

358

"In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere."

Stars in heaven are many,
Suns in heaven but one:
Nor for man may any
Star supplant the sun.

Many a child as joyous
As our far-off king
Meets as though to annoy us
In the paths of spring.

Sure as spring gives warning,
All things dance in tune:
Sun on Easter morning,
Cloud and windy moon,

Stars between the tossing
Boughs of tuneful trees,
Sails of ships recrossing
Leagues of dancing seas;

Best, in all this playtime,
Best of all in tune,
Girls more glad than Maytime,
Boys more bright than June;

Mixed with all those dances,
Far through field and street
Sing their silent glances,
Ring their radiant feet.

359

Flowers wherewith May crowned us
Fall ere June be crowned:
Children blossom round us
All the whole year round.

Is the garland worthless
For one rose the less,
And the feast made mirthless?
Love, at least, says yes.

Strange it were, with many
Stars enkindling air,
Should but one find any
Welcome: strange it were,

Had one star alone won
Praise for light from far:
Nay, love needs his own one
Bright particular star.

Hope and recollection
Only lead him right
In its bright reflection
And collateral light.

Find as yet we may not
Comfort in its sphere:
Yet these days will weigh not
When it warms us here;

When full-orbed it rises,
 Now divined afar:
 None in all the skies is
 Half so good a star;

None that seers importune
 Till a sign be won:
 Star of our good fortune,
 Rise and reign, our sun!

XXVII

I pass by the small room now forlorn
 Where once each night as I passed I knew
 A child's bright sleep from even to morn
 Made sweet the whole night through.

As a soundless shell, as a songless nest,
 Seems now the room that was radiant then
 And fragrant with his happier rest
 Than that of slumbering men.

The day therein is less than the day,
 The night is indeed night now therein:
 Heavier the dark seems there to weigh,
 And slower the dawns begin.

As a nest fulfilled with birds, as a shell
 Fulfilled with breath of a god's own hymn,
 Again shall be this bare blank cell,
 Made sweet again with him.

XXVIII

Spring darkens before us,
 A flame going down,
 With chant from the chorus
 Of days without crown—
 Cloud, rain, and sonorous
 Soft wind on the down.

She is wearier not of us
 Than we of the dream
 That spring was to love us
 And joy was to gleam
 Through the shadows above us
 That shift as they stream.

Half dark and half hoary,
 Float far on the loud
 Mild wind, as a glory
 Half pale and half proud
 From the twilight of story,
 Her tresses of cloud;

Like phantoms that glimmer
 Of glories of old
 With ever yet dimmer
 Pale circlets of gold
 As darkness grows grimmer
 And memory more cold.

Like hope growing clearer
 With wane of the moon,
 Shines toward us the nearer
 Gold frontlet of June,
 And a face with it dearer
 Than midsummer noon.

XXIX

You send me your love in a letter,
I send you my love in a song:
Ah child, your gift is the better,
Mine does you but wrong.

No fame, were the best less brittle,
No praise, were it wide as earth,
Is worth so much as a little
Child's love may be worth.

We see the children above us
As they might angels above:
Come back to us, child, if you love us,
And bring us your love.

XXX

365

No time for books or for letters:
What time should there be?
No room for tasks and their fetters:
Full room to be free.

The wind and the sun and the Maytime
Had never a guest
More worthy the most that his playtime
Could give of its best.

If rain should come on, peradventure,
(But sunshine forbid!)
Vain hope in us haply might venture
To dream as it did.

But never may come, of all comers
Least welcome, the rain,
To mix with his servant the summer's
Rose-garlanded train!

He would write, but his hours are as busy
As bees in the sun,
And the jubilant whirl of their dizzy
Dance never is done.

The message is more than a letter,
Let love understand,
And the thought of his joys even better
Than sight of his hand.

XXXI

366

Wind, high-souled, full-hearted
South-west wind of the spring!
Ere April and earth had parted,
Skies, bright with thy forward wing,
Grew dark in an hour with the shadow behind it, that bade not a bird dare
sing.

Wind whose feet are sunny,
Wind whose wings are cloud,
With lips more sweet than honey
Still, speak they low or loud,
Rejoice now again in the strength of thine heart: let the depth of thy soul wax
proud.

We hear thee singing or sighing,
Just not given to sight,
All but visibly flying
Between the clouds and the light,
And the light in our hearts is enkindled, the shadow therein of the clouds put
to flight.

From the gift of thine hands we gather
The core of the flowers therein,
Keen glad heart of heather,

Hot sweet heart of whin,
Twin breaths in thy godlike breath close blended of wild spring's wildest of
kin.

All but visibly beating
We feel thy wings in the far
Clear waste, and the plumes of them fleeting,
Soft as swan's plumes are,
And strong as a wild swan's pinions, and swift as the flash of the flight of a
star.

As the flight of a planet enkindled
Seems thy far soft flight
Now May's reign has dwindled
And the crescent of June takes light
And the presence of summer is here, and the hope of a welcomer presence in
sight.

Wind, sweet-souled, great-hearted
Southwest wind on the wold!
From us is a glory departed
That now shall return as of old,
Borne back on thy wings as an eagle's expanding, and crowned with the
sundawn's gold.

There is not a flower but rejoices,
There is not a leaf but has heard:
All the fields find voices,
All the woods are stirred:
There is not a nest but is brighter because of the coming of one bright bird.

Out of dawn and morning,
Noon and afternoon,
The sun to the world gives warning
Of news that brightens the moon;
And the stars all night exult with us, hearing of joy that shall come with June.

Transcriber's note

The line in number VII

To far outshines the sun,
appears thus in the original. It may be a misprint.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A DARK MONTH ***

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