

LAURENCE ALMA-TADEMA

SONGS OF WOMANHOOD

Laurence Alma-Tadema
Songs of Womanhood

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Alma-Tadema L.

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Songs of Womanhood

A great number of the following verses are already known to readers of *The Herb o' Grace*, and of the little reprint, *Songs of Childhood*. As these pamphlets, however, did not reach the public, it has been thought advisable to re-issue the verses in book-form, together with three or four more collected from various reviews, and a number that are here printed for the first time.

L.A.T.

CHILDHOOD

King Baby

King Baby on his throne
Sits reigning O, sits reigning O!
King Baby on his throne
Sits reigning all alone.

His throne is Mother's knee,
So tender O, so tender O!
His throne is Mother's knee,
Where none may sit but he.

His crown it is of gold,
So curly O, so curly O!
His crown it is of gold,
In shining tendrils rolled.

His kingdom is my heart,
So loyal O, so loyal O!
His kingdom is my heart,
His own in every part.

Divine are all his laws,
So simple O, so simple O!
Divine are all his laws,
With Love for end and cause.

King Baby on his throne
Sits reigning O, sits reigning O!
King Baby on his throne
Sits reigning all alone.

A Blessing for the Blessed

When the sun has left the hill-top,
And the daisy-fringe is furled,
When the birds from wood and meadow
In their hidden nests are curled,
Then I think of all the babies
That are sleeping in the world...

There are babies in the high lands
And babies in the low,
There are pale ones wrapped in furry skins
On the margin of the snow,
And brown ones naked in the isles,
Where all the spices grow.

And some are in the palace

On a white and downy bed,
And some are in the garret
With a clout beneath their head,
And some are on the cold hard earth,
Whose mothers have no bread.

O little men and women,
Dear flowers yet unblown!
O little kings and beggars
Of the pageant yet unshown!
Sleep soft and dream pale dreams now,
To-morrow is your own...

Though some shall walk in darkness,
And others in the light,
Though some shall smile and others weep
In the silence of the night,
When Life has touched with many hues
Your souls now clear and white:

God save you, little children!

And make your eyes to see
His finger pointing in the dark
Whatever you may be,
Till one and all, through Life and Death,
Pass to Eternity...

To Raoul Bouchard

Dear were your kisses, baby boy,
Your weight upon my arm:
Gay were your tuneful cries of joy
As I danced you round the farm:
And sweet your softness when we lay
Laughing and cooing in the hay.

The summer sun will shine again,
Old arms will mow and reap;
There'll be new flowers on the plain,
New lambs among the sheep;
But never in this world of men
Shall we two be as we were then.

Your feet have touched the ground, my bird,

And now your wondering eyes
Will gaze no more as if they heard
A seraph in the skies:
A little boy, with leap and shout
You'll wildly chase your dreams about.

But when you are a man, soft thing,
And life has made you stern,
May we who watched you in your spring
Still feel our babe return
In hallowed moments, such as shine
When thought or deed makes man divine.

To-day and To-morrow

Little hands – what will you grasp
When you leave this nest, O?
Little arms – what will you clasp
Against that tender breast, O?
Cling to mother's finger, babe,
Throw sweet arms about me!
Here no noons may linger, babe,
Soon you'll love without me.

Little toes – where will you turn,
East or south or west, O?
Little feet – what sands that burn
Will you soon have pressed, O?
Lie on mother's knee, my own,
Dance your heels about me!
Apples leave the tree, my own,
Soon you'll live without me...

The Nesting Hour

Robin-friend has gone to bed,
Little wing to hide his head —
Mother's bird must slumber too
Just as baby Robins do —
When the stars begin to rise,
Birds and babies close their eyes.

The Little Sister

Bath-time:

Baby's got no legs at all,
They're soft and pinky, crumpled things;
If he stood up he'd only fall:
But then, you see, he's used to wings.

Bed-time:

Baby baby bye,
Close your little eye!
When the dark begins to creep,
Tiny-wees must go to sleep.

Lammy lammy lie,
I am seven, I;
Little boys must sleep and wait,
If they want their bed-time late.

Fidgy fidgy fie,
There's no need to cry!
Soon you'll never dress in white,
But sit up working half the night...

A Twilight Song

Baby moon, 'tis time for bed,
Owlet leaves his nest now;
Hide your little horned head
In the twilight west now;
When you're old and round and bright,
You shall stay and shine all night.

Baby girl is going too
In her bed to creep now;
She is little, just like you,
Time it is to sleep now;
When she's old and tired and wise,
She'll be glad to close her eyes.

A Wintry Lullaby

Blow, wind, blow,
The fields are white with snow —
Sleeping daisies, deep and warm,
Cannot hear the Winter storm.

Freeze, air, freeze,
The rime is on the trees —
Sleeping buds within the bough,
Dream of spring and cuckoos now.

Turn, earth, turn,
The flames of life do burn —
Sleeping girl, my baby dove,
Knows no world but mother's love.

The Warm Cradle

Hush, baby, hush,
Sweet robin's in the bush —
All the birdies lie so quiet,
Won't my little dicky try it?
Hush, baby, hush.

Sleep, baby, sleep,
The lammies love the sheep —
Woolly babes all nestle cosy,
Lie, my lambkin, warm and rosy,
Sleep, baby, sleep.

Dream, baby, dream,
Our feet are in the stream —
Stones below but stars above, child,
Life is warm so long we love, child,
Dream, baby, dream.

The Drooping Flower

Baby's rather ill to-night,
Little face is long and white,
Eyes are all too large and bright —
What shall mother do now?

Never leave him out of sight,
Hold him warm and still and tight,
Make him well with all her might,
That's what she will do now.

Mothers in the Garden

I

Wagtail – pied Wagtail —
What tremor's in your breast?
On nimble feet, when we draw near,
You run about to hide your fear,
As if to say: There's nothing here,
I have no nest...

Wagtail – pied Wagtail —
We too their voices heard;
Away then to the water-side,
And fetch the food for which they cried;
From us there is no need to hide,
My dainty bird.

II

The thrushes' nest has fallen
From the ivy on the wall:
The dear blue eggs are broken,
All broken by the fall.

But we heard a song at sundown
That said: O tears are vain! —
And babe and I ceased grieving:
We think they will build again.

The Gravel Path

Tiny mustn't frown
When she tumbles down;
If the wind should change – Ah me,
What a face her face would be!

Rub away the dirt,
Say she wasn't hurt;
What a world 'twould be – O my,
If all who fell began to cry!

The New Pelisse

Baby's got a new pelisse,
Very soft and very neat —
Like a lammy in her fleece
She's all white from head to feet.

Thirty lambs each gave a curl,
Mother sewed them, stitch by stitch —
All to clothe a baby-girl:
Don't you think she's very rich?

Solace

Whom does Miss belong to?
Just to Mother, Mother only:
That's whom Miss belongs to,
– And Mother's never lonely.

Whom's this little song to?
Just to Baby, Baby only:
That's whom little song's to,
– And Baby's never lonely.

Strange Lands

Where do you come from, Mr. Jay? —
'From the land of Play, from the land of Play.'
And where can that be, Mr. Jay? —
'Far away – far away.'

Where do you come from, Mrs. Dove? —
'From the land of Love, from the land of Love.'
And how do you get there, Mrs. Dove? —
'Look above – look above.'

Where do you come from, Baby Miss? —
'From the land of Bliss, from the land of Bliss.'
And what is the way there, Baby Miss? —
'Mother's kiss – mother's kiss.'

March Meadows

A Lark:

Lark-bird, lark-bird soaring high,
Are you never weary?
When you reach the empty sky,
Are the clouds not dreary?
Don't you sometimes long to be
A silent gold-fish in the sea?

Gold-fish, gold-fish diving deep,
Are you never sad, say?
When you feel the cold waves creep
Are you really glad, say?
Don't you sometimes long to sing
And be a lark-bird on the wing?

Lambs:

O little lambs! the month is cold,
The sky is very gray;
You shiver in the misty grass
And bleat at all the winds that pass;
Wait! when I'm big – some day —
I'll build a roof to every fold.

But now that I am small, I'll pray
At mother's knee for you;
Perhaps the angels with their wings
Will come and warm you, little things;
I'm sure that, if God knew,
He'd let the lambs be born in May.

The Robin

When father takes his spade to dig,
Then Robin comes along;
He sits upon a little twig
And sings a little song.

Or, if the trees are rather far,
He does not stay alone,
But comes up close to where we are
And bobs upon a stone.

The Mouse

Little Master Mouse,
You'd better leave this house;
Crumbs are scarce upon the floor,
And pussy sleeps behind the door.

Mousie soft and grey,
I wish you'd run away!
Cook will catch you in a trap,
And mice mayn't sit in mother's lap...

The Bat

Bat, Bat, that flies at night
When angels' breath has blown the light,
When all the bees are hived in bed
And swallow sleeps with hidden head:
Songless bird! until this hour,
Among the bells in the ivied tower
Have you hung dreaming in your house?
Are you a living wingèd mouse? —
Bat, Bat, I often doubt;
And when I see you flit about,
I wonder if the dead birds roam
In circles round their nestlings' home...

The Swallow

O Swallow! if I had your wings
I would not stay below;
I'd leave off catching flies and things
And up to Heaven I'd go.

I'd sail above the tallest tree
That waves its arms on high;
Beyond the furthest cloud we see,
And deeper than the sky.

Perhaps, when live birds find the way,
They're all sent down again,
And that is why you dive to-day
For insects in the rain.

Snowdrops

Little ladies, white and green,
With your spears about you,
Will you tell us where you've been
Since we lived without you?

You are sweet, and fresh, and clean,
With your pearly faces;
In the dark earth where you've been
There are wondrous places:

Yet you come again, serene,
When the leaves are hidden;
Bringing joy from where you've been
You return unbidden —

Little ladies, white and green,

Are you glad to cheer us?
Hunger not for where you've been,
Stay till Spring be near us!

Frost

The flowers in the garden
Are very cold at night;
When I look out of window
Their beds are hard and white.

The primrose and the scilla,
The merry crocus too —
O Jane! if we were flowers,
What should we children do?

We'd have to sleep all naked
Beneath the windy trees;
Yet we should die, I know it,
With even a chemise...

Apples

Red cheeks, red cheeks,
Will you play with me?
No boy, pale boy,
I want to climb that tree.

Red cheeks, red cheeks,
You will tumble down —
No boy, pale boy,
I'll eat the apples brown.

Red cheeks, red cheeks,
Barns are best for rain —
No boy, pale boy,
I'll soon be down again.

Lonely Children

I

The trees are dusty in the Park,
The grass is hard and brown;
I'm glad I've got a Noah's ark,
But I'm sorry I'm in town.

A lot of little girls and boys
Are not so rich as me;
But O! I'd give them all my toys
For shells beside the sea...

II

The flowers are happy in the garden,
For the bees are always there;
The clouds are happy up in Heaven
With the angels in the air;
But little boy and little mouse
Are rather lonely in the house.

Playgrounds

In summer I am very glad
We children are so small,
For we can see a thousand things
That men can't see at all.

They don't know much about the moss
And all the stones they pass:
They never lie and play among
The forests in the grass:

They walk about a long way off;
And, when we're at the sea,
Let father stoop as best he can
He can't find things like me.

But, when the snow is on the ground

And all the puddles freeze,
I wish that I were very tall,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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