

WHITNEY

HELEN HAY

SOME VERSES

Helen Whitney

Some Verses

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Some Verses:

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Some Verses

To my Father

SONNETS

THE DAYS

A long grim corridor—a sullen bar
Of light athwart the darkness—where no fleet
Pale sunshine spreads for dark his winding sheet
A light, not born of noon nor placid star
Glowes lurid thro' the gloom—while from afar,
Beats marching of innumerable feet.
Is this the place where tragic armies meet?
The throb of terror that presages war?—
I strain to see, then softly on my sight
There falls the vision, manifold they come—
White listless Day chained to her brother Night—
Their hands are shackled and their lips are dumb,
And as they meet the air where each one dies,
They turn and smile at me—with weary eyes.

THE EVERLASTING SNOWS

And shall it be that these undaunted snows
That poise so lightly on the mountains' crest—
A lily laid to cheer its lonely breast—
Shall their chill smile still face the wind, that blows
Across the field whereon no blossom grows,
And light the land where no gay life may rest
Save glowing hasty fingers of the West,
When our two hearts lie cold beneath the rose?
These silver flakes of ancient hoary frost,
Surviving all our joys' supremest powers,
And though the petals of your lips be lost
And gone the summer of your golden head,
This pale eternal growth of winter's flowers
Shall still live on—though our sweet love be dead.

THRONE AND ALTAR

He had a vision of a golden throne
Fronting an altar; both alike were bare,
But o'er the purple of the regal chair
Blazed the device, "I wait for him alone
Who with the world has held his soul his own."
He sadly turned, this height he could not dare.
But—Stay—the text upon the altar there—
"I wait for him who has not made a moan
Howe'er his kind have used his heaven-sent dower.
Fear not, and burn thine incense, lowly heart."
And sudden brightness turns the averted face,
To holy sense of majesty and power—
And a voice:—"Master—this indeed thou art."
Wondrous music trembles thro' the space.

EAST AND WEST

You have not ceased for me. Though stern-browed Fate
Laid our two paths apart; when in the West
She gave you over to the seas, and great
Wide winds of enterprise, and set your breast
Against the suns and shadows of the earth;
Then with a gilded largess, led my ways
Toward the time-worn East, who paints her dearth
With purple vain imaginings; the praise
Of all her languid incense and the pride
Of ancient mysteries and hopeless creeds
Hold for my heart no spell when warm and wide
I see across the blue of Isis' veil
The thunderous breakers of your ocean pale
And glints of prairie sun through river reeds.

THE BATTLE

The pallid waves caress the paler sand,
Falter and tremble, then reluctant wane,
Fearing advance, yet venturing again.
Grey deep sea waves that never knew the land,
Tired with the tumult, stretch a crooked hand
To win a precious sweet surcease from pain,
But, glancing back upon the mighty main,
Perforce return to swell the strong command.
So fretful Life sees Death's cold sands and fairs
To fling thereon the wearing of her wave,
Yet, turning ere she finds the gloomy shore,
Seeing ahead the idle senseless grave,
Behind—the Kings, the Patriots and the Saints,
She sighing turns to face the fight once more.

WATER AND WINE

I asked for water and they brought me wine;
Wine in a jewelled chalice, where the gold
Gleamed thro' the purple beads, as if unrolled—
One saw the sun-rays of a life-time shine.
So drinking, I forgot my dream divine
Of crystal purity, for in my hold
Were wealth and Fame and Passions manifold
Which with the draught I fancied might be mine.
"Ah, Youth," I said, "Ah, Faith and Love!" I said;
"These are but broken lances in the strife!
What shall remain when all these things are sped?"
Then crashed the dream. I clutched the hand of Fate
Amid the ruins of my shattered life,
And found the Gods had cheated, all too late.

PITY ME NOT!

Cruel and fair! within thy hollowed hand
My heart is lying as a little rose,
So faint and faded, scarce could one suppose
It might look in thine eyes and understand
The song they sing unto a weary land,
Making it radiant, yet because I dare,
To love thee, being weak, lose not thine air
Of passive distance, fateful and most grand.

Pity me not, nor turn away awhile
Till absence's cloud has caught my passion up.
Ah, be not kind! for love's sake, be not kind!
Grant me the tragic deepness of the cup,
And when thine eyes have flashed and made me blind,
Kill me beneath the shadow of thy smile.

A DREAM IN FEVER

A vast screen of unequal downward lines,
An orange purple halo 'round the rain,
Twists from a space whose very size is pain.
Here in this vortex day with night combines
Ruby and Emerald glint their blazing spines;
Closing and smothering, wheels a brazen main,
A shuddering sea of silence; in its train
A Thought—a cry, whose snake—fear trembling twines
Around—above—alive yet uttered not;
But my heart hears—and shrieking dies of dread,
Then soaring breaks its bands and o'er the rim
White winged it rends the dark with jagged blot,
Glimpsing the iris gateway barred ahead,
And, gazing thro', the eyes of cherubim.

A WOMAN'S PRIDE

I will not look for him—I will not hear
My heart's loud beating, as I strain to see
Across the rain forlorn and hopelessly,
Nor starting, think 'tis he that draws so near.
I will forget how tenderly and dear
He might in coming hold his arms to me,
For I will prove what woman's pride can be
When faint love lingers in the darkness drear.
I will not—Ah, but should he come to-night
I think my life might break thro' very bliss,
This little will should so be torn apart
That all my soul might fail in golden light
And let me die—So do I long for this.
Ah, love, thine eyes!—Nay, love—Thy heart, thy heart!

AGE

I have a dream, that somewhere in the days,
Since when a myriad suns have burned and died,
There was a time my soul was not for pride
Of spendthrift youth, the pensioner who pays
Dole for the pain of searching thro' the haze
Where joy lies hidden. As the puff balls ride,
The wandering wind across the Summer's side
So winged my spirit in a golden blaze
Of pure and careless Present—Future naught
But a sad dotard's wail—and I was young,
Who now am old. Now years like flashes seem,
Lambent or grey on the great wall of Thought—
This is a song a poet may have sung—
No proof remains, I have but dreamed a dream.

IN THE MIST

Ah love, my love, upon this alien shore
I lean and watch the pale uneasy ships
Slip thro' the waving mist in strange eclipse,
Like spirits of some time and land of yore.
I did not think my heart could love thee more,
And yet, when lightlier than a swallow dips,
The wind lays ghostly kisses on my lips
I seem to know of love the eternal core.
Here is no throbbing of impassioned breath
To beat upon my cheek, no pulsing heart
Which might be silenced by the touch of Death,
No smile which other smile has softly kissed
Or doting gaze which Time must draw apart,
But spirit's spirit in the trailing mist.

ON THE MOUNTAIN'S SLOPE

High on the mountain's slope I pause and turn—
Over my head, by the rough crag-points high,
Seems rent and torn the tender hovering sky,
Till almost—thro'—I see a Heaven-spark burn;
Then downward to the sleeping world I yearn
Whose eyes so heavy droop they may not try
To catch the higher gleam—and live thereby—
Youth passes graveward—and they never learn.
Then faint with brooding o'er a careless earth
I turn to Nature and her broad warm breast,
Strive for a friendship with her sun-burnt mirth,
Teach my sad soul to catch her cadence deep,
Dream that in her absorbed my heart must rest;
But Nature smiles, and turns once more in sleep.

TO THE BELOVED

Beloved, when the tides of life run low
As sobbing echoes of a dead refrain,
And I may sit and watch the silent rain
And muse upon the fulness of my woe,
Then is my burden lighter, for I know
The roses of my heart shall bloom again
The fairer for this plenitude of pain,
And Summer shall forget the chilly snow.
But when life calls me to its revels gay
And I must face the world's wide-gazing eyes
Nor find sweet rest by night or peace by day,
E'en seems your love, where I would turn for aid,
As distant as the blue in sunny skies;
Then am I very lonely and afraid.

MY BROOK

Earth holds no sweeter secret anywhere
Than this my brook, that lisps along the green
Of mossy channels, where slim birch trees lean
Like tall pale ladies whose delicious hair
Lures and invites the kiss of wanton air.
The smooth soft grasses, delicate between
The rougher stalks, by waifs alone are seen,
Shy things that live in sweet seclusion there.
And is it still the same, and do these eyes
Of every silver ripple meet the trees
That bend above like guarding emerald skies?
I turn—who read the city's beggared book
And hear across the moan of many seas

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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