

RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

RICHARD LeGALLIENNE



To Francis Wilson : is the
hope that this book may some-
day have more value than
it has at present : from
his friend Richard De Gallienne.

New York : 20, July, 1901.



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F I F T Y

R U B A I Y A T

O F

OMAR KHAYYAM

PARAPHRASED FROM LITERAL TRANSLATIONS BY

RICHARD LeGALLIENNE

THE PHILOSOPHER PRESS

At The Sign of The Green Pine Tree

W A U S A U W I S C O N S I N

Two hundred copies printed for private circulation
only for James Carleton Young and his friends of
which this is number

180

Richard Le Gallienne

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TATTERED robe, and face with
loving pale,

Pass me not by: I am the Nightingale
That dares to sing of Riot and the Rose;
And, Brother, I would give thee hand and hail.



BUT, sinner, there's one thing I want to
hear:

O tell me—is your sinning quite sincere?

You would not leave it even though you
could!

Say that you would not, O my brother dear.



REMEMBER—all the pious who cry
shame,

With holy horror, on your tattered fame,

Watch only for the opportunity
Of turned backs and the dark to do the same.

LET us at least who think the Rose is
best

Not, paltry, lie about it, like the rest;

But lift our glasses frankly in the sun,
And take our love as frankly to our breast.

THIS is the creed of Omar : I believe
In Wine and Roses, also I believe
In Woman—(what a foolish thing to do !)
And in the God that made them I believe.

DEARER than the soul that gives me
breath,

Dearer than life, as the old proverb saith,—

Nay, that is but a sorry compliment :
For thou, my love, art dearer even than death.

DAY days are filled with wonder and with
wine,—

Wine helps the wonder, wonder helps the
wine—

But in the night my bosom fills with tears,
Tears, tears, for one who never can be mine.

EVEN sad eyes must sparkle in the sun,
But, when the miracle of day is done,
Down in a bankrupt darkness deep I lie
Haunted by all I lost—and might have won!

BUT was there ought to win that is not
mine?

I ask not money—only to buy wine:

Women forsake me not, for all my sins—
What better winnings, pious friend, are thine?

I AM not fit for hell,—I am too small;
For heaven I am too heretical;

I love both places, yet not one enough:
'Twixt the two stools I fall—and fall—and fall.

GOD gave me eyesight—shall I rob my
eyes?

He gave me smell—instead of merchandise—

Members and senses delicate to feed:

Who bids me starve them God himself denies.

YEA! none shall tell that I have turned
away,

Ungrateful, when some woman bid me stay:

The golden invitation of a friend

I answered ever with a thankful “yea.”

THINK not that I have never tried your
way

To heaven, you who pray and fast and pray,
Once I denied myself both love and wine,
Yea wine and love—for a whole summer day.

ICANNOT help it. Were it in my
power,

I would forsake my sins this very hour,
Forswear the Rose, and bid the Vine
goodbye,
Kiss my last kiss—if it were in my power!

OGOOD old friends—what is it I have
said!

It was the wine which got into my head—
Forgive me, O forgive, I meant it not,
I shall forsake you only when I'm dead.

AND even then—who knows—we'll
meet again,

Nor the celestial wine-cup cease to drain,

And in some laughter-loving heaven on
high

Our little women to our bosoms strain.

WHEN to this loot of life I come anear,
Hoping to snatch some little worldly
gear,

I find the fools have carted off the best,
And nought is left for me, but—hope and fear.

IF thou wilt keep my head well filled
with wine,

I care not if the whole round world be thine;

O fading kingdoms and forgotten kings,

I know a better kingdom—drink red wine.

WITHIN the tavern each man is a
king,

Wine is the slave that brings him—anything;
O friend, be wise in time and join our band,
Drink and forget and laugh and dance and sing.

I WONDER why I go on living still
This life of pain and poison, why I still
Trust friends, hope good, still fight and
still have faith
In this world's business—still, think of it,—
still!

I GAVE my heart, and life returns me—
nought;
My mind, my soul, I gave—for what? For
nought;
All dreams and loves and hopes I freely gave;
Nothing is left to give. I give it: Nought.

YOU say: “There are so many crowns
to win,

Yet you lie sunken in your sleepy sin!”

Bring me a crown of gold and big enough,
And I will wear it—all these are of tin.

WHETHER you would abide or go
away,

Wine will befriend you, friend: for, if you stay,

You’ll forget going; and, if you must go,
He’ll drown you in the very sweetest way.

SOME that would leave this world
take dreadful means,

One wrenching poisons, one steel, another leans

His brow on sudden fire, but wine is
best—

Poets have died so, and many kings, and queens.

WINE is the tender friend of suicides,
You drown so softly in its gentle tides:
You know not you are dying, yet you die,
And love with rose-leaves all the ruin hides.

WOULD you forget a woman—drink
red wine:
Would you remember her, then drink red wine:
Is your heart breaking just to see her face?
Gaze deep within this mirror—of red wine.

FACE like a glass wherein all heaven
lies,
A firmament reflected in two eyes:
Thanks to your heaven, I am deep in hell,
The shadow of your laughter is my sighs.

MY cheeks, like hollow cups, are filled
with tears,

My body is a haunted house of fears,

My heart is like a wine-jar filled with blood:
O God! those sightless eyes, those small deaf
ears.

ASHEIK once took a harlot in her
shame,

Calling the poor soul many an ugly name;

“Tis true,” she wept, “all I appear I am;
But, sheik, of thee would I could say the same!”

DSPEAK not evil of these dancing
flowers,

These girls that arrogantly we call ours,—

Yours, mine, and anyone’s who bids and
buys—

O God! the pity of the fate of flowers!

GIRL, have you any thought what your
eyes mean?

You must have stolen them from some dead queen;

O little empty laughing soul that sings

And dances—tell me what do your eyes mean!

AND all this body of ivory and
myrrh,

O guard it with some little love and care—

Know your own wonder, worship it with
me,

See how I fall before it deep in prayer.

NOW sad to be a woman,—not to
know

Aught of the glory of this breast of snow,

All unconcerned to comb this mighty hair;

To be a woman—and yet never know!

WHERE I a woman, I would all day
long
Sing my own beauty in some holy song,
Bend low before it, hushed and half afraid,
And say "I am a woman" all day long.

LOVE, I come to worship in your
shrine,
There is no part of you is not divine,
There is no part of you not human too,
There is no part of you that is not mine;

EXCEPT—except—that heart of precious
stone,
Cold heart no man shall ever call his own,
Nor fire warm, nor might of loving win,
Heart great—and cold—enough to dwell alone.

THOUGH my estate be poor, my
raiment torn,

I am not really sorry I was born,

For God has given me my heart's desire—
Wine and the Well-Beloved and the morn.

SAD pilgrim of the heart, the way is
long,

Suppose we lighten it for you with a song;

Here in the tavern rest your wandering feet,
Strong is your love, but wine is just as strong.

WE know the love that drives you to
and fro,

Like hungry dogs that through the city go,

The hollow hunger of the breaking heart,
And the one cure for it, alike we know.

SAKI, bring roses for this sad one's
hair,

And set a bowl of rubies for him there ;

And you, O moon, dance, dance and
dance and dance—

That the poor fellow may not think of her.

LIFE is too short, dear brother, to be
sad ;

If you must needs be anything—be glad ;

Leave bitter books and read the Book of
Joy—

I know that some declare the book is bad.

O all of us the thought of heaven is
dear—

Why not be sure of it, and make it here !

No doubt there is a heaven yonder too,
But 'tis so far away, and—you are near.



BOOK, a Woman, and a Flask of
Wine,

The three make heaven—for me; it may be thine
Is some sour place of singing cold and bare—
But then I never said thy heaven was mine.



LOVE, the fair day is drawing to its
close,

The stars are rising and a soft wind blows,
The gates of heaven are opening in a
dream,
The nightingale sings to the sleeping rose.



HADOWS and dew and silence and
the stars;

I wonder, love, what is behind those bars
Of twinkling silver,—is there aught
behind?—
Venus and Jupiter, Sirius and Mars;

ALDEBARAN, and the soft Pleiades,
Orion ploughing the ethereal seas—
Which are the stars, my love, and which
your eyes?
And O the nightingale in yonder trees!

HEART of my heart, in such an hour as
this
The cup of life brims all too full of bliss,
See, it runs over in these happy tears—
How strange you seem! how solemn is your kiss!

LOVE, if I should die before you
died,
Would you be really sorry that I died?
And would you weep a whole week on
my tomb,
Then be a little happy—that I died?

AND would you see some face that
looked like mine,

And love it, love—"because it looked like
mine"!

And say: "How strangely like Khayyam
you are!"

And kiss the face—so wondrously like mine!

WHEN would you bring him softly
where the rose

Showers its petals upon my repose,

And shed two tears together on my tomb,—

Strange are the ways of grief—who knows,
who knows!

Here end the rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam of Naishapur newly done into English verse by Richard LeGallienne, made into this book by Helen Bruneau VanVechten at The Philosopher Press which is in Wausau Wisconsin at The Sign of The Green Pine Tree, finished this second day of March MCMI.

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