

Some Poems of Lionel Johnson

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SOME POEMS
OF
LIONEL JOHNSON

NEWLY SELECTED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Of Lionel Johnson	7
Winchester	25
Chalkhill... ..	32
Oxford	32
The Classics	36
Walter Pater	39
Cromwell	42
To Morfydd	45
Cadgwith	47
By the Statue of King Charles at Charing Cross	48
Glories	51
In Falmouth Harbour	52
Magic	54
To the Dead of '98	56
To a Spanish Friend	58
Brothers	61
A Friend... ..	63
Ash Wednesday	64
To a Friend	65
The Age of a Dream	66
The Precept of Silence... ..	67
The Dark Angel	68
Lucretius	71
Harvest... ..	72
A Stranger	74
Winchester Close	76
In Memory of M. B.	77
A Proselyte	79

OF LIONEL JOHNSON

AN early death has lately robbed the world of letters in England of its one critic of the first rank in this generation. Poet-minds of the Arnold breed, with what may be called the hush of scholarship laid upon their full energies and animations, must necessarily grow rarer and rarer, in a world ever more noisy and more superficial. They cannot expect now the fostering cloistral conditions which were finally disturbed by the great Revolution. Yet they still find themselves here, in a state of royal dis-possession, and live on as they can. Of these was Lionel Johnson. In criticism, though he seemed to care so little about acknowledging, preserving, and collecting what he wrote, he was nobly able to "beat his music out;" his potential success lay there, perhaps, rather than in the exercise of his singularly lovely and

austere poetic gift. But this is not saying that he was more critic than poet. On the contrary, he was all poet; and the application of the poet's touchstone to human affairs, whether in art or in ethics, was the very thing which gave its extraordinary elasticity and balance to his prose work. Being what he was, a selfless intelligence, to him right judgments came easy, and to set them down, at the eligible moment, was mere play. He had lived more or less alone from his boyhood, but alone with eternal thoughts and classic books. Whenever he spoke, there was authority in the speech coloured by companionship with the great of his own election: with Plato; Lucretius and Virgil; Augustine; Shakespeare. His capacity for admiration was immense, although in his choice of things admirable he was quite uncompromising. Beyond that beautiful inward exaction, "the chastity of honour," he was naturally inclined to the charities of interpretation. He gave them, but he asked them not, and would not thank you for your casual approval, except by his all-understanding smile. Neither vanity, ambition, nor envy ever so much as breathed upon him, and, scholar that he was, he had none of the limitations

common to scholars, for he was without fear and without prejudice.

A striking feature in the make-up of his mind was its interplay and counterpoise of contrasts. Full of worship and wonder (and a certain devout sense of indebtedness kept him, as by a strict rubric of his own, an allusive and a quoting writer), he was also full of an almost fierce uninfluenced independence. Not wholly blest is the poet who has historic knowledge of his own craft; for to him nothing is sayable which has already been well said. Lionel Johnson, even as a beginner, was of so jealous an integrity that his youthful numbers are in their detail rather scandalously free from *parentalia*. Yet by some supernatural little joke, his most famous line,—

“ Lonely unto the Lone I go,”

had been anticipated by Plotinus. With a great vocabulary, his game was always to pack close, and thin out, his words. Impersonal as Pan's pipe to the audience of *The Anti-Jacobin* or *The Academy*, he became intensely subjective the moment he reached his fatherland of poesy. His utterance, as daring in its opposite way as Mr. John Davidson's, has laid bare some of

the deepest secrets of the spirit. And side by side with them lie etched on the page the most delicate little landscapes, each as happily conceived as if "the inner eye" and "the eye on the object," of both of which Wordsworth speaks, were one and the same.

One might have thought, misled by Lionel Johnson's strongly philosophic fibre, his habits of a recluse simplicity, his faith in minorities, his patrician old-fashioned tastes, that he would have ranged himself with the abstract critics, with Joubert and Vauvenargues, rather than with Sainte-Beuve. But it was another of his surprising excellencies that he was never out of tune with cosmic externals, and the aspirations of to-day. Into these his brain had a sort of detached angelic insight. His earliest book, written while he was very young, was not about some subtlety of Attic thought: it was a masterly exposition of *The Art of Thomas Hardy*. This same relevance and relativity of our friend, this open dealing with the nearest interest, was his strength; he not only did not shrink from contemporary life, but bathed in the apprehension of it as joyously as in a mountain stream. How significant, how full of fresh force, have been his many unsigned reviews! Nothing so broad,

so sure, so penetrating, has been said, in little, of such very modern men as Renan and William Morris.

It is perhaps less than exact to claim that Lionel Johnson had no prejudices. All his humilities and tolerances did not hinder his humorous depreciation of the Teutonic intellect; and he liked well King Charles II.'s word for it: "foggy." Heine, that "Parisianized Jew," was his only love made in Germany. Non-scientific, anti-mathematical, he was a genuine Oxonian; a recruit, as it were, for transcendentalism and the White Rose. His studies were willful and concentrated; he never tried to get a thorough understanding of some arts which he relished, music and sculpture, for instance; and, discursive as his national sympathies certainly were, he was never out of the British Isles. In all such lateral matters, he saw the uses of exclusion, of repression, if his calling was to be not a dilettante impulse, but the sustained and unwasted passion of a lifetime. Culture in him, it is true to say, was not miscellaneous information; as in Newman's perfect definition, it was "the command over his own faculties, and the instinctive just estimate of things as they pass." He had an amazing and

most accurate memory for everything worth while : it was as if he had moved, to some profit, in several ages, and forgotten none of their " wild and noble sights." And the powers which were so delighting to others, were, in a reflex way, a most single-hearted and modest way, sheer delight to the one who had tamed them to his hand.

His non-professorial conception of the function of a man of letters (only it was one of the thousand subjects on which he was sparing of speech, perhaps deterred by the insincerities all about him) amounted to this : that he was glad to be a bond-slave to his own discipline ; that there should be no limit to the constraints and the labour self-imposed ; that in pursuit of the best, he would never count cost, never lower a pennon, never bow the knee to Baal. It was not his isolated position, nor his exemption from the corroding breath of poverty, which made it easy for such an one to hold his ground ; for nothing can make easy that strenuous and entire consecration of a soul to what it is given to do. It extended to the utmost detail of composition. The proud melancholy charm of his finest stanzas rests upon the severest adherence to the laws and by-laws of rhythm ; in

no page of his was there ever a rhetorical trick or an underbred rhyme. Excess and show were foreign to him. Here was a poet who liked the campaign better than Capua. He sought out voluntarily never, indeed, the fantastic, but the difficult way. If he could but work out his idea in music, he preferred to do so with divers painstaking which less scrupulous vassals of the Muse would as soon practice as fasting and praying. To one who looks well into the structure of his poems, they are like the roof of Milan Cathedral, "gone to seed with pinnacles," full of voweled surprises and exquisitely devotional elaborations, given in the zest of service, and meant either to be searched for or else hidden. Yet they have the grace to appear much simpler than they are. The groundwork, at least, is always simple: his usual metre is iambic or trochaic, and the English alexandrine he made his own. The shortcoming of his verse lies in its Latin strictness and asceticism, somewhat repellent to any readers but those of his own temper. Its emotional glow is a shade too moral, and it is only after a league of stately pacing that fancy is let go with a looser rein.

Precision clung like drapery to everything he

did. His handwriting was unique; a slender, close slant, very odd, but not illegible; a true script of the old time, without a flaw. It seemed to whisper: "Behold in me the inveterate foe of haste and discourtesy, of typewriters, telegrams, and secretaries!" As he wrote, he punctuated: nothing was trivial to this "enamoured architect" of perfection. He cultivated a half-mischievous attachment to certain antique forms of spelling, and to the colon, which our slovenly press will have none of; and because the colon stands for fine differentiations and sly sequences, he delighted especially to employ it.

Lionel Johnson's gallant thoroughness was applied not only to the department of literature. He had a loving heart, and laid upon himself the burden of many gratitudes. To Winchester, his old school, and Oxford, his university (in both of which he covered himself, as it happened, with honours), he was a bounden knight. The Catholic Church, to which he felt an attraction from infancy, and which he entered soon after he came of age, could command his whole zeal and furtherance, to the end. His faith was his treasure, and an abiding peace and compensation. The delicacy, nay, the sanctity of his character, was the out-

come of it ; and when clouds did not impede his action, it so pervaded, guided, and adjusted his whole attitude towards life (as Catholicism alone claims and intends to do), that his religiousness can hardly be spoken of, or examined, as a thing separate from himself. There was a seal upon him as of something priestly and monastic. His place, like his favourite Hawthorne's, should have been in a Benedictine scriptorium, far away, and long ago.

“ Us the sad world rings round
With passionate flames impure ;
We tread an impious ground ;
We hunger, and endure.”

But he would be “ at rest with ancient victors,” and “ with you imparadised, White angels around Christ !” The saints, bright from their earthly battle, and especially the angels, in Heaven their commonweal, were always present to the imagination of this *anima naturaliter Christiana*.

Again, his most conscious loyalty, with the glamour of mediæval chivalry upon it, was for Ireland. He was descended from a line of soldiers, and from the baronet of his name who, in the ruthless governmental fashion of the time, put down at New Ross the tragic in-

surrection of 1798. Study and sympathy brought his great-grandson to see things from a point of view not in the least ancestral ; and the consequence was that Lionel Johnson came to write, (and even to lecture !) as the heart-whole champion of hapless Inisfail. In the acknowledged spirit of reparation, he gave his thought, his time, and his purse to her interests. He devoted his lyre to her, as his most moving theme, and he pondered not so much her political hope, nor the charm of her streams and valleys, as her constancy under sorrows, and the holiness of her mystical ideal. His inheritance was goodly unto him, for he had by race both the Gaelic and the Cymric strain, and his temperament, with its remoteness, and its sage and sweet ironies, was by so much more and less than English. But he possessed also, in very full measure, the basic English traits : deliberation, patience, and control. It was owing to these unexpected and saving qualities in him that he turned out no mere visionary, but made his mark in life like a man, and that he held out for five and thirty years in that fragile, terribly nervous body always so inadequate and perilous a mate for his giant intelligence.

Next to the impersonal allegiances which had so much claim upon him was his feeling for his friends. The boy Lionel had been the exceptional sort of boy who can discern a possible halo about a master or a tutor; and at Oxford, as at Winchester, he found men worth his homage. The very last poem he sent forth was a threnody for his dear and honoured Walter Pater, honoured and dear long after death, as during life. Like so much else from the same pen, it is of synthetic and illuminating beauty, and it ends with the tenderest of lyrical cries :—

“ Gracious God keep him : and God grant to me
By miracle to see
That unforgettably most gracious friend,
In the never-ending end ! ”

Friendship, with Lionel Johnson, was the grave, high romantic sentiment of antique tradition. He liked to link familiar names with his own by means of little dedications, and the two volumes of his poems, with their placid blue covers and dignity of margin, furnish a fairly full roll-call of those with whom he felt himself allied : English, Irish, Welsh, and American ; men and women ; famous and unknown ; Christian and pagan ; clerical and lay. It was characteristic of him that he addressed but one or two poems

directly to a friend, but set apart this or that, in print, as private to one or another whose heart he knew, would go along with it. As a proof of the shyness and reticence of his affections, it may be added that some who were fond of him did not discover, for years after (and perhaps some have not yet discovered), the page bearing their own names, once quietly left to them in most loyal remembrance, by the hand which towards the last answered few letters, and withdrew more and more from social contact.

Alas, this brings us upon sad ground. We all first began to be conscious of losing him about 1899, when he shut himself up, and kept obstinate silence, for weeks and months, in the cloistral London nooks where he and his library successively abode. Then, not quite two years later, began a painful and prolonged illness, in the course of which his hands and feet became temporarily crippled; and for the ardent lover, in any weather, of the open countryside, arrived a dark twelvemonth of indoor inaction. It is to be feared he was not properly nursed; he had never known how to care for himself, and had lived as heedless of the flesh as if he were all wings. It seemed ungenerous, that instinct to

go into the dark at times, wholly away from wonted intercourse. Yet it was neither ungenerous nor perverse. Surging up the more as his bodily resources failed him, a "mortal moral strife" had to be undergone: the fight in which there can be no comrades. The brave will in him fought long and fought hard: no victor could do more. He had apparently recovered his health after all the solitude and mental weariness, and had just expressed himself as "greedy for work," when he went out from his chambers in Clifford's Inn, late on the night of the 29th of September, for the last of his many enchanted walks alone: for with Hazlitt and Stevenson, this walker held that any walk is the richer for being companionless. He had a fall, and was picked up unconscious and carried to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. And there he lay, with his skull fractured (a child's skull it was, abnormally thin, as the doctors found), recognised and tended, but always asleep, for four days and five nights; and then the little flickering candle went quietly out. In the bitter pathos of his end he was not with Keats, but with Poe. It was the 4th of October, 1902, a Saturday of misted autumn sunshine, sacred in the ecclesiastical calendar to

the Poverello of Assisi. Of that blessed fore-runner his dead poet had once written :—

“ Thy love loved all things, thy love knew no stay,
But drew the very wild beasts round thy knee.
O lover of the least and lowest! pray,
Saint Francis, to the Son of Man, for me.”

The only other Englishman of letters so elfin-small and light was De Quincey. Few persons could readily be got to believe Lionel Johnson's actual age. With his smooth hair and cheek, he passed for a slim undergrown boy of sixteen; his light-footed marches, in bygone summers, over the Welsh hills and the coasts of Dorset and Cornwall, were interrupted at every inn by the ubiquitous motherly landlady, expostulating with him for his supposed truancy. His extreme sense of humour forbade annoyance over the episode; rather was it not unwelcome to one who had no hold on time, and was as elemental as foam or air. Yes, he lived and died young. It was not only simple country folk who missed in him the adult “note.” And yet a certain quaint and courageous pensiveness of aspect and outlook; a hint of power in the fine brow, the sensitive hands, the gray eye so quick, and yet so chastened and incurious, could neither escape a

true palæographer, nor be misconstrued by him. Lionel Johnson must have been at all times both a man and a child. At ten years old, or at the impossible sixty, he must equally have gone on, in a sort of beautiful vital stubbornness, being a unit, being himself. His manners, as well as his mental habits, lasted him throughout; from the first he was a sweet gentleman and a sound thinker. His earliest and his latest poems, in kind altogether, and largely in degree, were of a piece. A paper produced at Winchester School, on Shakespeare's Fools, is as unmistakably his as his final review of Tennyson. To put it rather roughly, he had no discarded gods, and therefore no periods of growth. He was a crystal, a day-lily, shown without tedious processes. In his own phrase,—

“ All that he came to give
He gave, and went again.”

He had a homeless genius: it lacked affinity with the planetary influences under which he found himself here, being as Sir Thomas Browne grandly says, “older than the elements, and owing no homage unto the sun.” He seemed ever the same because he was so. Only intense natures have this continuity of look and mood.

With all his deference, his dominant compassion, his grasp of the spiritual and the unseen, his feet stood foursquare upon rock. He was a tower of wholesomeness in the decadence which his short life spanned. He was no pedant, and no prig. Never poet cared so little to "publish his wistfulness abroad," and here was one gentle critic, at least, whose head was as clear as any barbarian's concerning the things he would adore, and the things he would burn. He suffered indeed, but he won manifold golden comfort from the mercies of God, from human excellence, the arts, and the stretches of meadow, sky, and sea. Sky and sea! they were sacrament and symbol, meat and drink, to him. To illustrate both his truth of perception when dealing with the magic of the natural world and his rapturous sense of union with it, take certain lines, written at Cadgwith in 1892, "Winds rush and waters roll"; an Oxford poem of 1889, "Going down the forest side"; and one (with its lovely opening anticipation of Tennyson), dating from Falmouth Harbour, as long ago as 1887, "I have passed over the rough sea, And over the white harbour bar."

Surely no pity need be wasted upon one who resolved himself into so glorious a harmony

with all creation and with the mysteries of our mortal being. To be happy is a feat, nowadays, nothing less than heroic. Lionel Johnson, after all and in spite of all, dared to be happy. As he never worried himself about awards, the question of his to-morrow's station and his measure of fame need not obtrude upon a mere character-study. Memorable and exhilarating has been the ten years' spectacle of him in unexhausted free play, now with his harp, now with his blunted rapier, under the steady dominion of a genius so wise and so ripe that one knows not where in living companies to look for its parallel. Well: may we soon get used to thinking of our dearest guild-fellow in a safer City, where no terror of defeat can touch him! "*And he shall sing there according to the days of his youth, and according to the days of his going up out of the land of Egypt.*"

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY.

(From *The Atlantic Monthly*,
December, 1902.)

Winchester

To the fairest !

 Then to thee
Consecrate and bounden be,
Winchester ! this verse of mine.
Ah, that loveliness of thine !
To have lived enchanted years
Free from sorrows, free from fears,
Where thy Tower's great shadow falls
Over those proud buttressed walls ;
Whence a purpling glory pours
From high heaven's inheritors,
Throned within the arching stone !
To have wandered, hushed, alone,
Gently round thy fair, fern-grown
Chantry of the Lilies, lying
Where the soft night winds go sighing
Round thy Cloisters, in moonlight
Branching dark, or touched with white :

Round old, chill aisles, where moon-smitten
Blanches the *Orate*, written
Under each worn old-world face
Graven on Death's holy place !

To the noblest !

None but thee.

Blest our living eyes, that see
Half a thousand years fulfilled
Of that age, which Wykeham willed
Thee to win ; yet all unworn,
As upon that first March morn,
When thine honoured city saw
Thy young beauty without flaw,
Born within her water-flowing
Ancient hollows, by wind-blowing
Hills enfolded ever more.
Thee, that lord of splendid lore,
Orient from old Hellas' shore,
Grocyn, had to mother : thee,
Monumental majesty
Of most high philosophy
Honours, in thy wizard Browne :
Tender Otway's dear renown,

Mover of a perfect pity,
Victim of the iron city,
Thine to cherish is: and thee
Laureate of Liberty;
Harper of the Highland faith,
Elf, and faery, and wan wraith;
Chaunting softly, chaunting slowly,
Minstrel of all melancholy;
Master of all melody,
Made to cling round memory;
Passion's poet, Evening's voice,
Collins glorified. Rejoice,
Mother! in thy sons: for all
Love thine immemorial
Name, august and musical.
Not least he, who left thy side,
For his sire's, thine earlier pride,
Arnold: whom we mourn to-day,
Prince of song, and gone away
To his brothers of the bay:
Thine the love of all his years;
His be now thy praising tears.

To the dearest !

Ah, to thee !

Hast thou not in all to me
Mother, more than mother, been ?
Well toward thee may Mary Queen
Bend her with a mother's mien ;
Who so rarely dost express
An inspiring tenderness,
Woven with thy sterner strain,
Prelude of the world's true pain.
But two years, and still my feet
Found thy very stones more sweet,
Than the richest fields elsewhere :
Two years, and thy sacred air
Still poured balm upon me, when
Nearer drew the world of men ;
When the passions, one by one,
All sprang upward to the sun ;
Two years have I lived, still thine :
Lost, thy presence ! gone, that shrine,
Where six years, what years ! were mine.
Music is the thought of thee ;
Fragrance, all thy memory.
Those thy rugged Chambers old,
In their gloom and rudeness, hold

Dear remembrances of gold.
Some first blossoming of flowers
Made delight of all the hours ;
Greatness, beauty, all things fair
Made the spirit of thine air :
Old years live with thee ; thy sons
Walk with high companions.
Then, the natural joy of earth,
Joy of very health and birth !
Hills, upon a summer noon :
Water Meads, on eves of June :
Chamber Court, beneath the moon :
Days of spring, on Twyford Down,
Or when autumn woods grew brown,
As they looked when here came Keats,
Chaunting of autumnal sweets ;
Through this city of old haunts,
Murmuring immortal chaunts ;
As when Pope, art's earlier king,
Here, a child, did nought but sing,
Sang, a child, by nature's rule,
Round the trees of Twyford School :
Hours of sun beside Meads' Wall,
Ere the may began to fall ;
Watching the rooks rise and soar,

High from lime and sycamore :
Wanderings by old-world ways,
Walks and streets of ancient days ;
Closes, churches, arches, halls,
Vanished men's memorials.
There was beauty, there was grace,
Each place was an holy place :
There the kindly fates allowed
Me too room ; and made me proud,
(Prouder name I have not wist !)
With the name of Wykehamist.
These thy joys, and more than these :
Ah, to watch beneath thy trees,
Through long twilights linden-scented,
Sunsets, lingering, lamented,
In the purple west ; prevented,
Ere they fell, by evening star !
Ah, long nights of Winter ! far
Leaps and roars the faggot fire ;
Ruddy smoke rolls higher, higher,
Broken through by flame's desire ;
Circling faces glow, all eyes
Take the light ; deep radiance flies,
Merrily flushing overhead
Names of brothers, long since fled,

And fresh clusters, in their stead,
Jubilant round fierce forest flame.
Friendship too must make her claim :
But what songs, what memories end,
When they tell of friend on friend ?
And for them I thank thy name.

Love alone of gifts, no shame
Lessens, and I love thee : yet
Sound it but of echoes, let
This my maiden music be
Of the love I bear to thee,
Witness and interpreter,
Mother mine : loved Winchester !

Chalkhill

*From his Latin epitaph in the Cloisters of
Winchester College*

Here lies John Chalkhill: years two score
A Fellow here, and then, no more!
Long life of chaste and sober mood,
Of silence and of solitude;
Of plenteous alms, of plenteous prayer,
Of sanctity and inward care:
So lived the Church's early fold,
So saintly anchorites of old.
A little child, he did begin
The Heaven of Heavens by storm to win;
At eighty years he entered in.

Oxford

Over, the four long years! And now there rings
One voice of freedom and regret: *Farewell!*
Now old remembrance sorrows, and now sings:
But song from sorrow, now, I cannot tell.

City of weathered cloister and worn court ;
Grey city of strong towers and clustering spires :
Where art's fresh loveliness would first resort ;
Where lingering art kindled her latest fires.

Where on all hands, wondrous with ancient grace,
Grace touched with age, rise works of goodliest men:
Next Wykeham's art obtain their splendid place
The zeal of Inigo, the strength of Wren.

Where at each coign of every antique street,
A memory hath taken root in stone :
There, Raleigh shone ; there, toiled Franciscan feet ;
There, Johnson flinched not, but endured, alone.

There, Shelley dreamed his white Platonic dreams ;
There, classic Landor throve on Roman thought ;
There, Addison pursued his quiet themes ;
There, smiled Erasmus, and there, Colet taught.

And there, O memory more sweet than all !
Lived he, whose eyes keep yet our passing light ;
Whose crystal lips Athenian speech recall ;
Who wears Rome's purple with least pride, most right.

That is the Oxford strong to charm us yet :
Eternal in her beauty and her past.
What, though her soul be vexed ? She can forget
Cares of an hour : only the great things last.

Only the gracious air, only the charm,
And ancient might of true humanities,
These, nor assault of man, nor time, can harm :
Not these, nor Oxford with her memories.

Together have we walked with willing feet
Gardens of plenteous trees, bowering soft lawn ;
Hills, whither Arnold wandered ; and all sweet
June meadows, from the troubling world withdrawn ;

Chapels of cedarn fragrance, and rich gloom
Poured from empurpled panes on either hand ;
Cool pavements, carved with legends of the tomb ;
Grave haunts, where we might dream, and under-
stand.

Over, the four long years ! And unknown powers
Call to us, going forth upon our way :
Ah ! Turn we, and look back upon the towers
That rose above our lives, and cheered the day.

Proud and serene, against the sky, they gleam :
Proud and secure, upon the earth they stand :
Our city hath the air of a pure dream,
And hers indeed is a Hesperian land.

Think of her so ! The wonderful, the fair,
The immemorial, and the ever young :
The city sweet with our forefathers' care :
The city where the Muses all have sung.

Ill times may be ; she hath no thought of time :
She reigns beside the waters yet in pride.
Rude voices cry : but in her ears the chime
Of full sad bells brings back her old springtide.

Like to a queen in pride of place, she wears
The splendour of a crown in Radcliffe's dome.
Well fare she, well ! As perfect beauty fares,
And those high places that are beauty's home.

The Classics

Fain to know golden things, fain to grow wise,
Fain to achieve the secret of fair souls :
His thought, scarce other lore need solemnize,
Whom Virgil calms, whom Sophocles controls :

Whose conscience Æschylus, a warrior voice,
Enchanted hath with majesties of doom :
Whose melancholy mood can best rejoice,
When Horace sings, and roses bower the tomb :

Who, following Cæsar unto death, discerns
What bitter cause was Rome's, to mourn that day :
With austere Tacitus for master, learns
The look of empire in its proud decay :

Whom dread Lucretius of the mighty line
Hath awed, but not borne down : who loves the flame
That leaped within Catullus the divine,
His glory, and his beauty, and his shame :

Who dreams with Plato and, transcending dreams,
Mounts to the perfect City of true God :
Who hails its marvellous and haunting gleams,
Treading the steady air as Plato trod :

Who with Thucydides pursues the way,
Feeling the heart-beats of the ages gone,
Till fall the clouds upon the Attic day,
And Syracuse draw tears for Marathon :

To whom these golden things best give delight :
The music of most sad Simonides ;
Propertius' ardent graces ; and the might
Of Pindar chaunting by the olive trees :

Livy, and Roman consuls purple swathed ;
Plutarch, and heroes of the ancient earth ;
And Aristophanes, whose laughter scathed
The souls of fools, and pealed in lyric mirth :

Æolian rose-leaves blown from Sappho's isle ;
Secular glories of Lycean thought ;
Sallies of Lucian, bidding wisdom smile ;
Angers of Juvenal, divinely wrought :

Pleasant, and elegant, and garrulous
Pliny : crowned Marcus, wistful and still strong ;
Sicilian seas and their Theocritus,
Pastoral singer of the last Greek song :

Herodotus, all simple and all wise ;
Demosthenes, a lightning flame of scorn ;
The surge of Cicero, that never dies ;
And Homer, grand against the ancient morn.

Walter Pater

Gracious God rest him! he who toiled so well
 Secrets of grace to tell
Graciously; as the awed rejoicing priest
 Officiates at the feast,
Knowing how deep within the liturgies
 Lie hid the mysteries.
Half of a passionately pensive soul
 He showed us, not the whole :
Who loved him best, they best, they only, knew
 The deeps they might not view ;
That which was private between God and him ;
 To others, justly dim.
Calm Oxford autumns and prelude springs !
 To me your memory brings
Delight upon delight, but chiefest one :
 The thought of Oxford's son,
Who gave me of his welcome and his praise,
 When white were still my days ;

Ere death had left life darkling, nor had sent
 Lament upon lament :
Ere sorrow told me how I loved my lost,
 And bade me base love's cost.
Scholarship's constant saint, he kept her light
 In him divinely white :
With cloistral jealousy of ardour strove
 To guard her sacred grove,
Inviolatè by unworldly feet, nor paced
 In desecrating haste.
Oh, sweet grave smiling of that wisdom, brought
 From arduous ways of thought ;
Oh, golden patience of that travailing soul
 So hungered for the goal,
And vowed to keep, through subtly vigilant pain,
 From pastime on the plain,
Enamoured of the difficult mountain air
 Up beauty's Hill of Prayer !
Stern is the faith of art, right stern, and he
 Loved her severity.
Momentous things he prized, gradual and fair
 Births of a passionate air :
Some austere setting of an ancient sun,
 Its midday glories done,

Over a silent melancholy sea
 In sad serenity :
Some delicate dawning of a new desire,
 Distilling fragrant fire
On hearts of men prophetically fain
 To feel earth young again :
Some strange rich passage of the dreaming earth,
 Fulfilled with warmth and worth.
Ended, his service : yet, albeit farewell
 Tolls the faint vesper bell,
Patient beneath his Oxford trees and towers
 He still is gently ours :
Hierarch of the spirit, pure and strong,
 Worthy Uranian song.
Gracious God keep him : and God grant to me
 By miracle to see
That unforgettably most gracious friend,
 In the never-ending end !

Cromwell

Now, on his last of ways,
The great September star,
That crowned him on the days
Of Worcester and Dunbar,
Shines through the menacing night afar.

This day his England knows
Freedom and fear in one ;
She holds her breath, while goes
Her mighty mastering son :
His sceptre-sword its work hath done.

O crowning mercy, Death !
Peace to the stormy heart,
Peace to the passionate breath,
And awful eyes : their part
Is done, for thou their victor art !

Yet, is it peace with him ?
Answer, O Drogheda's dead !
O ghosts, beside the dim
Waters and shadows dread !
What of his coming shall be said ?

Answer, O fatal King !
Whose sad prophetic eyes
Foresaw his glory bring
Thy death ! He also lies
Dead : hath he peace, O King of sighs ?

His soul's most secret thought
Eternal Light declares :
He, who in darkness wrought,⁷
To very Truth now bares
All hidden hopes, all deep despairs.

Maintains he in Death's land
The quarrel of the Lord,
As when from his live hand
Leaped lightnings of the sword ?
Is *Come, good servant !* his reward ?

Hath the word come, *Well done!*
Or the pure word of doom,
Sending him from the sun
To walk in bitter gloom,
With the lost angels of the tomb?

Prince of the iron rod
And war's imperious mail,
Did he indeed for God
Fight ever, and prevail,
Bidding the Lord of hosts *All hail?*

Or was it ardent lust
Of majesty and might,
That stung and fired and thrust
His soul into the fight:
Mystic desire and fierce delight?

Nay, peace for ever more!
O martyred souls! He comes,
Your conquered conqueror:
No trappings now, nor drums,
Are his, who wrought your martyrdoms

Tragic, triumphant form,
He comes to your dim ways,
Comes upon wings of storm :
Greet him, with pardoning praise,
With marvelling awe, with equal gaze !

To Morfydd

A voice on the winds,
A voice by the waters,
Wanders and cries :
Oh ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes !

Western the winds are,
And western the waters,
Where the light lies :
Oh ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes !

Cold, cold, grow the winds,
And wild grow the waters,
Where the sun dies :
Oh ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes !

And down the night winds,
And down the night waters,
The music flies :
Oh ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Cold be the winds,
And wild be the waters,
So mine be your eyes !

Cadgwith

My windows open to the autumn night,
In vain I watched for sleep to visit me ;
How should sleep dull mine ears, and dim my sight,
Who saw the stars, and listened to the sea ?

Ah, how the City of our God is fair !
If, without sea, and starless though it be,
For joy of the majestic beauty there,
Men shall not miss the stars, nor mourn the sea.

By the Statue of King Charles at Charing
Cross

Sombre and rich, the skies ;
Great glooms, and starry plains.
Gently the night wind sighs ;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me : and around
The saddest of all kings
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall.
Only the night wind glides :
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court : and yet,
The stars his courtiers are :
Stars in their stations set ;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king :
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate :
The stars ; or those sad eyes ?
Which are more still and great :
Those brows, or the dark skies ?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy,
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends :
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life, and hapless? Nay :
Through death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence? Yea :
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom ;
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ :
His soul was of the saints ;
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe !
Men hunger for thy grace :
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet, when the city sleeps,
When all the cries are still,
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

Glories

Roses from Pæstan rosaries !
More goodly red and white was she :
Her red and white were harmonies
Not matched upon a Pæstan tree.

Ivories blanched in Alban air !
She lies more purely blanched than you :
No Alban whiteness doth she wear,
But death's perfection of that hue.

Nay! now the rivalry is done,
Of red, and white, and whiter still :
She hath a glory from that sun
Who falls not from Olympus hill.

In Falmouth Harbour

The large calm harbour lies below
Long terraced lines of circling light :
Without, the deep sea currents flow :
 And here are stars, and night.

No sight, no sound, no living stir,
But such as perfect the still bay :
So hushed it is, the voyager
 Shrinks at the thought of day.

We glide by many a lanternd mast ;
Our mournful horns blow wild to warn
Yon looming pier : the sailors cast
 Their ropes, and watch for morn.

Strange murmurs from the sleeping town,
And sudden creak of lonely oars
Crossing the water, travel down
 The roadstead, the dim shores.

A charm is on the silent bay ;
Charms of the sea, charms of the land.
Memories of open wind convey
 Peace to this harbour strand.

Far off, Saint David's crags descend
On seas of desolate storm : and far
From this pure rest, the Land's drear End,
 And ruining waters are.

Well was it worth to have each hour
Of high and perilous blowing wind :
For here, for now, deep peace hath power
 To conquer the worn mind.

I have passed over the rough sea,
And over the white harbour bar :
And this is Death's dreamland to me,
 Led hither by a star.

And what shall dawn be ? Hush thee, nay !
Soft, soft is night, and calm and still :
Save that day cometh, what of day
 Knowest thou good, or ill ?

Content thee! Not the annulling light
Of any pitiless dawn is here ;
Thou art alone with ancient night :
And all the stars are clear.

Only the night air, and the dream,
Only the far, sweet-smelling wave,
The stilly sounds, the circling gleam,
Are thine : and thine a grave.

Magic

They wrong with ignorance a royal choice
Who cavil at my loneliness and labour :
For them, the luring wonder of a voice,
The viol's cry for them, the harp and tabour :
For me divine austerity,
And voices of philosophy.

Ah ! light imaginations, that discern
No passion in the citadel of passion :
Their fancies lie on flowers ; but my thoughts turn
To thoughts and things of an eternal fashion :
 The majesty and dignity
 Of everlasting verity.

Mine is the sultry sunset, when the skies
Tremble with strange intolerable thunder :
And at the dead of an hushed night, these eyes
Draw down the soaring oracles winged with wonder :
 From the four winds they come to me,
 The Angels of Eternity.

Men pity me ; poor men, who pity me !
Poor charitable scornful souls of pity !
I choose laborious loneliness : and ye
Lead Love in triumph through the dancing city :
 While death and darkness girdle me,
 I grope for immortality.

To the Dead of '98

God rest you, rest you, rest you, Ireland's dead !
 Peace be upon you shed,
Peace from the Mercy of the Crucified,
 You, who for Ireland died !
Soft fall on you the dews and gentle airs
 Of interceding prayers,
From lowly cabins of our ancient land,
 Yours yet, O sacred band !
God rest you, rest you : for the fight you fought
 Was His : the end you sought,
His ; from His altar fires you took your flame,
 Hailing His Holy Name.
Triumphantly you gave yourselves to death :
 And your last breath
Was one last sigh for Ireland, sigh to Him,
 As the loved land grew dim.

And, still blessed and martyr souls ! you pray
 In the same faith this day :
From forth your dwelling beyond sun and star,
 Where only spirits are,
Your prayers in a perpetual flight arise
 To fold before God's Eyes
Their tireless wings, and wait the Holy Word
 That one day shall be heard.
*Not unto us, they plead, Thy goodness gave
 Our mother to unslave ;
To us Thou gavest death for love of her :
 Ah, what death lovelier ?
But to our children's children give to see
 The perfect victory !
Thy dead beseech Thee : to Thy living give
 In liberty to live !*

To a Spanish Friend

Exiled in America
From thine old Castilia,
Son of holy Avila!
Leave thine endless tangled lore,
As in childhood to implore
Her whose pleading evermore
Pleads for her own Avila.

Seraph saint, Teresa burns
Before God, and burning turns
To the furnace, whence she learns
How the Sun of Love is lit:
She the Sunflower following it.
O fair ardour infinite:
Fire, for which the cold soul yearns!

Clad in everlasting fire,
Flame of one long, lone desire,
Surely thou too shalt aspire

Up by Carmel's bitter road :
Love thy goal and love thy goad,
Love thy lightness and thy load,
Love thy rose and love thy briar.

Leave the false light, leave the vain :
Lose thyself in Night again,
Night divine of perfect pain.
Lose thyself and find thy God,
Through a prostrate period ;
Bruise thee with an iron rod ;
Suffer, till thyself be slain.

Fly thou from the dazzling day,
For it lights the downward way :
In the sacred Darkness pray,
Till prayer cease, or seem to thee
Agony of ecstasy :
Dead to all men, dear to me,
Live as saints, and die as they.

Stones and thorns shall tear and sting,
Each stern step its passion bring,
On the Way of Perfecting,

On the Fourfold Way of Prayer :
Heed not, though joy fill the air ;
Heed not, though it breathe despair :
In the City thou shalt sing.

Without hope and without fear,
Keep thyself from thyself clear :
In the secret seventh sphere
Of thy soul's hid Castle, thou
At the King's white throne shalt bow :
Light of Light shall kiss thy brow,
And all darkness disappear.

Brothers

IN MEMORY OF AUSTIN FARRAND, KILLED IN THE
SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

Now hath Death dealt a generous violence,
Calling thee swiftly hence
By the like instrument of instant fire,
To join thy heart's desire,
Thy brother, slain before thee; but whom thou,
Slain friend! regainest now.
True brother wast thou, whom from his dear side
Death did not long divide.
How often, till the golden stars grew dim,
Our speech was but of him,
Exiled beneath those Afric stars, whose deep
Radiance adorns your sleep!
Fair warrior brothers, excellently dead,
Your loyal lifeblood shed,
In death's gray distant land do thou and he
Keep any mind of me,

Of old days filled with laughter of delight,
And many a laughing night?
Yes! for although your stars in storm have set,
Nor you, nor I, forget :
Earthward you long and lean, earthward : and I
Toward your eternity.
Death cannot conquer all ; your love and mine
Lives, deathlessly divine.
You wait, I wait, a little while we wait :
And then, the wide-flung Gate,
The impassioned Heavens, the white-horsed, white-
robed Knights,
The chaunting on the heights,
The beauty of the Bright and Morning Star!
Then, burst our prison bar,
Shall we for evermore each other see,
We three, we happy three,
Where, in the white perfection of God's peace,
Old love shall find increase.
In faith and hope endure our hearts till then :
Amen ! Amen !

A Friend

His are the whitenesses of soul
That Virgil had: he walks the earth
A classic saint, in self-control,
And comeliness, and quiet mirth.

His presence wins me to repose;
When he is with me, I forget
All heaviness; and when he goes,
The comfort of the sun is set.

But in the lonely hours I learn,
How I can serve and thank him best:
*God! trouble him: that he may turn
Through sorrow to the only rest.*

Ash Wednesday

IN MEMORIAM: ERNEST DOWSON

Memento, homo, quia pulvis es !

To-day the cross of ashes marks my brow :
Yesterday, laid to solemn sleep wert thou,
O dear to me of old, and dearer now !

Memento, homo, quia pulvis es !

Memento, homo, quia pulvis es !

And all the subtile beauty of that face,
With all its winning, all its wistful grace
Fades in the consecrated stilly place :

Memento, homo, quia pulvis es !

Memento, homo, quia pulvis es !

The visible vehement earth remains to me :
The visionary quiet land holds thee :
But what shall separate such friends as we ?

Memento, homo, quia pulvis es !

To a Friend

Sweet, hard and wise, your choice so early made,
To cast the world away, a derelict :
To wear within the pure and austere shade
The sacred sables of Saint Benedict.

I give you praise : give me your better prayers.
The nothingness, which you have flung away,
To me seems full of fond delightful cares,
Visions, and dangers of the crowded day.

Give me your prayers : you keep no other wealth,
And therefore are the wealthiest of my friends.
So shall you lure me by an holy stealth
At last into the Land where wandering ends.

The Age of a Dream

Imageries of dreams reveal a gracious age :
Black armour, falling lace, and altar lights at morn.
The courtesy of Saints, their gentleness and scorn,
Lights on an earth more fair than shone from
Plato's page :

The courtesy of knights, fair calm and sacred rage :
The courtesy of love, sorrow for love's sake borne.
Vanished, those high conceits! Desolate and forlorn,
We hunger against hope for that lost heritage.

Gone now, the carven work! Ruined, the golden
shrine!

No more the glorious organs pour their voice divine;
No more rich frankincense drifts through the Holy
Place.

Now from the broken tower, what solemn bell still
tolls,

Mourning what piteous death? Answer, O saddened
souls!

Who mourn the death of beauty and the death of
grace.

The Precept of Silence

I know you : solitary griefs,
Desolate passions, aching hours !
I know you : tremulous beliefs,
Agonised hopes, and ashen flowers !

The winds are sometimes sad to me ;
The starry spaces, full of fear ;
Mine is the sorrow on the sea,
And mine the sigh of places drear.

Some players upon plaintive strings
Publish their wistfulness abroad :
I have not spoken of these things,
Save to one man, and unto God.

The Dark Angel

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust
To rid the world of penitence :
Malicious Angel, who still dost
My soul such subtile violence !

Because of thee, no thought, no thing,
Abides for me undesecrate :
Dark Angel, ever on the wing,
Who never reachest me too late !

When music sounds, then changest thou
Its silvery to a sultry fire :
Nor will thine envious heart allow
Delight untortured by desire.

Through thee, the gracious Muses turn
To Furies, O mine Enemy !
And all the things of beauty burn
With flames of evil ecstasy.

Because of thee, the land of dreams
Becomes a gathering place of fears :
Until tormented slumber seems
One vehemence of useless tears.

When sunlight glows upon the flowers,
Or ripples down the dancing sea :
Thou, with thy troop of passionate powers,
Beleaguerest, bewilderest, me.

Within the breath of autumn woods,
Within the winter silences :
Thy venomous spirit stirs and broods,
O Master of impieties !

The ardour of red flame is thine,
And thine the steely soul of ice :
Thou poisonest the fair design
Of nature, with unfair device.

Apples of ashes, golden bright ;
Waters of bitterness, how sweet !
O banquet of a foul delight,
Prepared by thee, dark Paraclete !

Thou art the whisper in the gloom,
The hinting tone, the haunting laugh :
Thou art the adorer of my tomb,
The minstrel of mine epitaph.

I fight thee, in the Holy Name !
Yet what thou dost is what God saith :
Tempter ! should I escape thy flame,
Thou wilt have helped my soul from Death :

The second Death, that never dies,
That cannot die, when time is dead :
Live Death, wherein the lost soul cries,
Eternally uncomforted.

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust !
Of two defeats, of two despairs,
Less dread, a change to drifting dust,
Than thine eternity of cares.

Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not so,
Dark Angel ! triumph over me :
Lonely, unto the Lone I go ;
Divine, to the Divinity.

Lucretius

Visions, to sear with flame his worn and haunted eyes,
Throng him: and fears unknown invest the black
 night hours.

His royal reason fights with undefeated Powers,
Armies of mad desires, legions of wanton lies;
His ears are full of pain, because of their fierce cries:
Nor from his tended thoughts, for all their fruits
 and flowers,
Comes solace: for Philosophy within her bowers
Falls faint, and sick to death. Therefore Lucretius
 dies.

Dead! And his deathless death hath him, so still
 and stark!
No change upon the deep, no change upon the earth,
None in the wastes of nature, the starred wilderness,
Wandering flames and thunders of the shaken dark,
Among the mountain heights, winds wild with stormy
 mirth:
These were before, and these will be: no more, no less.

Harvest

Not now the rejoicing face of summer glows
In splendour to a blue and splendid sky :
For now hath died each lingering wild rose
Off tangled river banks : and autumn shows
Fields of red corn, that on the downside lie
Beneath a gentle mist, a golden haze.
So shrouded, the red cornlands take an air
Trembling with warm wind : sickle-girt, forth fare
To gather in the fruit of summer days,
Harvesting hinds, with swift arms brown and bare ;
Revering well toil's venerable ways.

Most golden music is among the corn,
Played by the winds wavering over it :
A murmuring sound, as when against the morn,
Orient upon calm seas, their noise is borne
Innumerable rippling and sunlit.

Most golden music is in either tide :
And this of radiant corn, before it fall,
Wills not that summer die unmusical,
By no rich surge of murmurs glorified :
Nay! the fields rock and rustle, sounding all
Praise of the fruitful earth on every side.

Good, through the yellow fields to ponder long :
Good, long to meditate the stilly sight.
Afar shone down a brazen sunlight strong,
Over the harvested hillside, along
The laboured meadows, burning with great light :
The air trembled with overflow of heat
In the low valley, where no movement was
Of soft-blown wind, ruffling the scytheless grass
Thick-growing by the waters, cool and sweet ;
No swing of boughs ; there were no airs to pass
Caressing them : all winds failed, when all wheat,

All fair crops murmuring their soft acclaim,
Fell, golden rank on golden rank, and lay
Ruddily heaped along the earth : the flame
Of delicate poppies, rich and frail, became
Wan dying weed : convolvulus, astray

Out from its hedgerows far into the field,
In clinging coils of leaf and tender bloom,
Shared with the stalks it clung and clasped, their
doom.

So went the work: so gave the ripened weald
Its fruits and pleasant flowers; and made a room,
Wherein fresh winds might wave a fresh year's yield.

A Stranger

Her face was like sad things: was like the lights
Of a great city, seen from far off fields,
Or seen from sea; sad things, as are the fires
Lit in a land of furnaces by night;
Sad things, as are the reaches of a stream
Flowing beneath a golden moon alone.
And her clear voice, full of remembrances,
Came like faint music down the distant air.
As though she had a spirit of dead joy
About her, looked the sorrow of her ways:
If light there be, the dark hills are to climb
First: and if calm, far over the long sea.

Fallen from all the world apart she seemed,
Into a silence and a memory.
What had the thin hands done, that now they
 strained
Together in such passion ? And those eyes,
What saw they long ago, that now they dreamed
Along the busy streets, blind but to dreams ?
Her white lips mocked the world and all therein :
She had known more than this ; she wanted not
This, who had known the past so great a thing.
Moving about our ways, herself she moved
In things done, years remembered, places gone.
Lonely, amid the living crowds, as dead,
She walked with wonderful and sad regard.
With us, her passing image : but herself
Far over the dark hills and the long sea.

Winchester Close

Holy have been the wanderings here : and here
The beauty hath been shown of holiness.
Nine hundred years ago, Frithstan the Saint
Put off his mitre, in a rough cowl hiding
The snows of age and care, to go at eve
Among the quiet graves with orison.
The sun fell, and the gentle winds made stir.
By graves, ah! by how many graves, he went,
Old in war's day : then said he : *Requiem*
Æternam dona eis, Domine !
Eternal rest, eternal rest, O Lord!
Give thou these dead. The heart of earth, the
 hearts
Of poor dead, lapped in earth, heard : slowly grew
A murmur, and a gathering thunder ; slowly
Beneath his feet grew voices of the dead.
And faint, each voice : but sounding as one sea,
Together cried the ghostly multitude,

Cried hungrily to that great prayer: *Amen!*
Immeasurably surged the *Amen*: till sank
Softly away the voices of the dead,
Softly: they slept in the cold earth once more
The stilly sleep, glad to have cried that cry.
Frithstan's white face thrilled upward to his God.

In 'Memory of M. B.

Old age, that dwelt upon thy years
With softest and with stateliest grace,
Hath sealed thine eyes, hath closed thine ears,
And stilled the sweetness of thy face.'

That gentle and that gracious look
Sleeps now, and wears a marble calm:
Death took no more away, but took
All cares away, and left the balm

Of pure repose and peacefulness
Upon thy forehead touched by time :
So shall I know thee, none the less
Than earth unwintered, come the prime.

Gone, the white snows, the lingering leaves,
That once endeared the wintry days :
But the new bloom of spring receives
The old love, and has equal praise.

Fare then thee well ! in Winchester
Sleep thy last fearless sleep serene.
Friends fail me not ; but kindlier
Can no friend be, than thou hast been.

The city that we two loved best,
No fairer place of sleep for thee !
There lay thee down, and take thy rest,
And this farewell of love from me.

A Proselyte

Heart of magnificent desire :
O equal of the lordly sun !
Since thou hast cast on me thy fire,
My cloistral peace, so hardly won,
 Breaks from its trance :
 One glance
From thee hath all its joy undone.

Of lonely quiet was my dream ;
Day gliding into fellow day,
With the mere motion of a stream :
But now in vehement disarray
 Go time and thought,
 Distraught
With passion kindled at thy ray.

Heart of tumultuary might,
O greater than the mountain flame,
That leaps upon the fearful night !
On me thy devastation came
 Sudden and swift,
 A gift
Of joyous torment without name.

Thy spirit stings my spirit : thou
Takest by storm and ecstasy
The cloister of my soul. And now,
With ardour that is agony,
 I do thy will ;
 Yet still
Hear voices of calm memory.

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