Poems

By

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin



MY PEDIGREE.

With scorning laughter at a fellow writer, In a chorus the Russian scribes With name of aristocrat me chide: Just look, if please you ... nonsense what! Court Coachman not I, nor assessor, Nor am I nobleman by cross; No academician, nor professor, I'm simply of Russia a citizen. Well I know the times' corruption, And, surely, not gainsay it shall I: Our nobility but recent is: The more recent it, the more noble 't is. But of humbled races a chip, And, God be thanked, not alone Of ancient Lords am scion I; Citizen I am, a citizen! Not in cakes my grandsire traded, Not a prince was newly-baked he; Nor at church sang he in choir, Nor polished he the boots of Tsar; Was not escaped a soldier he From the German powdered ranks; How then aristocrat am I to be? God be thanked, I am but a citizen. My grandsire Radsha in warlike service To Alexander Nefsky was attached. The Crowned Wrathful, Fourth Ivan,

His descendants in his ire had spared. About the Tsars the Pushkins moved; And more than one acquired renown, When against the Poles battling was Of Nizhny Novgorod the citizen plain. When treason conquered was and falsehood, And the rage of storm of war, When the Romanoffs upon the throne The nation called by its Chart— We upon it laid our hands; The martyr's son then favored us; Time was, our race was prized, But I ... am but a citizen obscure. Our stubborn spirit us tricks has played; Most irrepressible of his race, With Peter my sire could not get on; And for this was hung by him. Let his example a lesson be: Not contradiction loves a ruler, Not all can be Prince Dolgorukys, Happy only is the simple citizen. My grandfather, when the rebels rose In the palace of Peterhof, Like Munich, faithful he remained To the fallen Peter Third; To honor came then the Orloffs, But my sire into fortress, prison— Quiet now was our stern race, And I was born merely—citizen. Beneath my crested seal

The roll of family charts I've kept;

Not running after magnates new,

My pride of blood I have subdued;

I'm but an unknown singer

Simply Pushkin, not Moussin,

My strength is mine, not from court:

I am a writer, a citizen.

MY MONUMENT.

A monument not hand-made I have for me erected: The path to it well-trodden will not overgrow; Risen higher has it with unbending head Than the monument of Alexander. No! not all of me shall die! my soul in hallowed lyre Shall my dust survive, and escape destruction— And famous be I shall, as long as on earth sublunar One bard at least living shall remain. My name will travel over the whole of Russia great, And there pronounce my name shall every living tongue: The Slav's proud scion, and the Finn, and the savage yet Tungus, and the Calmuck, lover of the steppe. And long to the nation I shall be dear: For rousing with my lyre its noble feelings. For extolling freedom in a cruel age, For calling mercy upon the fallen. The bidding of God, O Muse, obey. Fear not insult, ask not crown: Praise and blame take with indifference

And dispute not with the fool!

MY MUSE.

In the days of my youth she was fond of me,
And the seven-stemmed flute she handed me.
To me with smile she listened; and already gently
Along the openings echoing of the woods
Was playing I with fingers tender:
Both hymns solemn, god-inspired
And peaceful song of Phrygian shepherd.
From morn till night in oak's dumb shadow
To the strange maid's teaching intent I listened;
And with sparing reward me gladdening
Tossing back her curls from her forehead dear,
From my hands the flute herself she took.
Now filled the wood was with breath divine
And the heart with holy enchantment filled.

MY DEMON.

In those days when new to me were
Of existence all impressions:—
The maiden's glances, the forests' whisper,
The song of nightingale at night;
When the sentiments elevated
Of Freedom, glory and of love,
And of art the inspiration
Stirred deeply so my blood:—

My hopeful hours and joyful With melancholy sudden dark'ning A certain evil spirit then Began in secret me to visit. Grievous were our meetings, His smile, and his wonderful glance, His speeches, these so stinging Cold poison poured into my soul. Providence with slander Inexhaustible he tempted; Of Beauty as a dream he spake And inspiration he despised; Nor love, nor freedom trusted he, On life with scorn he looked— And nought in all nature To bless he ever wished.

REGRET.

Not ye regret I, of spring my years,
In dreams gone by of hopeless love;
Not ye regret I, O mysteries of nights.
By songstress passionate celebrated;
Not ye, regret I, O my faithless friends
Nor crowns of feasts, nor cups of circle,
Nor ye regret I, O traitresses young—
To pleasures melancholy stranger am I.
But where are ye, O moments tender
Of young my hopes, of heartfelt peace?

The former heat and grace of inspiration?

Come again, O ye, of spring my years!

REMINISCENCE.

When noisy day to mortals quiet grows, And upon the city's silent walls Night's shadow half-transparent lies, And Sleep, of daily toils reward,— Then for me are dragging in the silence Of wearying wakefulness the hours. In the sloth of night more scorching burn My heart's serpents' gnawing fangs; Boil my thoughts; my soul with grief oppressed Full of reveries sad is thronged. Before me memory in silence Its lengthy roll unfolds. And with disgust my life I reading Tremble I and curse it. Bitterly I moan, and bitterly my tears I shed, But wash away the lines of grief I cannot. In laziness, in senseless feasts In the craziness of ruinous license, In thraldom, poverty, and homeless deserts My wasted years there I behold. Of friends again I hear the treacherous greeting Games amid of love and wine. To the heart again insults brings Irrepressible the cold world.

No joy for me,—and calmly before me
Of visions young two now rise:
Two tender shades, two angels me
Given by fate in the days of yore.
But both have wings and flaming swords,
And they watch—... and both are vengeant,
And both to me speak with death tongue
Of Eternity's mysteries, and of the grave.

ELEGY.

My wishes I have survived,
My ambition I have outgrown!
Left only is my smart,
The fruit of emptiness of heart.
Under the storm of cruel Fate
Faded has my blooming crown!
Sad I live and lonely,
And wait: Is nigh my end?
Thus touched by the belated frost,
When storm's wintry whistle is heard,
On the branch bare and lone
Trembles the belated leaf.

RESURRECTION.

With sleepy brush the barbarian artist

The master's painting blackens;

And thoughtlessly his wicked drawing

Over it he is daubing.

But in years the foreign colors

Peal off, an aged layer:

The work of genius is 'gain before us,

With former beauty out it comes.

Thus my failings vanish too

From my wearied soul,

And again within it visions rise,

Of my early purer days.

THE PROPHET.

Tormented by the thirst for the spirit I was dragging myself in a sombre desert, And a six-winged seraph appeared Unto me on the parting of the roads. With fingers as light as a dream Mine eyes he touched: And mine eyes opened wise Like the eyes of a frightened eagle; He touched mine ears, And they filled with din and ringing. And I heard the trembling of the heavens And the flight of the angel's wings, And the creeping of the polyps in the sea, And the growth of the vine in the valley. And he took hold of my lips, And out he tore my sinful tongue With its empty and false speech.

And the fang of the wise serpent
Between my terrified lips he placed
With bloody hand.
And ope he cut with sword my breast,
And out he took my trembling heart,
And a coal with flaming blaze
Into the opened breast he shoved.
Like a corpse I lay in the desert.
And the voice of God unto me called:
Arise, O prophet, and listen, and guide.
Be thou filled with my will,
And going over land and sea
Fire with the word the hearts of men!

THE OUTCAST.

On a rainy autumn evening
Into desert places went a maid;
And the secret fruit of unhappy love
In her trembling hands she held.
All was still: the hills and the woods
Asleep in the darkness of the night.
And her searching glances
In terror about she cast.
And on this babe, the innocent,
Her glance she paused with a sigh:
Asleep thou art, my child, my grief.
Thou knowest not my sadness.
Thine eyes will ope, and tho' with longing,

To my breast shalt no more cling.

No kiss for thee to-morrow

From thine unhappy mother.

Beckon in vain for her thou wilt,

My everlasting shame, my guilt!

Me forget thou shalt for aye,

But thee forget shall not I.

Shelter thou shalt receive from strangers, Who 'll say: Thou art none of ours!

Thou wilt ask, Where are my parents?

But for thee no kin is found!

Hapless one! With heart filled with sorrow,

Lonely amid thy mates,

Thy spirit sullen to the end,

Thou shalt behold fondling mothers.

A lonely wanderer everywhere Cursing thy fate at all times,

Thou the bitter reproach shalt hear....

Forgive me, oh, forgive me then!

Asleep! let me then, O hapless one

To my bosom press thee once for all.

A law unjust and terrible Thee and me to sorrow dooms.

While the years have not yet chased

The guiltless joy of thy days,

Sleep, my darling, let no griefs bitter

Mar thy childhood's quiet life!

But lo! behind the woods, near by

The moon brings a hut to light.

Forlorn, pale, and trembling

To the doors nigh she came.

She stooped and gently laid she down
The babe on the threshold strange.
In terror away her eyes she turned
And in the dark night disappeared.

THE BLACK SHAWL.

I gaze demented on the black shawl And my cold soul is torn by grief. When young I was and full of trust I passionately loved a young Greek girl. The charming maid, she fondled me, But soon I lived the black day to see. Once as were gathered my jolly guests A detested Jew knocked at my door. Thou art feasting (he whispered) with friends But betrayed thou art by thy Greek maid. Moneys I gave him and curses, And called my servant the faithful. We went: I flew on the wings of my steed; And tender mercy was silent in me. Her threshold no sooner I espied Dark grew my eyes, and my strength departed. The distant chamber I enter alone, An Armenian embraces my faithless maid. Darkness around me; flashed the dagger; To interrupt his kiss the wretch had no time. And long I trampled the headless corpse,—

And silent and pale at the maid I stared.

I remember her prayers, her flowing blood,
But perished the girl, and with her my love.
The shawl I took from the head now dead
And wiped in silence the bleeding steel.
When came the darkness of eve, my serf
Threw their bodies into the Danube's billows—
Since then I kiss no charming eyes,
Since then I know no cheerful days.
I gaze demented on the black shawl,
And my cold soul is torn by grief.

THE ROUSSALKA.

By a lake once in forest darkness
A monk his soul was saving,
Ever in stern occupation
Of prayer, fast, and labor.
Already with slackened shovel
The aged man his grave was digging,
And only for death in peace and quiet
To his saintly patrons prayed he.
Once in summer at the threshold
Of his drooping little hut
To God was praying the hermit.
Darker grew the forest.
Over the lake was rising fog.
And in the clouds the reddish moon
Was gently rolling along the sky.

Upon the waters the hermit gazed. He looks, and fears, and knows not why, Himself he cannot understand.... Now he sees: the waves are seething And suddenly again are quiet.... Suddenly ... as light as shade of night, As white as early snow of hills, Out cometh a woman naked And on the shore herself she seats. Upon the aged monk she gazes And she combs her moistened tresses— The holy monk with terror trembles, Upon her charms still he gazes; With her hand to him she beckons And her head she's quickly nodding.... And suddenly like a falling star The dreamy wave she vanished under. The sober monk, all night he slept not, And all day he prayed not The shadow unwittingly before him Of the wondrous maid he ever sees. Again the forest is clad in darkness, Along the clouds the moon is sailing. Again the maid above the water, Pale and splendent there she sits. Gaze her eyes, nods her head, Throws kisses, and she's sporting, The wave she sprinkles, and she frolics; Child-like weeping now and laughing; Sobbing tender—the monk she calls:

Monk, O monk, to me, to me!

Into the waves transparent she dashes;
And again is all in silence deep.

But on the third day the roused hermit
The enchanted shores nigh sitting was,
And the beautiful maid he awaited.

Upon the trees were falling shades....

Night at last by dawn was chased—
And nowhere monk could be found,
His beard alone, the gray one
In the water the boys could see.

THE COSSAK.

Once at midnight hour,
Darkness thro' and fog,
Quiet by the river
Rode a Cossak brave.
Black his cap upon his ear,
Dust-covered is his coat,
By his knee the pistols hang
And nigh the ground his sword.
The faithful steed, rein not feeling
Is walking slowly on,
(Long its mane is, and is waving)
Ever further it keeps on.
Now before him two—three huts:
Broken is the fence;
To the village here the road,

To the forest there.

"Not in forest maid is found,"

Dennis thinks, the brave.

"To their chambers went the maids;

Are gone for the night."

The son of Don he pulls the rein

And the spur he strikes:

Like an arrow rushed the steed—

To the huts he turned.

In the clouds the distant sky

Was silvering the moon;

A Beauty-Maid in melancholy

By the window sits.

Espies the brave the Beauty-Maid,

Beats his heart within:

Gently steed to left, to left—

Under the window now is he.

"Darker growing is the night

And hidden is the moon;

Quick, my darling, do come out,

Water give my steed."

"No, not unto a man so young;

Right fearful't is to go;

Fearful't is my house to leave,

And water give thy steed."

"Have no fear, O Beauty-Maid,

And friendship close with me"—

"Brings danger night to Beauty-Maids,"

"Fear me not, O joy of mine!

"Trust me, dear, thy fear is vain,

Away with terror groundless!

Time thou losest precious,
Fear not, O my darling!

Mount my steed; with thee I will
To distant regions gallop;
Blest with me be thou shalt,
Heaven with mate is everywhere."

And the maid? Over she bends,
Her fear is overcome,
Bashfully to ride consents,
And the Cossak happy is.
Off they dart, away they fly;
Are loving one another.

Faithful he for two brief weeks,
Forsook her on the third.

THE DROWNED.

Into the hut the children run,
In haste they called their father:

"Papa, papa, oh, our nets
Out a corpse have dragged."

"Ye lie, ye lie, ye little devils"

Upon them father grumbled.

"I declare, those wicked brats!

Corpse now too have they must!

"Down will come the court, 'Give answer!'

And for an age no rest from it.

But what to do? Heigh, wife, there,

My coat give me, must get there somehow....

Now where's the corpse?"—"Here, papa, here!"

And in truth along the river,

Where is spread the moistened net,

Upon the sand is seen the corpse.

Disfigured terribly the corpse is, Is blue, and all is swollen.

Is it a hapless sorrower,

Who ruined has his sinful soul,

Or by the waves a fisher taken,

Or some fellow, drunkard,

Or by robbers stripped, perchance,

Trader some, unbusinesslike?

To the peasant, what is this?

About he looks and hastens....

Seizes he the body drowned,

By the feet to water drags it,

And from the shore the winding

Off he pushes it with oar

Downward 'gain floats the corpse,

And grave, and cross still is seeking.

And long the dead among the waves,

As if living, swinging, floated;

With his eyes the peasant him

Homeward going, followed.

"Ye little dogs, now follow me,

Each of you a cake shall have;

But look ye out, and hold your tongues!

Else a thrashing shall ye have."

At night the wind to blow began

Full of waves became the river;

Out the light was already going

In the peasant's smoky hut.

The children sleep; the mother slumbers.

On the oven husband lies.

Howls the storm; a sudden knocking

He hears of some one at the window.

"Who's there?"—"Ope the door I say!"

"Time eno'; what is the matter?

Wherefore comes tramp at night?

By the devil art hither brought!

Wherefore with you should I bother?

Crowded my house and dark is."

So saying, he with lazy hand

Open throws the window.

Rolls the moon from behind the clouds—

And now? A naked man before him stands;

From his beard a stream is flowing

His glance is fixed, and is open.

All about him is frightful dumbness

And his hands are dropped down;

And to the puffed-out, swollen body

Black crabs are fastened.

The peasant quickly shuts the window;

He recognized his naked guest,

Is terror-struck. "May you burst!"

Out he whispered and trembled.

In great confusion now his thoughts are,

And all night he shakes in fever;

And till the morrow still the knocking

'S heard on the window and at the gates.

Report there was among the people:

Saying, since then every year

Waiting is the hapless peasant

For his guest on the appointed day.

In the morning the weather changes

And at night the storm arrives,

And the dead man is ever knocking

By the window, and at the gates.

THE BIRDLET.

God's birdlet knows Nor care, nor toil; Nor weaves it painfully An everlasting nest. Thro' the long night on the twig it slumbers; When rises the red sun Birdie listens to the voice of God And it starts, and it sings. When Spring, Nature's Beauty, And the burning summer have passed, And the fog, and the rain, By the late fall are brought, Men are wearied, men are grieved, But birdie flies into distant lands, Into warm climes, beyond the blue sea: Flies away until the spring.

THE CLOUD.

O last cloud of the scattered storm,
Alone thou sailest along the azure clear;
Alone thou bringest the shadow sombre,
Alone thou marrest the joyful day.
Thou but recently had'st encircled the sky
When sternly the lightning was winding about thee;
Thou gavest forth mysterious thunder,
With rain hast watered the parched earth.
Enough! Hie thyself: thy time hath passed:
Earth is refreshed; the storm hath fled;
And the breeze, fondling the trees' leaves
Forth thee chases from the quieted heavens!

THE NORTH WIND.

Why, O wrathful north wind, thou
The marshy shrub dost downward bend?
Why thus in the distant sky-vault
Wrathfully the cloud dost chase?
The black clouds but recently
Had spread the whole heavens o'er,
The oak on hill top but recently
In beauty wondrous itself was priding.
Thou hast risen, and up hast played,
With terror resounded, and with splendor—
And away are driven the stormy clouds;
Down is hurled the mighty oak.

Let now then the sun's clear face
With joy henceforth ever shine,
With the clouds now the zephyr play,
And the bush in quiet sway.

WINTER MORNING.

Frost and sun—the day is wondrous! Thou still art slumbering, charming friend. 'Tis time, O Beauty, to awaken: Ope thine eyes, now in sweetness closed, To meet the Northern Dawn of Morning Thyself a north-star do thou appear! Last night, remember, the storm scolded, And darkness floated in the clouded sky; Like a yellow, clouded spot Thro' the clouds the moon was gleaming,— And melancholy thou wert sitting— But now ... thro' the window cast a look: Stretched beneath the heavens blue Carpet-like magnificent, In the sun the snow is sparkling; Dark alone is the wood transparent, And thro' the hoar gleams green the fir, And under the ice the rivulet sparkles. Entire is lighted with diamond splendor Thy chamber ... with merry crackle The wood is crackling in the oven. To meditation invites the sofa.

But know you? In the sleigh not order why
The brownish mare to harness?
Over the morning snow we gliding
Trust we shall, my friend, ourselves
To the speed of impatient steed;
Visit we shall the fields forsaken,
The woods, dense but recently,
And the banks so dear to me.

WINTER EVENING.

The storm the sky with darkness covers, The snowy whirlings twisting; Like a beast wild now is howling, Like an infant now is crying; Over the aged roof now sudden In the straw it rustling is; Like a traveller now belated For entrance at our window knocking. With melancholy and with darkness Our little, aged hut is filled Why in silence then thou sittest By the window, wife old mine? Or by the howling storms art Wearied thou, O companion mine? Or perchance art slumbering, By the rustling spindle soothed? Let us drink, O kindly friend Of my poverty and youth,

Away with grief,—where is the cup?
Joy it shall bring to our heart.
A song now sing me, how the bird
Beyond the sea in quiet lived;
A song now sing me, how the maiden
In the morning for water went.
The storm the sky with darkness covers,
The snowy whirlings twisting;
Like a beast wild now is howling,
Like an infant now is crying.
Let us drink, O kindly friend
Of my poverty and youth,
Away with grief,—where is the cup
Joy it shall bring to our heart!

THE WINTER-ROAD.

Breaking thro' the waving fogs
Forth the moon is coming,
And on the gloomy acres
She gloomy light is shedding.
Along the wintry, cheerless road
Flies the rapid troika
The little bell monotonous
Wearily is tinkling.
A certain homefulness is heard
In the driver's lengthy lays:
Now light-hearted carelessness,
Now low-spirited sadness.

Neither light, nor a dark hut ... Only snow and silence.... Striped mileposts are alone The travellers who meet us. Sad I feel and weary.... On the morrow, Nina, To my beloved I returning Forget myself shall by the fire And scarce eno' at her shall gaze. Loudly of my watch the spring Its measured circle is completing And us the parter of the wearied, Midnight, not shall separate. Sad I'm, Nina; my journey's weary; Slumbering now, my driver is quiet The little bell is monotonous And darkened now is the moon's face.

THE STORM-MAID

Hast thou seen on the rock the maid,
In robe of white above the waves,
When seething in the storm dark
Played the sea with its shores,—
When the glare of lightning hourly
With rosy glimmer her lighted up,
And the wind beating and flapping
Struggled with her flying robe?
Beautiful's the sea in the storm dark,
Glorious is the sky even without its blue

But trust me: on the rock the maid Excels both wave, and sky, and storm.

THE BARD.

Have ye heard in the woods the nightly voice
Of the bard of love, of the bard of his grief?
When the fields in the morning hour were still,
The flute's sad sound and simple
Have ye heard?

Have ye met in the desert darkness of the forest

The bard of love, the bard of his grief?

Was it a track of tears, was it a smile,

Or a quiet glance filled with melancholy,

Have ye sighed, listening to the calm voice
Of the bard of love, of the bard of grief?
When in the woods the youth ye saw
And met the glance of his dulled eyes,

Have ye met?

Have ye sighed?

SPANISH LOVE-SONG.

Evening Zephyr

Waves the ether.

Murmurs,

Rushes

The Guadalquivir.

Now the golden moon has risen,

Quiet,... Tshoo ... guitar's now heard....

Now the Spanish girl young

O'er the balcony has leaned.

Evening Zephyr

Waves the ether.

Murmurs,

Rushes

The Guadalquivir.

Drop thy mantle, angel gentle,

And appear as fair as day!

Thro' the iron balustrade

Put thy wondrous tender foot!

Evening Zephyr

Waves the ether.

Murmurs,

Rushes

The Guadalquivir.

LOVE

Bitterly groaning, jealous maid the youth was scolding;
He, on her shoulder leaning, suddenly was in slumber lost.
Silent forthwith is the maid; his light sleep now fondles she
Now she smiles upon him, and is shedding gentle tears.

JEALOUSY

Damp day's light is quenched: damp night's darkness Stretches over the sky its leaden garment.

Like a ghost, from behind the pine wood Foggy moon has risen.... All brings upon my soul darkness grievous. Far, far away rises the shining moon, There the earth is filled with evening warmth There the sea moveth with luxuriant wave Under the heavens blue.... Now is the time. On the hillside now she walks To the shore washed by noisy waves. There, under the billowed cliffs Alone she sits now melancholy.... Alone ... none before her weeping, grieves not, Her knees none kisses in ecstasy. Alone ... to lips of none she is yielding Her shoulders, nor moist lips, nor snow-white fingers. None is worthy of her heavenly love. Is it not so? Thou art alone. . . . Thou weepest. . . . And I at peace?

IN AN ALBUM.

But if

The name of me, what is it to thee
Die it shall like the grievous sound
Of wave, playing on distant shore,
As sound of night in forest dark.
Upon the sheet of memory
Its traces dead leave it shall

Inscriptions-like of grave-yard
In some foreign tongue.
What is in it? Long ago forgotten
In tumultuous waves and fresh
To thy soul not give it shall
Pure memories and tender.
But on sad days, in calmness
Do pronounce it sadly;
Say then: I do remember thee—
On earth one heart is where yet I live!

THE AWAKING.

Ye dreams, ye dreams, Where is your sweetness? Where thou, where thou O joy of night? Disappeared has it, The joyous dream; And solitary In darkness deep I awaken. Round my bed Is silent night. At once are cooled, At once are fled, All in a crowd The dreams of Love— Still with longing

The soul is filled
And grasps of sleep
The memory.
O Love, O Love,
O hear my prayer:
Again send me
Those visions thine,
And on the morrow
Raptured anew
Let me die
Without awaking!

ELEGY.

Happy who to himself confess
His passion dares without terror;
Happy who in fate uncertain
By modest hope is fondled;
Happy who by foggy moonbeams
Is led to midnight joyful
And with faithful key who gently
The door unlocks of his beloved.
But for me in sad my life
No joy there is of secret pleasure;
Hope's early flower faded is,
By struggle withered is life's flower.
Youth away flies melancholy,
And droop with me life's roses;
But by Love tho' long forgot,

Forget Love's tears I cannot.

FIRST LOVE

Not at once our youth is faded,
Not at once our joys forsake us,
And happiness we unexpected
Yet embrace shall more than once;
But ye, impressions never-dying
Of newly trepidating Love,
And thou, first flame of Intoxication,—
Not flying back are coming ye!

ELEGY.

My songs to me with pensive play replied;
But if the youths to me, in silence listening
At my love's long torture were marvelling;
But if thou thyself, to tenderness yielding
Repeated in quiet my melancholy verses
And didst love my heart's passionate language;
But if I am loved:—grant then, O dearest friend,
That my beautiful beloved's coveted name
Breathe life into my lyre's farewell.
When for aye embraced I am by sleep of Death,
Over my urn do with tenderness pronounce:
"By me he loved was, to me he owed
Of his love and song his last inspiration."

THE BURNT LETTER.

Good-bye, love-letter, good-bye! 'T is her command....

How long I waited, how long my hand

To the fire my joys to yield was loath! ...

But eno', the hour has come: burn, letter of my love!

I am ready: listens more my soul to nought.

Now the greedy flame thy sheets shall lick ...

A minute! ... they crackle, they blaze ... a light smoke

Curls and is lost with prayer mine.

Now the finger's faithful imprint losing

Burns the melted wax.... O Heavens!

Done it is! curled in are the dark sheets;

Upon their ashes light the lines adored

Are gleaming.... My breast is heavy. Ashes dear,

In my sorrowful lot but poor consolation,

Remain for aye with me on my weary breast....

SING NOT, BEAUTY

Sing not, Beauty, in my presence,
Of Transcaucasia sad the songs,
Of distant shore, another life,
The memory to me they bring.
Alas, alas, remind they do,
These cruel strains of thine,
Of steppes, and night, and of the moon
And of distant, poor maid's features.

The vision loved, tender, fated,
Forget can I, when thee I see
But when thou singest, then before me
Up again it rises.
Sing not, Beauty, in my presence
Of Transcaucasia sad the songs,
Of distant shore, another life
The memory to me they bring.

SIGNS.

To thee I rode: living dreams then
Behind me winding in playful crowd;
My sportive trot my shoulder over
The moon upon my right was chasing.
From thee I rode: other dreams now....
My loving soul now sad was,
And the moon at left my side
Companion mine now sad was.
To dreaming thus in quiet ever
Singers we are given over;
Marks thus of superstition
Soul's feeling with are in accord!

A PRESENTIMENT.

The clouds again are o'er me, Have gathered in the stillness; Again me with misfortune

Envious fate now threatens. Will I keep my defiance? Will I bring against her The firmness and patience Of my youthful pride? Wearied by a stormy life I await the storm fretless Perhaps once more safe again A harbor shall I find.... But I feel the parting nigh, Unavoidable, fearful hour, To press thy hand for the last time I haste to thee, my angel. Angel gentle, angel calm, Gently tell me: fare thee well. Be thou grieved: thy tender gaze Either drop or to me raise. The memory of thee now shall To my soul replace The strength, the pride and the hope, The daring of my former days!

IN VAIN, DEAR FRIEND

In vain, dear friend, to conceal I tried
The turmoil cold of my grieving soul;
Now me thou knowest; goes by the intoxication.
And no longer thee I love....
Vanished for aye the bewitching hours,

The beautiful time has passed,
Youthful desires extinguished are
And lifeless hope is in my heart....

LOVE'S DEBT

For the shores of thy distant home Thou hast forsaken the foreign land; In a memorable, sad hour I before thee cried long. Tho' cold my hands were growing Thee back to hold they tried; And begged of thee my parting groan The gnawing weariness not to break. But from my bitter kisses thou Thy lips away hast torn; From the land of exile dreary Calling me to another land. Thou saidst: on the day of meeting Beneath a sky forever blue Olives' shade beneath, love's kisses Again, my friend, we shall unite. But where, alas! the vaults of sky Shining are with glimmer blue, Where 'neath the rocks the waters slumber— With last sleep art sleeping thou. And beauty thine and sufferings In the urnal grave have disappeared— But the kiss of meeting is also gone....

INVOCATION.

Oh, if true it is that by night When resting are the living And from the sky the rays of moon Along the stones of church-yard glide; O, if true it is that emptied then Are the quiet graves, I call thy shade, I wait my Lila Come hither, come hither, my friend, to me! Appear, O shade of my beloved As thou before our parting wert: Pale, cold, like a wintry day Disfigured by thy struggle of death, Come like unto a distant star, Or like a fearful apparition, 'T is all the same: Come hither, come hither And I call thee, not in order To reproach him whose wickedness My friend hath slain. Nor to fathom the grave's mysteries, Nor because at times I'm worn With gnawing doubt ... but I sadly Wish to say that still I love thee, That wholly thine I am: hither come, O hither! The extinguished joy of crazy years
On me rests heavy, like dull debauch.
But of by-gone days the grief, like wine
In my soul the older, the stronger 't grows.
Dark my path. Toil and pain promised are me
By the Future's roughened sea.
But not Death, O friends, I wish!
But Life I wish: to think and suffer;
Well I know, for me are joys in store
'Mid struggles, toils, and sorrows:
Yet 'gain at times shall harmony drink in
And tears I'll shed over Fancy's fruit,—
Yet mayhap at my saddened sunset
Love will beam with farewell and smile.

SORROW.

Ask not why with sad reflection
'Mid gayety I oft am darkened,
Why ever cheerless eyes I raise,
Why sweet life's dream not dear to me is;
Ask not why with frigid soul
I joyous love no longer crave,
And longer none I call dear:
Who once has loved, not again can love;
Who bliss has known, ne'er again shall know;
For one brief moment to us 't is given:
Of youth, of joy, of tenderness

Is left alone the sadness.

DESPAIR.

Dear my friend, we are now parted, My soul's asleep; I grieve in silence. Gleams the day behind the mountain blue, Or rises the night with moon autumnal,— Still thee I seek, my far off friend, Thee alone remember I everywhere, Thee alone in restless sleep I see. Pauses my mind, unwittingly thee I call; Listens mine ear, then thy voice I hear. And thou my lyre, my despair dost share, Of sick my soul companion thou! Hollow is and sad the sound of thy string, Grief's sound alone hast not forgot.... Faithful lyre, with me grieve thou! Let thine easy note and careless Sing of love mine and despair, And while listening to thy singing May thoughtfully the maidens sigh!

A WISH.

Slowly my days are dragging

And in my faded heart each moment doubles

All the sorrows of hopeless love

And heavy craze upsets me.

But I am silent. Heard not is my murmur.

Tears I shed ... they are my consolation;

My soul in sorrow steeped

Finds enjoyment bitter in them.

O flee, life's dream, thee not regret I!

In darkness vanish, empty vision!

Dear to me is of love my pain,

Let me die, but let me die still loving!

RESIGNED LOVE

Thee I loved; not yet love perhaps is

In my heart entirely quenched

But trouble let it thee no more;

Thee to grieve with nought I wish.

Silent, hopeless thee I loved,

By fear tormented, now by jealousy;

So sincere my love, so tender,

May God the like thee grant from another.

LOVE AND FREEDOM

Child of Nature and simple,

Thus to sing was wont I

Sweet the dream of freedom—

With tenderness my breast it filled.

But thee I see, thee I hear—

And now? Weak become I.

With freedom lost forever

With all my heart I bondage prize.

NOT AT ALL

I thought forgotten has the heart
Of suffering the easy art;
Not again can be, said I
Not again what once has been.
Of Love the sorrows gone were,
Now calm were my airy dreams....
But behold! again they tremble
Beauty's mighty power before!...

INSPIRING LOVE

The moment wondrous I remember

Thou before me didst appear

Like a flashing apparition,

Like a spirit of beauty pure.

'Mid sorrows of hopeless grief,

'Mid tumults of noiseful bustle,

Rang long to me thy tender voice,

Came dreams to me of thy lovely features.

Went by the years. The storm's rebellious rush

The former dreams had scattered

And I forgot thy tender voice,

I forgot thy heavenly features.

In the desert, in prison's darkness,

Quietly my days were dragging;

No reverence, nor inspiration,
Nor tears, nor life, nor love.
But at last awakes my soul:
And again didst thou appear:
Like a flashing apparition,
Like a spirit of beauty pure.
And enraptured beats my heart,
And risen are for it again
Both reverence, and inspiration
And life, and tears, and love.

THE GRACES

Till now no faith I had in Graces:

Seemed strange to me their triple sight;

Thee I see, and with faith am filled

Adoring now in one the three!

THE BIRDLET.

In exile I sacredly observe
The custom of my fatherland:
I freedom to a birdlet give
On Spring's holiday serene.
And now I too have consolation:
Wherefore murmur against my God
When at least to one living being
I could of freedom make a gift?

THE NIGHTINGALE.

In silent gardens, in the spring, in the darkness of the night
Sings above the rose from the east the nightingale;
But dear rose neither feeling has, nor listens it,
But under its lover's hymn waveth it and slumbers.

Dost thou not sing thus to beauty cold?
Reflect, O bard, whither art thou striding?
She neither listens, nor the bard she feels.

Thou gazest? Bloom she does; thou callest?—
Answer none she gives!

THE FLOWERET.

A floweret, withered, odorless

In a book forgot I find;

And already strange reflection

Cometh into my mind.

Bloomed, where? when? In what spring?

And how long ago? And plucked by whom?

Was it by a strange hand? Was it by a dear hand?

And wherefore left thus here?

Was it in memory of a tender meeting?

Was it in memory of a fated parting?

Was it in memory of a lonely walk?

In the peaceful fields or in the shady woods?

Lives he still? Lives she still?

And where their nook this very day?

Or are they too withered

THE HORSE.

Why dost thou neigh, O spirited steed, Why thy neck so low, Why thy mane unshaken Why thy bit not gnawed? Do I then not fondle thee? Thy grain to eat art thou not free? Is not thy harness ornamented, Is not thy rein of silk, Is not thy shoe of silver, Thy stirrup not of gold? The steed in sorrow answer gives: Hence am I quiet Because the distant tramp I hear, The trumpet's blow and the arrow's whizz And hence I neigh, since in the field No longer feed I shall, Nor in beauty live and fondling, Neither shine with harness bright. For soon the stern enemy My harness whole shall take And the shoes of silver Tear he shall from feet mine light. Hence it is that grieves my spirit: That in place of my chaprak With thy skin shall cover he

My perspiring sides.

TO A BABE.

Child, I dare not over thee
Pronounce a blessing;
Thou art of consolation a quiet angel
May then happy be thy lot....

THE POET.

Ere the poet summoned is To Apollo's holy sacrifice In the world's empty cares Engrossed is half-hearted he. His holy lyre silent is And cold sleep his soul locks in; And of the world's puny children, Of all puniest perhaps is he. Yet no sooner the heavenly word His keen ear hath reached, Than up trembles the singer's soul Like unto an awakened eagle. The world's pastimes him now weary And mortals' gossip now he shuns To the feet of popular idol His lofty head bends not he. Wild and stern, rushes he, Of tumult full and sound,

To the shores of desert wave,

Into the widely-whispering wood.

TO THE POET. SONNET.

Poet, not popular applause shalt thou prize!

Of raptured praise shall pass the momentary noise;

The fool's judgment hear thou shalt, and the cold mob's laughter—

Calm stand, and firm be, and—sober!

Thou art king: live alone. On the free road

Walk, whither draws thee thy spirit free:

Ever the fruits of beloved thoughts ripening,

Never reward for noble deeds demanding.

In thyself reward seek. Thine own highest court thou art;

Severest judge, thine own works canst measure.

Art thou content, O fastidious craftsman?

Content? Then let the mob scold,

And spit upon the altar, where blazes thy fire.

Thy tripod in childlike playfulness let it shake.

THE THREE SPRINGS.

In the world's desert, sombre and shoreless

Mysteriously three springs have broken thro':

Of youth the spring, a boisterous spring and rapid;

It boils, it runs, it sparkles, and it murmurs.

The Castalian Spring, with wave of inspiration

In the world's deserts its exiles waters;

The last spring—the cold spring of forgetfulness, Of all sweetest, quench it does the heart's fire.

THE TASK.

The longed-for moment here is. Ended is my long-yeared task.

Why then sadness strange me troubles secretly?

My task done, like needless hireling am I to stand,

My wage in hand, to other task a stranger?

Or my task regret I, of night companion silent mine,

Gold Aurora's friend, the friend of my sacred household gods?

SLEEPLESSNESS.

I cannot sleep, I have no light;
Darkness 'bout me, and sleep is slow;
The beat monotonous alone
Near me of the clock is heard.
Of the Fates the womanish babble,
Of sleeping night the trembling,
Of life the mice-like running-about,—
Why disturbing me art thou?
What art thou, O tedious whisper?
The reproaches, or the murmur
Of the day by me misspent?
What from me wilt thou have?
Art thou calling or prophesying?
Thee I wish to understand,
Thy tongue obscure I study now.

QUESTIONINGS

Useless gift, accidental gift,
Life, why given art thou me?
Or, why by fate mysterious
To torture art thou doomed?
Who with hostile power me
Out has called from the nought?
Who my soul with passion thrilled,
Who my spirit with doubt has filled?...
Goal before me there is none,
My heart is hollow, vain my mind
And with sadness wearies me
Noisy life's monotony.

CONSOLATION

Life,—does it disappoint thee?
Grieve not, nor be angry thou!
In days of sorrow gentle be:
Come shall, believe, the joyful day.
In the future lives the heart:
Is the present sad indeed?
'T is but a moment, all will pass;
Once in the past, it shall be dear.

FRIENDSHIP

Thus it ever was and ever will be,
Such of old is the world wide:
The learned are many, the sages few,
Acquaintance many, but not a friend!

FAME

Blessed who to himself has kept
His creation highest of the soul,
And from his fellows as from the graves
Expected not appreciation!
Blessed he who in silence sang
And the crown of fame not wearing,
By mob despised and forgotten,
Forsaken nameless has the world!
Deceiver greater than dreams of hope,
What is fame? The adorer's whisper?
Or the boor's persecution?
Or the rapture of the fool?

THE ANGEL.

At the gates of Eden a tender angel
With drooping head was shining;
A demon gloomy and rebellious
Over hell's abyss was flying.
The Spirit of Denial, the Spirit of Doubt
The Spirit of Purity espied;
And a tender warmth unwittingly

Now first to know it learned he.

Adieu, he spake, thee I saw:

Not in vain hast thou shone before me;

Not all in the world have I hated,

Not all in the world have I scorned.

HOME-SICKNESS

In exile peaceful to remain,
Of dear days of yore to sigh,
And rustic muse in quiet
With spirit calm to follow.
But even far, in foreign land,
In thought forever roam I shall
Around Trimountain mine:
By meadows, river, by its hills,
By garden, linden nigh the house.
Thus when darkens day the clear,
Alone from depths of grave,
Spirit home-longing
Into the native hall flies
To espy the loved ones with tender glance.

INSANITY

God grant I grow not insane:

No, better the stick and beggar's bag:

No, better toil and hunger bear.

Not that I upon my reason Such value place; not that I Would fain not lose it. If freedom to me they would leave How I would lasciviously For the gloomy forest rush! In hot delirium I would sing And unconscious would remain With ravings wondrous and chaotic. And listen would I to the waves And gaze I would full of bliss Into the empty heavens. And free and strong then would I be Like a storm the fields updigging, Forest-trees uprooting. But here's the trouble: if crazy once, A fright thou art like pestilence, And locked up now shalt thou be. To a chain thee, fool, they 'll fasten And through the gate, a circus beast, Thee to nettle the people come. And at night not hear shall I Clear the voice of nightingale Nor the forest's hollow sound, But cries alone of companions mine

DEATH-THOUGHTS

And the scolding guards of night

And a whizzing, of chains a ringing.

Whether I roam along the noisy streets Whether I enter the peopled temple, Whether I sit by thoughtless youth, Haunt my thoughts me everywhere. I say, Swiftly go the years by: However great our number now, Must all descend the eternal vaults,— Already struck has some one's hour. And if I gaze upon the lonely oak I think: the patriarch of the woods Will survive my passing age As he survived my father's age. And if a tender babe I fondle Already I mutter, Fare thee well! I yield my place to thee. For me 'T is time to decay, to bloom for thee Every year thus, every day With death my thought I join Of coming death the day I seek among them to divine. Where will Fortune send me death? In battle? In wanderings, or on the waves Or shall the valley neighboring Receive my chilled dust? But tho' the unfeeling body Can everywhere alike decay, Still I, my birthland nigh Would have my body lie. Let near the entrance to my grave

Cheerful youth be in play engaged,
And let indifferent creation
With beauty shine there eternally.

RIGHTS

Not dear I prize high-sounding rights By which is turned more head than one; Not murmur I that not granted the Gods to me The blessed lot of discussing fates, Of hindering kings from fighting one another; And little care I whether free the press is. All this you see are words, words, words! Other, better rights, dear to me are; Other, better freedom is my need.... To depend on rulers, or the mob— Is not all the same it? God be with them! To give account to none; to thyself alone To serve and please; for power, for a livery Nor soul, nor mind, nor neck to bend: Now here, now there to roam in freedom Nature's beauties divine admiring, And before creations of art and inspiration Melt silently in tender ecstasy— This is bliss, these are rights!....

THE GYPSIES.

Over the wooded banks,

In the hour of evening quiet,
Under the tents are song and bustle
And the fires are scattered.
Thee I greet, O happy race!
I recognize thy blazes,
I myself at other times
These tents would have followed.
With the early rays to-morrow
Shall disappear your freedom's trace,
Go you will—but not with you
Longer go shall the bard of you.
He alas, the changing lodgings,
And the pranks of days of yore
Has forgot for rural comforts
And for the quiet of a home.

THE DELIBASH.

Cross-firing behind the hills:

Both camps watch, theirs and ours;

In front of Cossaks on the hill

Dashes 'long brave Delibash

O Delibash, not to the line come nigh,

Do have mercy on thy life;

Quick 't is over with thy frolic bold,

Pierced thou by the spear shalt be

Hey, Cossak, not to battle rush

The Delibash is swift as wind;

Cut he will with crooked sabre

From thy shoulders thy fearless head.

They rush with yell: are hand to hand;

And behold now what each befalls:

Already speared the Delibash is

Already headless the Cossak is!



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