Classic Poetry Series

Frances M. Jones Bannerman - poems -

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Frances M. Jones Bannerman(1855-1940)

Frances Bannerman (née Jones) (1855 – 1940) was a Canadian poet. She was the daughter of Lieutenant-Governor A.G. best-known poem is "An Upper Chamber", which is included in the Oxford Book of English was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia and died in Torquay, England. Before turning to poetry (because of rheumatoid arthritis) she had been an artist and is exhibited at the art gallery of The Rooms in Newfoundland. She was the first woman to be elected an Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy (1882), following the charter membership of Charlotte Schreiber. She exhibited her work at the Royal Canadian Academy (1881-83), the Paris Salon (1883 and 1884), the Royal Society of British Artists (1883-86) and (1889-90), the Royal Academy (1885, 1888-91) and the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (1885, 1888-91).

An Upper Chamber

I CAME into the City and none knew me; None came forth, none shouted 'He is here! Not a hand with laurel would bestrew me, All the way by which I drew anear--Night my banner, and my herald Fear.

But I knew where one so long had waited In the low room at the stairway's height, Trembling lest my foot should be belated, Singing, sighing for the long hours' flight Towards the moment of our dear delight.

I came into the City when you hail'd me Saviour, and again your chosen Lord:-Not one guessing what it was that fail'd me, While along the way as they adored Thousands, thousands, shouted in accord.

But through all the joy I knew--I only-- How the hostel of my heart lay bare and cold, Silent of its music, and how lonely! Never, though you crown me with your gold, Shall I find that little chamber as of old!

Frances M. Jones Bannerman