

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Alfonsina Storni**

**- poems -**

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## **I Am Going to Sleep**

Teeth of flowers, hairnet of dew,  
hands of herbs, you, perfect wet nurse,  
prepare the earthly sheets for me  
and the down quilt of weeded moss.

I am going to sleep, my nurse, put me to bed.  
Set a lamp at my headboard;  
a constellation; whatever you like;  
all are good: lower it a bit.

Leave me alone: you hear the buds breaking through . . .  
a celestial foot rocks you from above  
and a bird traces a pattern for you

so you'll forget . . . Thank you. Oh, one request:  
if he telephones again  
tell him not to keep trying for I have left . . .

Alfonsina Storni

## **Lighthouse in the Night**

The sky a black sphere,  
the sea a black disk.

The lighthouse opens  
its solar fan on the coast.

Spinning endlessly at night,  
whom is it searching for

when the mortal heart  
looks for me in the chest?

Look at the black rock  
where it is nailed down.

A crow digs endlessly  
but no longer bleeds.

Alfonsina Storni

## **Little Little Man**

Little little man, little little man,  
set free your canary that wants to fly.  
I am that canary, little little man,  
leave me to fly.

I was in your cage, little little man,  
little little man who gave me my cage.  
I say "little little" because you don't understand me  
Nor will you understand.

Nor do I understand you, but meanwhile,  
open for me the cage from which I want to escape.  
Little little man, I loved you half an hour,  
Don't ask me again.

Alfonsina Storni

## **Sleep Peacefully**

You said the word that enamors  
My hearing. You already forgot. Good.  
Sleep peacefully. Your face should  
Be serene and beautiful at all hours.

When the seductive mouth enchants  
It should be fresh, your speech pleasant;  
For your office as lover it's not good  
That many tears come from your face.

More glorious destinies reclaim you  
That were brought, between the black wells  
Of the dark circles beneath your eyes,  
the seer in pain.

The bottom, summit of the beautiful victims!  
The foolish spade of some barbarous king  
Did more harm to the world and your statue.

Alfonsina Storni

## **Sweet Torture**

My melancholy was gold dust in your hands;  
On your long hands I scattered my life;  
My sweetnesses remained clutched in your hands;  
Now I am a vial of perfume, emptied

How much sweet torture quietly suffered,  
When, my soul wrested with shadowy sadness,  
She who knows the tricks, I passed the days  
kissing the two hands that stifled my life

Alfonsina Storni

## **They've Come**

Today my mother and sisters  
came to see me.

I had been alone a long time  
with my poems, my pride . . . almost nothing.

My sister---the oldest---is grown up,  
is blondish. An elemental dream  
goes through her eyes: I told the youngest  
"Life is sweet. Everything bad comes to an end."

My mother smiled as those who understand souls  
tend to do;  
She placed two hands on my shoulders.  
She's staring at me . . .  
and tears spring from my eyes.

We ate together in the warmest room  
of the house.  
Spring sky . . . to see it  
all the windows were opened.

And while we talked together quietly  
of so much that is old and forgotten,  
My sister---the youngest---interrupts:  
"The swallows are flying by us."

Alfonsina Storni