

Classic Poetry Series

Carl Michael Bellman

- poems -

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Epistle No. 36

Our Ulla lay one morning and slept,
A hand beneath her ear;
Her key alone the taverner kept
Or through its hole might peer.
Outside in the tavern, sir,
All was nocturnally quiet;
Beer was none, nor, I'll aver,
Scarce water to supply it.
On tip-toes
He comes and goes
About her bedside, brothers;
Lifts a bit
Of coverlet,
And whispers with the others.
Ulla quivers,
Snores and shivers,
O'er her head the blanket piles;
Snuggles under,
With a thunder;
Turns about and smiles.

Carl Michael Bellman

Epistle No. 39

Storm and wave their tumult cease.
See, the heav'nly galaxies,
Fainter, even dimmer
Is their golden glimmer
As the morning
Softly dawning
Of the sun's wan ray gives warning.
Asp and maple sighing,
Stream and marsh replying,
Woodcock buzzes,
Peasant passes
Round his filly's neck her harness.
Now in our stove
When it is lit,
Grasses and twigs
Crackle and spit,
Soon our porridge will be boiling.
Now with tousled brow
Cottager, I trow,
Seeks to light his pipe,
And out in the field
Leaning on a stone,
Dalesman lifts anew his spade.

Carl Michael Bellman

Fredman's song no. 10

Drink till after twelve or more,
Live it up with madmen !
Earth is but my chamber floor
And the sun my lantern.
Nothing else is worth a pin
If my head but giddy spin,
Giddy spin, giddy spin,
Giddy spin, giddy spin,
Until it's so drowsy
Nothing more can rouse me.

In my grandad's overcoat,
Torn and out at elbows,
Here I stand, on brandy dote,
'Mid the queerest fellows;
Out of pretty goblets bright
Tipple morning noon and night,
Noon and night, noon and night,
Noon and night, noon and night,
Till I'm just another
Boozy red-nosed brother.

If my sainted father stood
Suddenly before me
"Son", he'd hiccup, "skål ! That's good,
Brandy best doth warm me."
"Brother mine," I'd then reply,
Let us toast the morning sky,
Morning sky, morning sky,
Morning sky, morning sky,
Then to thy repose, sir,
Thou again mayst go, sir."

Were I but a man of wealth,
Gold my pocket lining,
Christmas day I'd dress myself
Like the king, when dining.
Then I'd purchase and I'd use
Coat and waistcoat and new shoes,
New shoes, new shoes,
New shoes, new shoes,
And of course I'd buy, sir,
A watch upon my thigh, sir !

But my throat can't stand such loss,
'Tis a very drought, sir.
What is gold, when got, but dross ?
Pull the cork right out, sir !

Let us steady on our legs,
Drain this bottle to the dregs,
To the dregs, to the dregs,
To the dregs, to the dregs,
Then let death attack us
In the blood of Bacchus.

Carl Michael Bellman