Classic Poetry Series

Dowell O'Reilly

- poems -

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WHAT can we give in return
For her beauty and mystery
 Of flowering forest, infinite plain,
 Deep sky and distant mountain-chain,
And her triumphant sea,
Thundering old songs of liberty?

Love—steadfast as her stars,
And passionate as her sun,
 And joyous as the winds, that fling
 The golden petals of her spring
By gully, spur, and run,
On dreaming age, and little one:

Courage—when courage fails
In the blind smoke and pain
 Of raging fire, and lurid sky,
 And dumb thirst-driven agony—
Till river and creek again
Swirl seaward through the teeming rain.

Faith—wild flower of the soul,
Thrilling the breathless night
 With fragrance, and the desolate ways
 Where silence fears to whisper praise,
With radiant delight
Of wonder—worship in God’s sight.

Duty—O great white stars,
And glorious red cross, shine
 On victory, when, rushing forth
 Against the peril of the North,
Australia’s battle-line
Flings out Trafalgar’s deathless sign.

Dowell O'Reilly

Faith, Love and Death

GREY dawn—and lucent star that slowly paled
 Beyond the breaking splendour of the years,
 When boyhood’s heart looked up to heaven, through tears
Of joy, to see the glory of God unveiled:

High noon—and bridal earth, whose footsteps failed
 For very love—when passionate hopes and fears
 Dazzled the flowers, made music in the ears,
And through the trancéd wood their splendour trailed.

Calm eventide—afar the lonely west
 Dreams of the wondrous day, and dreaming, lies
 With folded hands, still lips, and weary eyes
Searching the shadows of eternal rest:

Childhood, and youth, and age—for each a prize,
Faith—Love—and Death—I know not which is best.

Dowell O'Reilly

Sea Grief

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitiation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Dowell O'Reilly

Stars

WILD eyes—and faces ashen grey
 That strain through lofty prison bars
 To see the everlasting stars,
Then turn—to slumber as we may:

Even as we are, so are they,
 And here is peace for all who know
 The stars still follow where we go,
When heaven and earth have passed away.

Obedient to the Unknown Power,
 From out the ruin of a world
 A clustered galaxy is hurled
To glimmer through its steadfast hour:

The blazing sun of Shakespeare’s soul
 Shattered to star-dust, fills again
 With meteor-flights the immortal brain
That seeks a yet more splendid goal;

And still a voice—that now is ours—
 Repeats for aye the unknown word
 That thrilled the heart of beast and bird,
Ere man had learned to love the flowers.

Dowell O'Reilly

The Sea Maiden

Like summer waves on sands of snow,
Soft ringlets clasp her neck and brow,
And wandering breezes kiss away
A threaded light of glimmering spray,
That drifts and floats and softly flies
In a golden mist about her eyes.
Her laugh is fresh as foam that springs
Through tumbling shells and shining things,
And where the gleaming margin dries
Is heard the music of her sighs.
Her gentle bosom ebbs and swells
With the tide of life that deeply wells
From a throbbing heart that loves to break
In the tempest of love for love's sweet sake.
O, the fragrance of earth, and the song of the sea,
And the light of the heavens, are only three
Of the thousand glories that Love can trace,
In her life, and her soul, and her beautiful face.

This tangled weed of poesy,
Torn from the heart of a stormy sea,
I fling upon the love divine
Of her, who fills this heart of mine.

Dowell O'Reilly

The Sea-Maiden

Like summer waves on sands of snow,
Soft ringlets clasp her neck and brow,
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