

Classic Poetry Series

Elizabeth Daryush

- poems -

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After Bank Holiday

Now deserted are the roads
Where awhile the lovers went;
Vacant are the field-abodes
Where a vivid hour they spent:
Solemn dark
Broods again in lane and park.

'Tis no matter where are gone
Those warm lives---to halls, maybe,
Festive, or to lodgings lone:
Of the land their tenancy
Now is o'er;
Earth to earth belongs once more.

Gone are they as hourly goes
From the sombre fields of space
Our world, with its little glows—
Passion's ship that has no place,
Leaves no track,
On time's endless ocean black.

Elizabeth Daryush

Children of Wealth in your Warm Nursery

Children of wealth in your warm nursery,
Set in the cushioned window-seat to watch
The volleying snow, guarded invisibly
By the clear double pane through which no touch
Untimely penetrates, you cannot tell
What winter means; its cruel truths to you
Are only sound and sight; your citadel
Is safe from feeling, and from knowledge too.

Go down, go out to elemental wrong,
Waste your too round limbs, tan your skin too white;
The glass of comfort, ignorance, seems strong
To-day, and yet perhaps this very night
You'll wake to horror's wrecking fire-your home
Is wired within for this, in every room.

Elizabeth Daryush

Flanders Fields

Here the scanted daisy glows
Glorious as the carmined rose;
Here the hill-top's verdure mean
Fair is with unfading green;
Here, where sorrow still must tread,
All her graves are garlanded.

And still, O glad passer-by
Of the fields of agony,
Lower laughter's voice, and bare
Thy head in the valley where
Poppies bright and rustling wheat
Are a desert to love's feet.

Elizabeth Daryush

Invalid Dawn

Above the grey dawn
Gather, wan, the glows;
Relieved by leaden
Gleams a star-gang goes;

In the dark valley
Here and there enters
A spark, laggardly,
For the faint watchers
That were there all night -
Factory, station
And hospital light ...
Tired of lamp, star, sun,

Bound to my strait bed
Uncurtained I see
Heaven itself law-led,
Earth in slavery.

Elizabeth Daryush

Still-life

Through the open French window the warm sun
Lights up the polished breakfast-table, laid
Round a bowl of crimson roses, for one -
A service of Worcester porcelain, arrayed
Near it a melon, peaches, figs, small hot
Rolls in a napkin, fairy rack of toast,
Butter in ice, high silver coffee-pot,
And, heaped on a salver, the morning's post.

She comes over the lawn, the young heiress,
From her early walk in her garden-wood,
Feeling that life's a table set to bless
Her delicate desires with all that's good.

That even the unopened future lies
Like a love-letter, full of sweet surprise.

Elizabeth Daryush

The Railroad

Along the iron rails
Plod still with panting power,
Range still the empty trails
Hour after hour;

Stare still where looms ahead
Each signal-skeleton,
Whose jerking arms forbid
Or bid you on,

Whose grim lamps rule the glooms
With stringent red or green—
Forget your sunny home's
Wild-paths between

Primrose and violet,
Your breeze-lit fields of rye...
Your golden sheaves forget—
Forget, or die.

Elizabeth Daryush

You Should at Times Go Out

You should at times go out
from where the faithful kneel,
visit the slums of doubt
and feel what the lost feel;

you should at times walk on,
away from your friends' ways,
go where the scorned have gone,
pass beyond blame and praise;

and at times you should quit
(ah yes) your sunny home,
sadly awhile should sit,
even, in wrong's dark room,

or ever, suddenly,
by simple bliss betrayed,
you shall be forced to flee,
unloved, alone, afraid.

Elizabeth Daryush