

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Francis Thompson**

**- poems -**

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## **An Arab Love-Song**

The hunched camels of the night  
Trouble the bright  
And silver waters of the moon.  
The Maiden of the Morn will soon  
Through Heaven stray and sing,  
Star gathering.

Now while the dark about our loves is strewn,  
Light of my dark, blood of my heart, O come!  
And night will catch her breath up, and be dumb.

Leave thy father, leave thy mother  
And thy brother;  
Leave the black tents of thy tribe apart!  
Am I not thy father and thy brother,  
And thy mother?  
And thou--what needest with thy tribe's black tents  
Who hast the red pavilion of my heart?

Francis Thompson

## **At Lord's**

It is little I repair to the matches of the Southron folk,  
Though my own red roses there may blow;  
It is little I repair to the matches of the Southron folk,  
Though the red roses crest the caps, I know.  
For the field is full of shades as I near the shadowy coast,  
And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling of a ghost,  
And I look through my tears on a soundless-clapping host  
As the run-stealers flicker to and fro,  
To and fro: -  
O my Hornby and my Barlow long ago!

Francis Thompson

## Before Her Portrait In Youth

As lovers, banished from their lady's face  
And hopeless of her grace,  
Fashion a ghostly sweetness in its place,  
Fondly adore  
Some stealth-won cast attire she wore,  
A kerchief or a glove:  
And at the lover's beck  
Into the glove there fleets the hand,  
Or at impetuous command  
Up from the kerchief floats the virgin neck:  
So I, in very lowlihead of love, -  
Too shyly reverencing  
To let one thought's light footfall smooth  
Tread near the living, consecrated thing, -  
Treasure me thy cast youth.  
This outworn vesture, tenantless of thee,  
Hath yet my knee,  
For that, with show and semblance fair  
Of the past Her  
Who once the beautiful, discarded raiment bare,  
It cheateth me.  
As gale to gale drifts breath  
Of blossoms' death,  
So dropping down the years from hour to hour  
This dead youth's scent is wafted me to-day:  
I sit, and from the fragrance dream the flower.  
So, then, she looked (I say);  
And so her front sunk down  
Heavy beneath the poet's iron crown:  
On her mouth museful sweet -  
(Even as the twin lips meet)  
Did thought and sadness greet:  
Sighs  
In those mournful eyes  
So put on visibilities;  
As viewless ether turns, in deep on deep, to dyes.  
Thus, long ago,  
She kept her meditative paces slow  
Through maiden meads, with waved shadow and gleam  
Of locks half-lifted on the winds of dream,  
Till love up-caught her to his chariot's glow.  
Yet, voluntary, happier Proserpine!  
This drooping flower of youth thou lettest fall  
I, faring in the cockshut-light, astray,  
Find on my 'lated way,  
And stoop, and gather for memorial,  
And lay it on my bosom, and make it mine.  
To this, the all of love the stars allow me,  
I dedicate and vow me.  
I reach back through the days  
A trothed hand to the dead the last trump shall not raise.  
The water-wraith that cries

From those eternal sorrows of thy pictured eyes  
Entwines and draws me down their soundless intricacies!

Francis Thompson

## Daisy

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown  
Six foot out of the turf,  
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill--  
O breath of the distant surf!--

The hills look over on the South,  
And southward dreams the sea;  
And with the sea-breeze hand in hand  
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry  
Red for the gatherer springs;  
Two children did we stray and talk  
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,  
Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:  
Her skin was like a grape whose veins  
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,  
Nor knew her own sweet way;  
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song  
Thronged in whose throat all day.

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington  
On the turf and on the spray;  
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills  
Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face.  
She gave me tokens three:--  
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,  
And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,  
A still word,--strings of sand!  
And yet they made my wild, wild heart  
Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,  
And candid as the skies,  
She took the berries with her hand,  
And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,  
Their scent survives their close:  
But the rose's scent is bitterness  
To him that loved the rose.

She looked a little wistfully,  
Then went her sunshine way--

The sea's eye had a mist on it,  
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,  
She went and left in me  
The pang of all he partings gone,  
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul  
Was sad that she was glad;  
At all the sadness in the sweet,  
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still  
Look up with soft replies,  
And take the berries with her hand,  
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,  
That is not paid with moan,  
For we are born in other's pain,  
And perish in our own.

Francis Thompson

## **Dream tryst**

The breaths of kissing night and day  
Were mingled in the eastern Heaven,  
Throbbing with unheard melody,  
Shook Lyra all its star-cloud seven.  
When dusk shrank cold, and light trod shy,  
And dawn's grey eyes were troubled grey;  
And souls went palely up to the sky,  
And mine to Lucidè,  
There was no change in her sweet eyes  
Since last I saw those sweet eyes shine;  
There was no change in her deep heart  
Since last that deep heart knocked at mine.  
Her eyes were clear, her eyes were Hope's,  
Wherein did ever come and go;  
The sparkle of the fountain drops  
From her sweet soul below.  
The chambers in the house of dream  
Are fed with so divine an air,  
That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,  
And they who walk there are most fair.  
I joyed for me, I joyed for her,  
Who with the Past meet girt about:  
Where her last kiss still warms the air,  
Nor can her eyes go out.

Francis Thompson

## Gilded Gold

Thou dost to rich attire a grace,  
To let it deck itself with thee,  
And teachest pomp strange cunning ways  
To be thought simplicity.  
But lilies, stolen from grassy mold,  
No more curled state unfold  
Translated to a vase of gold;  
In burning throne though they keep still  
Serenities unthawed and chill.  
Therefore, albeit thou'rt stately so,  
In statelier state thou us'dst to go.

Though jewels should phosphoric burn  
Through those night-waters of thine hair,  
A flower from its translucid urn  
Poured silver flame more lunar-fair.  
These futile trappings but recall  
Degenerate worshippers who fall  
In purpled kirtle and brocade  
To 'parel the white Mother-Maid.  
For, as her image stood arrayed  
In vests of its self-substance wrought

To measure of the sculptor's thought -  
Slurred by those added braveries;  
So for thy spirit did devise  
Its Maker seemly garniture,  
Of its own essence parcel pure, -  
From grave simplicities a dress,  
And reticent demurenesses,  
And love encinctured with reserve;  
Which the woven vesture should subserve.  
For outward robes in their ostents  
Should show the soul's habiliments.  
Therefore I say,--Thou'rt fair even so,  
But better Fair I use to know.

The violet would thy dusk hair deck  
With graces like thine own unsought.  
Ah! but such place would daze and wreck  
Its simple, lowly rustic thought.  
For so advanced, dear, to thee,  
It would unlearn humility!  
Yet do not, with an altered look,  
In these weak numbers read rebuke;  
Which are but jealous lest too much  
God's master-piece thou shouldst retouch.  
Where a sweetness is complete,  
Add not sweets unto the sweet!  
Or, as thou wilt, for others so  
In unfamiliar richness go;  
But keep for mine acquainted eyes

The fashions of thy Paradise.

Francis Thompson

**Go, songs, for ended is our brief, sweet play**

Go, songs, for ended is our brief, sweet play;  
Go, children of swift joy and tardy sorrow:  
And some are sung, and that was yesterday,  
And some are unsung, and that may be tomorrow.

Go forth; and if it be o'er stony way,  
Old joy can lend what newer grief must borrow:  
And it was sweet, and that was yesterday,  
And sweet is sweet, though purchased with sorrow.

Go, songs, and come not back from your far way:  
And if men ask you why ye smile and sorrow,  
Tell them ye grieve, for your hearts know Today,  
Tell them ye smile, for your eyes know Tomorrow.

Francis Thompson

## **In No Strange Land**

*<i>The kingdom of God is within you</i>*

O world invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,  
The eagle plunge to find the air--  
That we ask of the stars in motion  
If they have rumor of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,  
And our benumbed conceiving soars!--  
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,  
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places--  
Turn but a stone and start a wing!  
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,  
That miss the many-splendored thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)  
Cry--and upon thy so sore loss  
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder  
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,  
Cry--clinging to Heaven by the hems;  
And lo, Christ walking on the water,  
Not of Genesareth, but Thames!

Francis Thompson

## New Year's Chimes

What is the song the stars sing?  
<i> (And a million songs are as song of one)</i>  
This is the song the stars sing:  
<i> (Sweeter song's none)</i>

One to set, and many to sing,  
<i> (And a million songs are as song of one)</i>  
One to stand, and many to cling,  
The many things, and the one Thing,  
The one that runs not, the many that run.

The ever new weaveth the ever old,  
<i> (And a million songs are as song of one)</i>  
Ever telling the never told;  
The silver saith, and the said is gold,  
And done ever the never done.

The chase that's chased is the Lord o' the chase,  
<i> (And a million songs are as song of one)</i>  
And the pursued cries on the race;  
And the hounds in leash are the hounds that run.

Hidden stars by the shown stars' sheen:  
<i> (And a million suns are but as one)</i>  
Colours unseen by the colours seen,  
And sounds unheard heard sounds between,  
And a night is in the light of the sun.

An ambushade of lights in night,  
<i> (And a million secrets are but as one)</i>  
And anight is dark in the sun's light,  
And a world in the world man looks upon.

Hidden stars by the shown stars' wings,  
<i> (And a million cycles are but as one)</i>  
And a world with unapparent strings  
Knits the stimulant world of things;  
Behold, and vision thereof is none.

The world above in the world below,  
<i> (And a million worlds are but as one)</i>  
And the One in all; as the sun's strength so  
Strives in all strength, glows in all glow  
Of the earth that wits not, and man thereon.

Braced in its own fourfold embrace  
<i>(And a million strengths are as strength of one)</i>  
And round it all God's arms of grace,  
The world, so as the Vision says,  
Doth with great lightning-tramples run.

And thunder bruiteth into thunder,  
<i>(And a million sounds are as sound of one)</i>  
From stellate peak to peak is tossed a voice of wonder,  
And the height stoops down to the depths thereunder,  
And sun leans forth to his brother-sun.

And the more ample years unfold  
<i>(With a million songs as song of one)</i>  
A little new of the ever old,  
A little told of the never told,  
Added act of the never done.

Loud the descant, and low the theme,  
<i>(A million songs are as song of one)</i>  
And the dream of the world is dream in dream,  
But the one Is is, or nought could seem;  
And the song runs round to the song begun.

This is the song the stars sing,  
(Tonèd all in time)  
Tintinnabulous, tuned to ring  
A multitudinous-single thing  
<i>(Rung all in rhyme)</i>.

Francis Thompson

## The Hound of Heaven

I fled Him down the nights and down the days  
I fled Him down the arches of the years  
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind, and in the midst of tears  
I hid from him, and under running laughter.  
Up vistaed hopes I sped and shot precipitated  
Adown titanic glooms of chasme d hears  
From those strong feet that followed, followed after  
But with unhurrying chase and unperturbe d pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat, and a Voice beat,  
More instant than the feet:  
All things betray thee who betrayest me.

I pleaded, outlaw--wise by many a hearted casement,  
curtained red, trellised with inter-twining charities,  
For though I knew His love who followe d,  
Yet was I sore adread, lest having Him,  
I should have nought beside.  
But if one little casement parted wide,  
The gust of his approach would clash it to.  
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
Across the margent of the world I fled,  
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,  
Smiting for shelter on their clange d bars,  
Fretted to dulcet jars and silvern chatter  
The pale ports of the moon.

I said to Dawn --- be sudden, to Eve --- be soon,  
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over  
From this tremendous Lover.  
Float thy vague veil about me lest He see.  
I tempted all His servitors but to find  
My own betrayal in their constancy,  
In faith to Him, their fickleness to me,  
Their traitorous trueness and their loyal deceit.  
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue,  
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind,  
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
The long savannahs of the blue,  
Or whether, thunder-driven,  
They clanged His chariot thwart a heaven,  
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn of their feet,  
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
Still with unhurrying chase and unperturbed pace  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
Came on the following feet, and a Voice above their beat:  
Nought shelters thee who wilt not shelter Me.

I sought no more that after which I strayed  
In face of Man or Maid.  
But still within the little childrens' eyes

Seems something, something that replies,  
They at least are for me, surely for me.  
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair,  
With dawning answers there,  
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.  
Come then, ye other children, Nature's  
Share with me, said I, your delicate fellowship.  
Let me greet you lip to lip,  
Let me twine with you caresses,  
Wantoning with our Lady Mother's vagrant tresses,  
Banqueting with her in her wind walled palace,  
Underneath her azured dai:s,  
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,  
From a chalice, lucent weeping out of the dayspring.

So it was done.  
I in their delicate fellowship was one.  
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies,  
I knew all the swift importings on the wilful face of skies,  
I knew how the clouds arise,  
Spume d of the wild sea-snotings.  
All that's born or dies,  
Rose and drooped with,  
Made them shapers of mine own moods, or wailful, or Divine.  
With them joyed and was bereaven.  
I was heavy with the Even,  
when she lit her glimmering tapers round the day's dead sanctities.  
I laughed in the morning's eyes.  
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,  
Heaven and I wept together,  
and its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine.  
Against the red throb of its sunset heart,  
I laid my own to beat  
And share commingling heat.

But not by that, by that was eased my human smart.  
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.  
For ah! we know what each other says,  
these things and I; In sound I speak,  
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.  
Nature, poor step-dame, cannot slake my drouth.  
Let her, if she would owe me  
Drop yon blue-bosomed veil of sky  
And show me the breasts o' her tenderness.  
Never did any milk of hers once bless my thirsting mouth.  
Nigh and nigh draws the chase, with unperturbe d pace  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
And past those noise d feet, a Voice comes yet more fleet:  
Lo, nought contentst thee who content'st nought Me.

Naked, I wait thy Love's uplifted stroke. My harness, piece by piece,  
thou'st hewn from me

And smitten me to my knee,  
I am defenceless, utterly.  
I slept methinks, and awoke.  
And slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.  
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
I shook the pillaring hours,  
and pulled my life upon me.  
Grimed with smears,  
I stand amidst the dust o' the mounded years--  
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.  
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
Have puffed and burst like sunstarts on a stream.  
Yeah, faileth now even dream the dreamer  
and the lute, the lutanist.  
Even the linked fantasies in whose blossomy twist,  
I swung the Earth, a trinket at my wrist,  
Have yielded, cords of all too weak account,  
For Earth, with heavy grief so overplussed.  
Ah! is thy Love indeed a weed,  
albeit an Amaranthine weed,  
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?  
Ah! must, Designer Infinite,  
Ah! must thou char the wood 'ere thou canst limn with it ?  
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust.  
And now my heart is as a broken fount,  
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever  
From the dank thoughts that shiver upon the sighful branches of my  
mind.

Such is. What is to be ?  
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind ?  
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds,  
Yet ever and anon, a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of Eternity.  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle,  
Then round the half-glimpse d turrets, slowly wash again.  
But not 'ere Him who summoneth  
I first have seen, enwound  
With glooming robes purpureal; Cypress crowned.  
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.  
Whether Man's Heart or Life it be that yield thee harvest,  
Must thy harvest fields be dunged with rotten death ?

Now of that long pursuit,  
Comes at hand the bruit.  
That Voice is round me like a bursting Sea:  
And is thy Earth so marred,  
Shattered in shard on shard?  
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest me.  
Strange, piteous, futile thing;  
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
Seeing none but I makes much of Naught (He said).

And human love needs human meriting ---  
How hast thou merited,  
Of all Man's clotted clay, the dingiest clot.  
Alack! Thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art.  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save me, save only me?  
All which I took from thee, I did'st but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in my arms.  
All which thy child's mistake fancies as lost,  
I have stored for thee at Home.  
Rise, clasp my hand, and come.  
Halts by me that Footfall.  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
Ah, Fondest, Blindest, Weakest,  
I am He whom thou seekest.  
Thou dravest Love from thee who dravest Me.

Francis Thompson

## The Poppy

<i>To Monica</i>

Summer set lip to earth's bosom bare,  
And left the flushed print in a poppy there:  
Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,  
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame.

With burnt mouth, red like a lion's, it drank  
The blood of the sun as he slaughtered sank,  
And dipped its cup in the purpurate shine  
When the Eastern conduits ran with wine.

Till it grew lethargied with fierce bliss,  
And hot as a swinked gipsy is,  
And drowsed in sleepy savageries,  
With mouth wide a-pout for a sultry kiss.

A child and man paced side by side,  
Treading the skirts of eventide;  
But between the clasp of his hand and hers  
Lay, felt not, twenty withered years.

She turned, with the rout of her dusk South hair,  
And saw the sleeping gipsy there:  
And snatched and snapped it in swift child's whim,  
With-- "Keep it, long as you live!" -- to him.

And his smile, as nymphs from their laving meres,  
Trembled up from a bath of tears;  
And joy, like a mew sea-rocked apart,  
Tossed on the wave of his troubled heart.

For he saw what she did not see,  
That -- as kindled by its own fervency --  
The verge shrivelled inward smoulderingly:  
And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers  
He knew the twenty withered years --  
No flower, but twenty shrivelled years.

"Was never such thing until this hour,"  
Low to his heart he said; "the flower  
Of sleep brings wakening to me,  
And of oblivion, memory."

"Was never this thing to me," he said,  
"Though with bruised poppies my feet are red!"  
And again to his own heart very low:  
"O child! I love, for I love and know;

"But you, who love nor know at all  
The diverse chambers in Love's guest-hall,  
Where some rise early, few sit long:

In how differing accents hear the throng  
His great Pentecostal tongue;

"Who know not love from amity,  
Nor my reported self from me;  
A fair fit gift is this, meseems,  
You give -- this withering flower of dreams.

"O frankly fickle, and fickle true,  
Do you know what the days will do to you?  
To your love and you what the days will do,  
O frankly fickle, and fickle true?

"You have loved me, Fair, three lives -- or days:  
'Twill pass with the passing of my face.  
But where I go, your face goes too,  
To watch lest I play false to you.

"I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,  
Knowing well when certain years are over  
You vanish from me to another;  
Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother.

"So, frankly fickle, and fickle true!  
For my brief life while I take from you  
This token, fair and fit, meseems,  
For me -- this withering flower of dreams."

The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,  
Heavy with dreams, as that with bread:  
The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper  
The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.

I hang 'mid men my needless head,  
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:  
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper  
Time shall reap, but after the reaper  
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper.

Love, love! your flower of withered dream  
In leavèd rhyme lies safe, I deem,  
Sheltered and shut in a nook of rhyme,  
From the reaper man, and his reaper Time.

Love! I fall into the claws of Time:  
But lasts within a leavèd rhyme  
All that the world of me esteems --  
My withered dreams, my withered dreams.

Francis Thompson

## To A Poet Breaking Silence

Too wearily had we and song  
Been left to look and left to long,  
Yea, song and we to long and look,  
Since thine acquainted feet forsook  
The mountain where the Muses hymn  
For Sinai and the Seraphim.  
Now in both the mountains' shine  
Dress thy countenance, twice divine!  
From Moses and the Muses draw  
The Tables of thy double Law!  
His rod-born fount and Castaly  
Let the one rock bring forth for thee,  
Renewing so from either spring  
The songs which both thy countries sing:  
Or we shall fear lest, heavened thus long,  
Thou should'st forget thy native song,  
And mar thy mortal melodies  
With broken stammer of the skies.

Ah! let the sweet birds of the Lord  
With earth's waters make accord;  
Teach how the crucifix may be  
Carven from the laurel-tree,  
Fruit of the Hesperides  
Burnish take on Eden-trees,  
The Muses' sacred grove be wet  
With the red dew of Olivet,  
And Sappho lay her burning brows  
In white Cecilia's lap of snows!

Thy childhood must have felt the stings  
Of too divine o'ershadowings;  
Its odorous heart have been a blossom  
That in darkness did unbosom,  
Those fire-flies of God to invite,  
Burning spirits, which by night  
Bear upon their laden wing  
To such hearts impregnating.  
For flowers that night-wings fertilize  
Mock down the stars' unsteady eyes,  
And with a happy, sleepless glance  
Gaze the moon out of countenance.  
I think thy girlhood's watchers must  
Have took thy folded songs on trust,  
And felt them, as one feels the stir  
Of still lightnings in the hair,  
When conscious hush expects the cloud  
To speak the golden secret loud  
Which tacit air is privy to;  
Flasked in the grape the wine they knew,  
Ere thy poet-mouth was able  
For its first young starry babble.

Keep'st thou not yet that subtle grace?  
Yea, in this silent interspace,  
God sets His poems in thy face!

The loom which mortal verse affords,  
Out of weak and mortal words,  
Wovest thou thy singing-weed in,  
To a rune of thy far Eden.  
Vain are all disguises! Ah,  
Heavenly incognita!  
Thy mien bewrayeth through that wrong  
The great Uranian House of Song!  
As the vintages of earth  
Taste of the sun that riped their birth,  
We know what never cadent Sun  
Thy lamed clusters throbb'd upon,  
What plumed feet the winepress trod;  
Thy wine is flavorful of God.  
Whatever singing-robe thou wear  
Has the Paradisal air;  
And some gold feather it has kept  
Shows what Floor it lately swept!

Francis Thompson

## To A Snowflake

What heart could have thought you? --  
Past our devisal  
(O filigree petal!)  
Fashioned so purely,  
Fragilely, surely,  
From what Paradisal  
Imagineless metal,  
Too costly for cost?  
Who hammered you, wrought you,  
From argentine vapor? --  
"God was my shaper.  
Passing surmised,  
He hammered, He wrought me,  
From curled silver vapor,  
To lust of His mind --  
Thou could'st not have thought me!  
So purely, so palely,  
Tinily, surely,  
Mightily, frailly,  
Insculped and embossed,  
With His hammer of wind,  
And His graver of frost."

Francis Thompson

## To Olivia

I fear to love thee, Sweet, because  
Love's the ambassador of loss;  
White flake of childhood, clinging so  
To my soiled raiment, thy shy snow  
At tenderest touch will shrink and go.  
Love me not, delightful child.  
My heart, by many snares beguiled,  
Has grown timorous and wild.  
It would fear thee not at all,  
Wert thou not so harmless-small.  
Because thy arrows, not yet dire,  
Are still unbarbed with destined fire,  
I fear thee more than hadst thou stood  
Full-panoplied in womanhood.

Francis Thompson

## What shall I your true love tell?

\*

What shall I your true love tell,  
Earth forsaking maid?  
What shall I your true love tell  
When life's spectre's laid?  
"Tell him that, our side the grave,  
Maid may not believe  
Life should be so sad to have,  
That's so sad to leave!"  
What shall I your true love tell  
When I come to him?  
What shall I your true love tell  
Eyes growing dim?  
"Tell him this, when you shall part  
From a maiden pined;  
That I see him with my heart,  
Now my eyes are blind."  
What shall I your true love tell  
Speaking while is scant?  
What shall I your true love tell  
Death's white postulant?  
"Tell him love, with speech at strife,  
For last utterance saith:  
'I who loved with all my life,  
Loved with all my death.'"

\*

Francis Thompson