

Classic Poetry Series

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

- poems -

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A Vision

There is an hour at night full of an awesome wonder,
When universal silence o'er the whole world lies
And when the cosmic chariot rolls, wakening no thunder,
Into the sanctuary of the skies.

The dark of chaos comes, land, sky and water merging;
Sleep Atlas-like treads earth, its weight like lead;
The gods with dreams prophetic fire the virgin
Soul of the Muse; all else is dead.

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

All Day She Quiet Lay

All day she quiet lay, lost in a trance,
The closing shadows all of her embracing...
The madcap rain of summer frisked and pranced,
At leaves it drummed, down garden paths went racing.

And slowly, slowly she revived and sought
To hear its voice, its warm and merry patter.
Withdrawn she lay, plunged deep in conscious thought,
And listened to the rushing, singing water.

Then suddenly she sighed and spoke; I heard...
(I was alive, alive through force of habit)
The softly whispered, simple, broken words:
"O how I loved it all, O how I loved it!"

You loved... To love so well none ever durst...
Then, even such love fades, to be it ceases...
To watch you die, and live! How did my heart not burst,
Not break, O God, into a thousand pieces!

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

As In The Globe Embraced By Ocean

As is the globe embraced by ocean, so
Embraced is earthly life by dreams and fancies.
Night comes unsought, and at the shore's defences
The breakers strike blow after blow.

Their call is loud: they plead and onward urge us...
A magic boat waits in the harbour - we
Are by the tide borne off that round us surges
Into the seas' infinity.

From out the depths the sky stares, strange and boundless,
By blazing stars in all their glory lit,
And we sail on, the vastness all around us
A fathomless and fiery pit.

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

Autumn Evening

There is a wistful charm, a tenderness,
Mysterious and soft, in autumn's even:
The trees in weird and brilliant garments dress,
The gory leaves to whispered talk are given;
Above the sad and orphaned earth the skies
Lie veiled and bleak, the sun's departure mourning,
And gusty winds with sudden anger rise,
Of pending storms the grim and chilly warning...
Fatigue, decline, and - over all - the worn
And wasting spirit's smile, doomed soon to vanish,
That lights a sufferer's face and that is born
Of modesty, the godlike pride of anguish.

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

Elysium Of Shades

Elysium of shades this soul of mine,
Shades silent, luminous, and wholly severed
From this tempestuous age, these restless times,
Their joys and griefs, their aims and their endeavours.

Speak, O my soul, Elysium of shades!
What bonds have you with life? Speak, phantoms summoned
From out a day whose very memory fades -
What have you with this heartless mob in common?

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

Gum Is The Sky

Glum is the sky, by night imprisoned,
As over it the dark clouds creep,
Not menacing or wistful is it,
But plunged in dreary, torpid sleep.
Alone the streaks of lightning, bursting
Through cloud and shadow, seem to be,
As they flare up and blaze, conversing
Like deaf-mute demons soundlessly.

As at a signal, for an instant
A strip of sky is lit, and Lo! -
From out the murk the forests distant
Emerge, set suddenly aglow.
But the light dies, the darkness fleeing
That cloaks the startled, wakeful sky,
And all is still... Is a plot being
Hatched in the silent wastes on high?..

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

Here, At A Meagre Earth

Here, at a meagre earth, despondent
And listless stare the dull grey skies,
And, as if plunged in leaden slumber,
A eary nature moveless lies.

Alone the few pale birches, gleaming
Mid greyish moss and stubby brush,
Like visions born of fevered dreaming
Disrupt the lifeless, eerie hush.

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

How Tuneful Is The Voice Of Sea

How tuneful is the voice of sea,
What true accord in ocean's murmur,
And in the reed's light, rhythmic tremour
What tender musicality!

In nature all is harmony,
A consonance fore'er agreed on,
And 'tis alone our phantom freedom
That is disturbingly off-key.

Whence comes this breach? How to explain
Why with the sea its song sonorous
The soul declines to sing in chorus?
Why does the thinking reed complain?

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

I Love The Tsarskoselsky Gardens

I love the Tsarskoselsky Gardens
Late in the fall when, in soft haze
Enfolded, as in sleep's embrace
They lie... The cold's breath slowly hardens,
And on the dull glass of the lake,
Clad in that same fine haze, white-winged
And strangely languid visions linger
And seem bemused, but half-awake.

The skies are grey, by not a star lit...
The evening's shadows onward press
And softly lick the steps dark scarlet
Of Catherine's lofty palaces.
Then dark the gardens grow and dreamy,
The stars appear and turn a dome,
Outlined by them, into a gleam of
A golden past, its symbol lone...

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

It's There, Still There

It's there, still there, a past love's madness,
Dull pain and longing my heart fill.
Your image, hid amid the shadows
Of memory, lives in me still.
I think of it with endless yearning,
'Tis e'er with me though from me far,
Unreachable, unchanged, bright-burning
As in the sky of night a star...

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

My Love For You, Sweet Earth

My love for you, sweet Earth, my mother,
I cannot hide - I do not crave
The phantom pleasures of that other,
That spectral world beyond the grave.
O spring, the blessedness of Eden
Compared to yours as nothing is!
Love's joys you bring us all unbidden,
And golden dreams, and light, and bliss.

What rapture to drink in the balmy,
Warm air of spring, to languor wed,
And watch the clouds drift slowly, calmly
High in the blueness overhead;
To wander happily and idly
Across a field and past a stream,
To catch the scent of blooming lilac
Or chance upon a radiant dream!..

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

Reproach Me Not

Reproach me not e'en if I earn your indignation;
Know: of us two you are to be more envied far.
Unlike my love for you, yours is sincere, unmarred
By jealousy's mistrust, its rancour and vexation.

A wretched sorcerer, who doubts himself and stifles
Faith in the magic world by his own efforts wrought
I know myself to be... I am - O bitter thought!-
Of your warm, living soul the idol cold and lifeless.

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

Say Not He Loves Me

Say not he loves me as before, as truly, dearly
As once he did... Oh no! My life
He would destroy, he does destroy - though see I clearly
The trembling of the hand that holds the knife.

Resentment, anger, tears, a pain now fierce, now muffled -
I'm wounded, stung, and yet I love... He is
All of my life, but I... I do not live - I suffer...
How bitter is existence such as this!

As to a mortal foe, in dozes scant and meagre
The air I breathe he measures out.. Each breath
I take is painful, yet... I breathe, for fresh air eager...
But life ... life slowly ebbs... I cannot ward off death.

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Silentium

Speak not, lie hidden, and conceal
the way you dream, the things you feel.
Deep in your spirit let them rise
akin to stars in crystal skies
that set before the night is blurred:
delight in them and speak no word.
How can a heart expression find?
How should another know your mind?
Will he discern what quickens you?
A thought once uttered is untrue.
Dimmed is the fountainhead when stirred:
drink at the source and speak no word.
Live in your inner self alone
within your soul a world has grown,
the magic of veiled thoughts that might
be blinded by the outer light,
drowned in the noise of day, unheard...
take in their song and speak no word.

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Spring Storm

I love a storm in early May
When springtime's boisterous, firstborn thunder
Over the sky will gaily wander
And growl and roar as though in play.

A peal, another - gleeful, cheering...
Rain, raindust... On the trees, behold!-
The drops hang, each a long pearl earring;
Bright sunshine paints the thin threads gold.

A stream downhill goes rushing reckless,
And in the woods the birds rejoice.
Din. Clamour. Noise. All nature echoes
The thunder's youthful, merry voice.

You'll say: 'Tis laughing, carefree Hebe -
She fed her father's eagle, and
The Storm Cup brimming with a seething
And bubbling wine dropped from her hand.

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

The Earth A Cheerless Look Still Wears

The earth a cheerless look still wears,
But spring's breath is already swaying
The dead stalks in the field and playing
With boughs as yet of leafage bare.
Though nature sleeps, through its dull slumber,
Through dreams that slowly fade away,
It hears spring's airy step and gay,
And, happy, smiles at the newcomer...

O soul, my soul, you slumbered too...
What is it that, your sleep disturbing,
Fills you with warmth and tender yearning
And gilds your tarnished dreams anew?

The thawing snows lie sparkling under
The sparkling sky: no clouds above.
My hot blood plays... Is it the languor
Of springtime or - a woman's love?..

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

The Glare! The Heat!

The glare! The heat! O Nice, you blind me!
A dull unease upon me settles...
Life, like a bird shot down, strains wildly
To fly - In vain! Its wings are fetters,
Its broken wings... As in a fever
It struggles on, yet is it vanquished:
Pressed to the dust it lies and shivers
In fear and impotence and anguish...

Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

There Is A Spell In Autumn

There is a spell in autumn early,
One all too brief, of an enchantment rare:
The nights are radiant and pearly,
The days, pellucid, crystal-clear.

Where played the sickle and fell the corn, a mellow,
A warm and breathless stillness reigns supreme;
Spanning the brown and idle furrow,
A dainty thread of cobweb gleams.

The birds have flown, we hear no more their clamour,
But winter's angry winds not soon will start to blow -
Upon the empty fields there pours the azure glow
Of skies that have not lost the warmth of summer.

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To K.B.

You're here again - and of a sudden
A warmth long gone floods my dead heart,
And all I thought forgot, unbidden
Returns, of me becomes a part.

Just as spring's breath may soft come stealing
Upon the air on late fall's day
And rouse in us a vanished feeling
Of life, of something young and gay -

So of past years do I recover
The richness, and on your sweet face
With all the ardour of a lover
In reawakened rapture gaze.

Too long apart, drawn are we nearer
Once more - you're here, 'tis not a dream!
Sounds, ne'er within me stilled, the clearer
At sight of you and louder seem.

Remembrance?- No! The rustling pages
Of life turn fast - life's full again.
Your loveliness stays ever changeless,
My love for you unchanged remains.

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When Life Is But A Round Of Crushing Care

When life is but a round of crushing care
And, a great heap of stones, lies heavy on us,
There suddenly, God knows how, why, upon us
A joyous mood descends... Of balmy air
A breath comes from the past and, o'er us drifting,
Invades the heart, its fearful burden lifting.

At times with autumn's coming is it so,
When empty lie the fields, when bare the groves are,
And paler turn the skies - and of a sudden, over
The darkened earth a damp wind starts to blow.
A fallen leaf it chases with elation
And to our hearts of spring brings a sensation.

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Why Moan, Why Wail You, Wind Of Night

Why moan, why wail you, wind of night,
With such despair, such frenzied madness?
Why is your voice now full of might,
Now piteous and tinged with sadness?
In tongue known to the heart, of pain
Unknown to it for ever chanting,
At times within it well-nigh frantic
Sounds you awaken and insane.

Sing not, O wind, your fearful song
Of chaos, for the hungry spirit,
Into night's world of shadows flung,
Exults in it and strains to hear it.
The bounds of mortal flesh 'twould fly
And merge with boundless ocean sweeping.
Take heed! Let slumbering tempests lie:
Beneath them chaos stirs unsleeping.

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