

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **George Hitchcock**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## Scattering Flowers

*It is our best and prayerful judgment that they (air attacks) are a necessary part of the surest road to peace.*  
Lyndon B. Johnson

There is a dark tolling in the air,  
an unbearable needle in the vein,  
the horizon flaked with feathers of rust.  
From the caves of drugged flowers  
fireflies rise through the night:  
they bear the sweet gospel of napalm.

Democracies of flame are declared  
in the villages, the rice-fields  
seethe with blistered reeds.  
Children stand somnolent on their crutches.  
Freedom, a dancing girl,  
lifts her petticoats of gasoline,  
and on the hot sands of the deserted beach  
a wild horse struggles, choking  
in the noose of diplomacy.

Now in the cane chairs the old men  
who listen for the bitter wind  
of bullets, spread on their thighs  
maps, portfolios, legends of hair,  
and photographs of dark Asian youths  
who are already dissolving into broken water.

George Hitchcock

## **The one whose Reproach I Cannot Evade**

She sits in her glass garden  
and awaits the guests -  
The sailor with the blue tangerines  
the fish clothed in languages  
the dolphin with a revolver in its teeth.

Dusk enters from stage left:  
its voice falls like dew on the arbor.  
Tiny bells  
sway in the catalpa tree.

What is it she hopes to catch in her net  
of love? Petals? Conch-shells?  
The night-moth? She does not speak.  
Tonight, I tell her, no one comes;  
you wait in vain.

Yet at eight precisely  
the moon opens its theatric doors,  
an arm rises from the fountain,  
the music box, face down  
on her tabouret, swells and bursts  
its cover - a tinkling flood of  
rice moves over the table.

She smiles at me, false believer,  
smiles and goes in, leaving  
the garden empty and my thighs  
half-eaten by the raging twilight.

George Hitchcock