

Classic Poetry Series

George Moses Horton

- poems -

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Death of an Old Carriage Horse

I was a harness horse,
Constrained to travel weak or strong,
With orders from oppressing force,
Push along, push along.
I had no space of rest,
And took at forks the roughest prong,
Still by the cruel driver pressed,
Push along, push along.
Vain strove the idle bird,
To charm me with her artless song,
But pleasure lingered from the word,
Push along, push along.

The order of the day
Was push, the peal of every tongue,
The only word was all the way,
Push along, push along.

Thus to my journey's end,
Had I to travel right or wrong,
'Till death my sweet and favored friend,
Bade me from life to push along.

George Moses Horton

Man, A Torch

Blown up with painful care and hard to light,
A glimmering torch blown in a moment out,
Suspended by a web, an angler's bait,
Floating at stake along the stream of chance,
Snatch'd from its hook by the fish of poverty,
A silent cavern is his last abode;
The king's repository veil'd with gloom,
The umbrage of a thousand oziars bowed,
The couch of hallowed bones, the grave's asylum,
The brave's retreat and end of ev'ry care.

George Moses Horton

The Slave's Complaint

Am I sadly cast aside,
On misfortune's rugged tide?
Will the world my pains deride
Forever?

Must I dwell in Slavery's night,
And all pleasure take its flight,
Far beyond my feeble sight,
Forever?

Worst of all, must Hope grow dim,
And withhold her cheering beam?
Rather let me sleep and dream
Forever!

Something still my heart surveys,
Groping through this dreary maze;
Is it Hope? -- then burn and blaze
Forever!

Leave me not a wretch confined,
Altogether lame and blind --
Unto gross despair consigned,
Forever!

Heaven! in whom can I confide?
Canst thou not for all provide?
Condescend to be my guide
Forever:

And when this transient life shall end,
Oh, may some kind eternal friend
Bid me from servitude ascend,
Forever!

George Moses Horton