

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **George William Russell**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## **A Memory**

FAINT grew the yellow buds of light  
Far flickering beyond the snows,  
As leaning o'er the shadowy white  
Morn glimmered like a pale primrose.

Within an Indian vale below  
A child said "OM" with tender heart,  
Watching with loving eyes the glow  
In dayshine fade and night depart.

The word which Brahma at his dawn  
Outbreathes and endeth at his night,  
Whose tide of sound so rolling on  
Gives birth to orbs of pearly light;

And beauty, wisdom, love, and youth,  
By its enchantment gathered grow  
In agelong wandering to the Truth,  
Through many a cycle's ebb and flow.

And here the voice of earth was stilled,  
The child was lifted to the Wise:  
A strange delight his spirit filled,  
And Brahm looked from his shining eyes.

George William Russell

## **By The Margin Of The Great Deep**

WHEN the breath of twilight blows to flame the misty skies,  
All its vaporous sapphire, violet glow and silver gleam,  
With their magic flood me through the gateway of the eyes;  
    I am one with the twilight's dream.

When the trees and skies and fields are one in dusky mood,  
Every heart of man is rapt within the mother's breast:  
Full of peace and sleep and dreams in the vasty quietude,  
    I am one with their hearts at rest.

From our immemorial joys of hearth and home and love  
Stray'd away along the margin of the unknown tide,  
All its reach of soundless calm can thrill me far above  
    Word or touch from the lips beside.

Aye, and deep and deep and deeper let me drink and draw  
From the olden fountain more than light or peace or dream,  
Such primaeval being as o'erfills the heart with awe,  
    Growing one with its silent stream.

George William Russell

## **Immortality**

WE must pass like smoke or live within the spirit 's fire,  
For we can no more than smoke unto the flame return,  
If our thought has changed to dream or will unto desire.  
As smoke we vanish though the fire may burn.

Lights of infinite pity star the gray dusk of our days:  
Surely here is soul; with it we have eternal breath:  
In the fire of love we live or pass by many ways,  
By unnumbered ways of dream to death.

George William Russell

## Krishna

THE EAST was crowned with snow-cold bloom  
And hung with veils of pearly fleece:  
They died away into the gloom,  
Vistas of peace—and deeper peace.

And earth and air and wave and fire  
In awe and breathless silence stood;  
For One who passed into their choir  
Linked them in mystic brotherhood.

Twilight of amethyst, amid  
Thy few strange stars that lit the heights,  
Where was the secret spirit hid?  
Where was Thy place, O Light of Lights?

The flame of Beauty far in space—  
Where rose the fire: in Thee? in Me?  
Which bowed the elemental race  
To adoration silently?

George William Russell

## **Self-Discipline**

WHEN the soul sought refuge in the place of rest,  
Overborne by strife and pain beyond control,  
From some secret hollow, whisper soft-confessed,  
    Came the legend of the soul.

Some bright one of old time laid his sceptre down,  
So his heart might learn of sweet and bitter truth;  
Going forth bereft of beauty, throne, and crown,  
    And the sweetness of his youth.

So the old appeal and fierce revolt we make  
Through the world's hour dies within our primal will;  
And we justify the pain and hearts that break,  
    And our lofty doom fulfilled.

George William Russell

## **The Great Breath**

ITS edges foam'd with amethyst and rose,  
Withers once more the old blue flower of day:  
There where the ether like a diamond glows,  
    Its petals fade away.

A shadowy tumult stirs the dusky air;  
Sparkle the delicate dews, the distant snows;  
The great deep thrills--for through it everywhere  
    The breath of Beauty blows.

I saw how all the trembling ages past,  
Moulded to her by deep and deeper breath,  
Near'd to the hour when Beauty breathes her last  
    And knows herself in death.

George William Russell

## **The Man To The Angel**

I HAVE wept a million tears.  
Pure and proud one, where are thine?  
What the gain, though all thy years  
In unbroken beauty shine?

All your beauty cannot win  
Truth we learn in pain and sighs:  
You can never enter in  
To the Circle of the Wise.

They are but the slaves of light  
Who have never known the gloom,  
And between the dark and bright  
Willed in freedom their own doom.

Think not in your pureness there  
That our pain but follows sin:  
There are fires for those who dare  
Seek the throne of might to win.

Pure one, from your pride refrain:  
Dark and lost amid the strife,  
I am myriad years of pain  
Nearer to the fount of life.

When defiance fierce is thrown  
At the god to whom you bow,  
Rest the lips of the Unknown  
Tenderest upon my brow.

George William Russell