

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Henrik Johan Ibsen**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## **In the Picture Gallery**

With palette laden  
She sat, as I passed her,  
A dainty maiden  
Before an Old Master.

What mountain-top is  
She bent upon? Ah,  
She neatly copies  
Murillo's Madonna.

But rapt and brimming  
The eyes' full chalice says  
The heart builds dreaming  
Its fairy-palaces.

\* \* \*

The eighteenth year rolled  
By, ere returning,  
I greeted the dear old  
Scenes with yearning.

With palette laden  
She sat, as I passed her,  
A faded maiden  
Before an Old Master.

But what is she doing?  
The same thing still--lo,  
Hotly pursuing  
That very Murillo!

Her wrist never falters;  
It keeps her, that poor wrist,  
With panels for altars  
And daubs for the tourist.

And so she has painted  
Through years unbrightened,  
Till hopes have fainted  
And hair has whitened.

But rapt and brimming  
The eyes' full chalice says  
The heart builds dreaming  
Its fairy-palaces.

Henrik Johan Ibsen

## The Miner

Beetling rock, with roar and smoke  
Break before my hammer-stroke!  
Deeper I must thrust and lower  
Till I hear the ring of ore.

From the mountain's unplumbed night,  
Deep amid the gold-veins bright,  
Diamonds lure me, rubies beckon,  
Treasure-hoard that none may reckon.

There is peace within the deep--  
Peace and immemorial sleep;  
Heavy hammer, burst as bidden,  
To the heart-nook of the hidden!

Once I, too, a careless lad,  
Under starry heavens was glad,  
Trode the primrose paths of summer,  
Child-like knew not care nor cummer.

But I lost the sense of light  
In the poring womb of night;  
Woodland songs, when earth rejoiced her,  
Breathed not down my hollow cloister.

Fondly did I cry, when first  
Into the dark place I burst:  
"Answer spirits of the middle  
Earth, my life's unending riddle!--"

Still the spirits of the deep  
Unrevealed their answer keep;  
Still no beam from out the gloomy  
Cavern rises to illumine me.

Have I erred? Does this way lead  
Not to clarity indeed?  
If above I seek to find it,  
By the glare my eyes are blinded.

Downward, then! the depths are best;  
There is immemorial rest.  
Heavy hammer burst as bidden  
To the heart-nook of the hidden!--

Hammer-blow on hammer-blow  
Till the lamp of life is low.  
Not a ray of hope's fore-warning;  
Not a glimmer of the morning.

Henrik Johan Ibsen