

Classic Poetry Series

Henry Francis Lyte

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

A Lost Love

I meet thy pensive, moonlight face;
Thy thrilling voice I hear;
And former hours and scenes retrace,
Too fleeting, and too dear!

Then sighs and tears flow fast and free,
Though none is nigh to share;
And life has nought beside for me
So sweet as this despair.

There are crush'd hearts that will not break;
And mine, methinks, is one;
Or thus I should not weep and wake,
And thou to slumber gone.

I little thought it thus could be
In days more sad and fair
That earth could have a place for me,
And thou no longer there.

Yet death cannot our hearts divide,
Or make thee less my own:
Twere sweeter sleeping at thy side
Than watching here alone.

Yet never, never can we part,
While Memory holds her reign:
Thine, thine is still this wither'd heart,
Till we shall meet again.

Henry Francis Lyte

Abide With Me

Abide with us: for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. -- Luke xxiv.29

Abide with me! Fast falls the Eventide;
The darkness thickens. Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away:
Change and decay in all around I see.
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word;
But as Thou dwellest with thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free, --
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea.
Come, Friend of sinners and thus abide with me.

Thou on my head in early youth did smile,
And though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee.
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me!

I need thy presence every passing hour.
What but thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O, abide with me!

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where grave thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold then thy cross before my closing eyes;
Speak through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and Earth's vain shadows flee!
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Henry Francis Lyte

Declining Days

Why do I sigh to find
Life's evening shadows gathering round my way?
The keen eye dimming, and the buoyant mind
Unhinging day by day?

Is it the natural dread
Of that stern lot, which all who live must see?
The worm, the clay, the dark and narrow bed, --
Have these such awe for me?

Can I not summon pride
To fold, my decent mantle round my breast;
And lay me down at Nature's eventide,
Calm to my dreamless rest?

As nears my soul the verge
Of this dim continent of woe and crime,
Shrinks she to hear Eternity's long surge
Break o'er the shores of time?

Asks she, how shall she fare
When conscience stands before the judge's throne,
And gives her record in, and all shall there
Know, as they all are known?

A solemn scene and time --
And well may Nature quail to feel them near --
But grace in feeble breasts can work sublime,
And faith overmaster fear!

Hark I from that throne comes down
A voice which strength to sinking souls can give,
That voice all judgment's thunders cannot drown;
'Believe,' it cries, 'and live.'

Weak-sinful, as I am,
That still small voice forbids me to despond
Faith clings for refuge to the bleeding Lamb,
Nor dreads the gloom beyond. --

'Tis not, then, earth's delights
From which my spirit feels so loath to part;
Nor the dim future's solemn sounds or sights,
That press so on my heart.

No I 'tis the thought that I --
My lamp so low, my sun so nearly set,
Have lived so useless, so unmissed should lie
'Tis this, I now regret. --

I would not be the wave,
That swells and ripples up to yonder shore

That drives impulsive on, the wild wind's slave,
And breaks, and is no more! --

I would not be the breeze,
That murmurs by me in its viewless play,
Bends the light grass, and flutters in the trees,
And sighs and flits away! --

No I not like wave or wind
Be my career across the earthly scene
To come and go, and leave no trace behind,
To say that I have been.

I want not vulgar fame --
I seek not to survive in brass or stone
Hearts may not kindle when they hear my name,
Nor tears my value own. --

But might I leave behind
Some blessing for my fellows, some fair trust
To guide, to cheer, to elevate my kind
When I am in the dust.

Within my narrow bed,
Might I not wholly mute or useless be;
But hope that they, who trampled o'er my head,
Drew still some good from me!

Might my poor lyre but give
Some simple strain, some spirit-moving lay;
Some sparklet of the soul, that still might live
When I have passed to clay! --

Might verse of mine inspire
One virtuous aim, one high resolve impart;
Light in one drooping soul a hallowed fire,
Or bind one broken heart. --

Death would be sweeter then,
More calm my slumber 'neath the silent sod;
Might I thus live to bless my fellow-men,
Or glorify my God.

Why do we ever lose,
As judgment ripens, our diviner powers
Why do we only learn our gifts to use,
When they no more are ours?

O Thou whose touch can lend
Life to the dead, Thy quick'ning grace supply,
And grant me, swanlike, my last breath to spend
In song that may not die!

Henry Francis Lyte

Far From My Heavenly Home

Far from my heavenly home,
Far from my Father's breast,
Fainting I cry, blest Spirit, come
And speed me to my rest.

My spirit homeward turns
And fain would thither flee;
My heart, O Zion, droops and yearns,
When I remember thee.

To thee, to thee I press,
A dark and toilsome road;
When shall I pass the wilderness,
And reach the saint's abode?

God of my life, be near;
On Thee my hopes I cast:
O guide me through the desert here,
And bring me home at last.

Henry Francis Lyte

God of Mercy, God of Grace

God of mercy, God of grace,
Show the brightness of Thy face:
Shine upon us, Saviour, shine,
Fill Thy church with light Divine;
And Thy saving health extend,
Unto earth's remotest end.

Let Thy people praise Thee, Lord;
Be by all that live adored;
Let the nations shout and sing,
Glory to their Saviour King;
At Thy feet their tributes pay,
And Thy holy will obey.

Let the people praise Thee, Lord;
Earth shall then her fruits afford;
God to man His blessing give,
Man to God devoted live;
All below, and all above,
One in joy, and light, and love.

Henry Francis Lyte

Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee.
Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou from hence my all shall be.
Perish every fond ambition, all I've sought or hoped or known.
Yet how rich is my condition! God and heaven are still mine own.

Let the world despise and leave me, they have left my Savior, too.
Human hearts and looks deceive me; Thou art not, like them, untrue.
And while Thou shalt smile upon me, God of wisdom, love and might,
Foes may hate and friends disown me, show Thy face and all is bright.

Go, then, earthly fame and treasure! Come, disaster, scorn and pain!
In Thy service, pain is pleasure; with Thy favor, loss is gain.
I have called Thee, "Abba, Father"; I have set my heart on Thee:
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather, all must work for good to me.

Man may trouble and distress me, 'twill but drive me to Thy breast.
Life with trials hard may press me; heaven will bring me sweeter rest.
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me while Thy love is left to me;
Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me, were that joy unmixed with Thee.

Take, my soul, thy full salvation; rise o'er sin, and fear, and care;
Joy to find in every station something still to do or bear:
Think what Spirit dwells within thee; what a Father's smile is thine;
What a Savior died to win thee, child of heaven, shouldst thou repine?

Haste then on from grace to glory, armed by faith, and winged by prayer,
Heaven's eternal day's before thee, God's own hand shall guide thee there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission, swift shall pass thy pilgrim days;
Hope soon change to glad fruition, faith to sight, and prayer to praise.

Henry Francis Lyte

O That the Lord's Salvation

O that the Lord's salvation
Were out of Zion come,
To heal His ancient nation,
To lead His outcasts home!

How long the holy city
Shall heathen feet profane?
Return, O Lord, in pity;
Rebuild her walls again.

Let fall Thy rod of terror;
Thy saving grace impart;
Roll back the veil of error;
Release the fettered heart.

Let Israel, home returning,
Their lost Messiah see;
Give oil of joy for mourning,
And bind Thy church to Thee.

Henry Francis Lyte

Pleasant Are Thy Courts Above

Pleasant are Thy courts above,
In the land of light and love;
Pleasant are Thy courts below
In this land of sin and woe;
O, my spirit longs and faints
For the converse of Thy saints,
For the brightness of Thy face,
For Thy fullness, God of grace.

Happy birds that sing and fly
Round Thy altars, O most High;
Happier souls that find a rest
In a heavenly Father's breast;
Like the wandering dove that found
No repose on earth around,
They can to their ark repair,
And enjoy it ever there.

Happy souls, their praises flow
Even in this vale of woe;
Waters in the desert rise,
Manna feeds them from the skies;
On they go from strength to strength,
Till they reach Thy throne at length,
At Thy feet adoring fall,
Who hast led them safe through all.

Lord, be mine this prize to win,
Guide me through a world of sin,
Keep me by Thy saving grace,
Give me at Thy side a place;
Sun and shield alike Thou art,
Guide and guard my erring heart.
Grace and glory flow from Thee;
Shower, O shower them, Lord, on me.

Henry Francis Lyte

Praise For Thee, Lord, in Zion Waits

Praise for Thee, Lord, in Zion waits;
Prayer shall besiege Thy temple gates;
All flesh shall to Thy throne repair,
And find through Christ salvation there.

Our spirits faint; our sins prevail;
Leave not our trembling hearts to fail:
O Thou that hearest prayer, descend,
And still be found the sinner's friend.

How blest Thy saints! how safely led!
How surely kept! how richly fed!
Savior of all in earth and sea,
How happy they who rest in Thee.

Thy hand sets fast the mighty hills,
Thy voice the troubled ocean stills;
Evening and morning hymn Thy praise,
And earthy Thou bounty wide displays.

The year is with Thy goodness crowned;
Thy clouds drop wealth the world around;
Through Thee the deserts laugh and sing,
And nature smiles and owns her King.

Lord, on our souls Thy Spirit pour;
The moral waste within restore;
O let Thy love our springtide be,
And make us all bear fruit to Thee.

Henry Francis Lyte

Praise the Lord, God's Glories Show

Praise the Lord, God's glories show, Alleluia!
Saints within God's courts below, Alleluia!
Angels round the throne above, Alleluia!
All that see and share God's love, Alleluia!

Earth to heaven and heaven to earth, Alleluia!
Tell the wonders, sing God's worth, Alleluia!
Age to age and shore to shore, Alleluia!
Praise God, praise forevermore! Alleluia!

Praise the Lord, great mercies trace, Alleluia!
Praise His providence and grace, Alleluia!
All that God for us has done, Alleluia!
All God sends us through the Son. Alleluia!

Strings and voices, hands and hearts, Alleluia!
In the concert bear your parts, Alleluia!
All that breathe, your Lord adore, Alleluia!
Praise Him, praise Him evermore!

Henry Francis Lyte

Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;
To His feet Thy tribute bring!
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me His praise should sing?
Praise Him! praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise Him for His grace and favour,
To our fathers in distress!
Praise Him still the same for ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless!
Praise Him! praise Him!
Glorious in His faithfulness!

Father-like, He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He knows.
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes,
Praise Him! praise Him!
Widely as His mercy flows!

Frail as summer's flower we flourish:
Blows the wind, and it is gone.
But while mortals rise and perish,
God endures unchanging on.
Praise Him, Praise Him,
Praise the high eternal One!

Angels, help us to adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face:
Sun and moon, bow down before Him;
Dwellers all in time and space,
Praise Him! praise Him!
Praise with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte

There Is a Safe and Secret Place

There is a safe and secret place,
Beneath the wings divine,
Reserved for all the heirs of grace;
O be that refuge mine!

The least and feeblest there may bide,
Uninjured and unawed;
While thousands fall on every side,
He rests secure in God.

He feeds in pastures, large and fair,
Of love and truth divine,
O child of God, O glory's heir,
How rich a lot is thine!

A hand almighty to defend,
An ear for every call,
An honored life, a peaceful end,
And heaven to crown it all!

Henry Francis Lyte

When at Thy Footstool, Lord, I Bend

When at Thy footstool, Lord, I bend,
And plead with Thee for mercy there,
Think of the sinner's dying Friend,
And for His sake receive my prayer.

O think not of my shame and guilt,
My thousand stains of deepest dye;
Think of the blood which Jesus spilt,
And let that blood my pardon buy.

Think, Lord, how I am still Thine own,
The trembling creature of Thy hand;
Think how my heart to sin is prone,
And what temptations round me stand.

O think upon Thy holy Word,
And every plighted promise there;
How prayer should evermore be heard,
And how Thy glory is to spare.

O think not of my doubts and fears,
My strivings with Thy grace divine;
Think upon Jesus' woes and tears,
And let His merits stand for mine.

Thine eyes, Thine ear, they are not dull;
Thine arm can never shortened be;
Behold me here; my heart is full;
Behold, and spare, and succor me.

Henry Francis Lyte