

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Joel Barlow**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## **Psalm CXXXVII The Babylonian Captivity**

ALONG the banks where Babel's current flows  
Our captive bands in deep despondence stray'd,  
While Zion's fall in sad remembrance rose,  
Her friends, her children mingled with the dead.

The tuneless harp, that once with joy we strung,  
When praise employ'd and mirth inspir'd the lay,  
In mournful silence on the willows hung;  
And growing grief prolong'd the tedious day.

The barbarous tyrants, to increase the woe,  
With taunting smiles a song of Zion claim;  
Bid sacred praise in strains melodious flow,  
While they blaspheme the great Jehovah's name.

But how, in heathen chains and lands unknown,  
Shall Israel's sons a song of Zion raise?  
O hapless Salem, God's terrestrial throne,  
Thou land of glory, sacred mount of praise.

If e'er my memory lose thy lovely name,  
If my cold heart neglect my kindred race,  
Let dire destruction seize this guilty frame;  
My hand shall perish and my voice shall cease.

Yet shall the Lord, who hears when Zion calls,  
O'ertake her foes with terror and dismay,  
His arm avenge her desolated walls,  
And raise her children to eternal day.

Joel Barlow