

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **John Howard Payne**

**- poems -**

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## Cadences

I

(MINOR)

THE ANCIENT memories buried lie,  
And the olden fancies pass;  
The old sweet flower-thoughts wither and fly,  
And die as the April cowslips die,  
That scatter the bloomy grass.

All dead, my dear! And the flowers are dead,  
And the happy blossoming spring;  
The winter comes with its iron tread,  
The fields with the dying sun are red,  
And the birds have ceas'd to sing.

I trace the steps on the wasted strand  
Of the vanish'd springtime's feet:  
Wither'd and dead is our Fairyland,  
For Love and Death go hand in hand  
Go hand in hand, my sweet!

II  
(MAJOR)

OH, what shall be the burden of our rhyme,  
And what shall be our ditty when the blossom's on the lime?  
Our lips have fed on winter and on weariness too long:  
We will hail the royal summer with a golden-footed song!

O lady of my summer and my spring,  
We shall hear the blackbird whistle and the brown sweet throstle sing,  
And the low clear noise of waters running softly by our feet,  
When the sights and sounds of summer in the green clear fields are sweet.

We shall see the roses blowing in the green,  
The pink-lipp'd roses kissing in the golden summer sheen;  
We shall see the fields flower thick with stars and bells of summer gold,  
And the poppies burn out red and sweet across the corn-crown'd wold.

The time shall be for pleasure, not for pain;  
There shall come no ghost of grieving for the past betwixt us twain;  
But in the time of roses our lives shall grow together,  
And our love be as the love of gods in the blue Olympic weather.

John Howard Payne

## Home, Sweet Home

Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,  
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;  
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,  
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.  
Home, home, sweet, sweet home!  
There's no place like home, oh, there's no place like home!

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain;  
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!  
The birds singing gayly, that come at my call --  
Give me them -- and the peace of mind, dearer than all!  
Home, home, sweet, sweet home!  
There's no place like home, oh, there's no place like home!

I gaze on the moon as I tread the drear wild,  
And feel that my mother now thinks of her child,  
As she looks on that moon from our own cottage door  
Thro' the woodbine, whose fragrance shall cheer me no more.  
Home, home, sweet, sweet home!  
There's no place like home, oh, there's no place like home!

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,  
And the caress of a mother to soothe and beguile!  
Let others delight mid new pleasures to roam,  
But give me, oh, give me, the pleasures of home.  
Home, home, sweet, sweet home!  
There's no place like home, oh, there's no place like home!

To thee I'll return, overburdened with care;  
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there;  
No more from that cottage again will I roam;  
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.  
Home, home, sweet, sweet, home!  
There's no place like home, oh, there's no place like home!

John Howard Payne

## Love's Autumn

YES, love, the Spring shall come again,  
But not as once it came:  
Once more in meadow and in lane  
The daffodils shall flame,  
The cowslips blow, but all in vain;  
Alike, yet not the same.

The roses that we pluck'd of old  
Were dew'd with heart's delight;  
Our gladness steep'd the primrose-gold  
In half its lovely light:  
The hopes are long since dead and cold  
That flush'd the wind-flowers' white.

Oh, who shall give us back our Spring?  
What spell can fill the air  
With all the birds of painted wing  
That sang for us whilere?  
What charm reclothe with blossoming  
Our lives, grown blank and bare?

What sun can draw the ruddy bloom  
Back to hope's faded rose?  
What stir of summer re-illumine  
Our hearts' wreck'd garden-close?  
What flowers can fill the empty room  
Where now the nightshade grows?

'T is but the Autumn's chilly sun  
That mocks the glow of May;  
'T is but the pallid bindweeds run  
Across our garden way,  
Pale orchids, scentless every one,  
Ghosts of the summer day.

Yet, if it must be so, 't is well:  
What part have we in June?  
Our hearts have all forgot the spell  
That held the summer noon;  
We echo back the cuckoo's knell,  
And not the linnet's tune.

What shall we do with roses now,  
Whose cheeks no more are red?  
What violets should deck our brow,  
Whose hopes long since are fled?  
Recalling many a wasted vow  
And many a faith struck dead.

Bring heath and pimpernel and rue,  
The Autumn's sober flowers:  
At least their scent will not renew

The thought of happy hours,  
Nor drag sad memory back unto  
That lost sweet time of ours.

Faith is no sun of summertime,  
Only the pale, calm light  
That, when the Autumn clouds divide,  
Hangs in the watchet height,—  
A lamp, wherewith we may abide  
The coming of the night.

And yet, beneath its languid ray,  
The moorlands bare and dry  
Bethink them of the summer day  
And flower, far and nigh,  
With fragile memories of the May,  
Blue as the August sky.

These are our flowers: they have no scent  
To mock our waste desire,  
No hint of bygone ravishment  
To stir the faded fire:  
The very soul of sad content  
Dwells in each azure spire.

I have no violets: you laid  
Your blight upon them all:  
It was your hand, alas! that made  
My roses fade and fall,  
Your breath my lilies that forbade  
To come at Summer's call.

Yet take these scentless flowers and pale,  
The last of all my year:  
Be tender to them; they are frail:  
But if thou hold them dear,  
I 'll not their brighter kin bewail,  
That now lie cold and sere.

John Howard Payne

## **Sibyl**

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

John Howard Payne

## **Song's End**

THE CHIME of a bell of gold  
That flutters across the air,  
The sound of a singing of old,  
The end of a tale that is told,  
Of a melody strange and fair,  
of a joy that has grown despair:

For the things that have been for me  
I shall never have them again;  
The skies and the purple sea,  
And day like a melody,  
And night like a silver rain  
Of stars on forest and plain.

They are shut, the gates of the day;  
The night has fallen on me:  
My life is a lightless way;  
I sing yet, while as I may!  
Some day I shall cease, maybe:  
I shall live on yet, you will see.

John Howard Payne

## Thorgerda

LO, what a golden day it is!  
The glad sun rives the sapphire deeps  
Down to the dim pearl-floor'd abyss  
Where, cold in death, my lover sleeps;

Crowns with soft fire his sea-drench'd hair,  
Kisses with gold his lips death-pale,  
Lets down from heaven a golden stair,  
Whose steps methinks his soul doth scale.

This is my treasure. White and sweet,  
He lies beneath my ardent eyne,  
With heart that nevermore shall beat,  
Nor lips press softly against mine.

How like a dream it seems to me,  
The time when hand in hand we went  
By hill and valley, I and he,  
Lost in a trance of ravishment!

I and my lover here that lies  
And sleeps the everlasting sleep,  
We walk'd whilere in Paradise;  
(Can it be true?) Our souls drank deep

Together of Love's wonder-wine:  
We saw the golden days go by,  
Unheeding, for we were divine;  
Love had advanced us to the sky.

And of that time no traces bin,  
Save the still shape that once did hold  
My lover's soul, that shone therein,  
As wine laughs in a vase of gold.

Cold, cold he lies, and answers not  
Unto my speech; his mouth is cold  
Whose kiss to mine was sweet and hot  
As sunshine to a marigold.

And yet his pallid lips I press;  
I fold his neck in my embrace;  
I rain down kisses none the less  
Upon his unresponsive face:

I call on him with all the fair  
Flower-names that blossom out of love;  
I knit sea-jewels in his hair;  
I weave fair coronals above

The cold, sweet silver of his brow:  
For this is all of him I have;

Nor any Future more than now  
Shall give me back what Love once gave.

For from Death's gate our lives divide;  
His was the Galilean's faith:  
With those that serve the Crucified,  
He shar'd the chance of Life and Death.

And so my eyes shall never light  
Upon his star-soft eyes again;  
Nor ever in the day or night,  
By hill or valley, wood or plain,

Our hands shall meet afresh. His voice  
Shall never with its silver tone  
The sadness of my soul rejoice,  
Nor his breast throb against my own.

His sight shall never unto me  
Return whilst heaven and earth remain:  
Though Time blend with Eternity,  
Our lives shall never meet again,—

Never by gray or purple sea,  
Never again in heavens of blue,  
Never in this old earth—ah me!  
Never, ah never! in the new.

For me, he treads the windless ways  
Among the thick star-diamonds,  
Where in the middle æther blaze  
The Golden City's pearl gate-fronds;

Sitteth, palm-crown'd and silver-shod,  
Where in strange dwellings of the skies  
The Christians to their Woman-God  
Cease nevermore from psalmodies.

And I, I wait, with haggard eyes  
And face grown awful for desire,  
The coming of that fierce day's rise  
When from the cities of the fire

The Wolf shall come with blazing crest,  
And many a giant arm'd for war;  
When from the sanguine-streaming West,  
Hell-flaming, speedeth Naglfar.

John Howard Payne