Classic Poetry Series

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

- poems -

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Cupid's Statue

He's but a child, tho
Unscathed he'd not be
Who despiseth him.
Gods so pompous
Were made to cavort
Where they wanted not;
When he wished it,
A king, his own
Estate fast forgot;
A lord of lords, he!
Foul, beasts and fishes
Ever do serve him;
'Tis each man tho,
His ruin can cause,
If idle he lays not.

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Epitaph To Rome

If midst Rome you wish to see Rome, pilgrim,
Tho in Rome naught of Rome might you see,
Behold the walls' ring, the theatres, temples
And ruptured pillars, to rubble all turned,
Rome be these! Mark how the corpse of a city
So strong still past fortune's pomp exudes;
Subduing a world, herself the city subdued
Lest yet more to subdue might there be.
Today in broken Rome, Rome unbroken
(A substance in its shadow) lies entombed.
Within all's changed; alone past change
Tiber remains, that to sea runs mixed with sand.
See what Fortune plays: 'tis wasted away,
What was unmoving; what moved, yet remains.

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Fortune's Statue

She's mistress of all:
Rule of this earth
To her is entrusted;
Fortune she's called.
But for her, Maia's son, whom
She grants gifts, be naught.
Man, living for gain,
Mars, fast to shed blood,
Stand both in her hand.
He fears her even
Whom Yenus enflames;
He praises her too,
Who lives by his toil,
In sweat and in thrift.
Kindly at her he'd look,
Who mocks her in word;
For wise deliberation,
Wishing, she'd turn to dispute.
Of a king, a pauper,
Of a slave, a king,
Should she will, she'd make.
She's heedless on whom
Her gifts she bestows,
In which no trust
Is she wont to keep.
So doth she sport!
Through inconstancy alone
She endures unchanging,
To wander hither and yon,
Ruling earth with no rules.
In this tho, she's less
Unto virtue persisting
Would she fast submit,
With it forever in strife.

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Song I

Dear people, swelled in fool's wisdom
And clinging to error so fanciful,
To the skies, adorned in hosts of fair stars,
Look up - and make bright your dimlit minds!

Know ye that 'tis a wise Lord, an eternal
Lord there with palace midst fiery vault,
Whereon airy voids He's fastened high
And great waters freed of earth's pondrance.

Day, at times fixed, to night's shadow ceding;
Night, at times fixed, ceding unto the day,
Thus do testify with course so concordant
That 'twas no mere chance earth came to be.

The sky's mechanics, fashioned in accord,
Proclaim 'tis God's wisdom, His endless might
That ever sways them, and o'er a vast
Earth is this voice heard on all ears.

For in no haunt of the habited world
Be there people so basely simple
They'd mark not that a faultless law
Sways the heavens, for no time doth it err.

Who, when a cloud veils not the heavens,
Looks unamazed on the stars' bright lustre?
Or when the sun doth his eyes assail with
Light, whilst reeling in its flaming arc?

Rising forth from his bridesbed,
Groom-like, adorned in raiments
Of pure gold, a crown of priceless
Gems glowing radiant o'er his brow,

From a full course not leastwise spent,
Forceful he plunges! Well he's likened
In his shape, strength, and speed,
To the behemoth of a hundred limbs.

Soaring from the east to where dark night
Ascends, light he adds to the stars;
And whatsoever be on a low earth,
He begets and nurtures by his flames.

But order in the lofty firmament
Draws a viewers' thoughts less so,
Than doth Thine own law, Lord, to propriety
Turn the senses and lay waste desire.

No change do Thy promises know,
And with truth's glow our hearts they affirm;

Thou so dost punish should one offend,
That in him Thy sacred suffering works gain.

Thy commandment delights our eyes
With grateful bliss, O Lord, and forms
Thy true glory which age injures not,
Whilst with steely tooth it crumbles all.

In Thine Edicts, guarding them heedfully,
Truth and piety all times abide;
Sweeter they are than honey, greater
Yet than gilded metal and rare jewels.

'Tis why, in his heart, Lord, Thy servant
Shall ne'er cease minding them duly,
Knowing the reward Thou hast readied
For each who would keep them always.

Yet who is it marks all his failings?
O God forever, cleanse me Thyself,
Do away with my sundry misdeeds
Whence unknowingly I am sullied.

And grant pride's force, hideous
To Thee, would enter not in my heart.
So wouldst Thou forever, with no travail,
Cast off the fetters of my great impiety.

Words from my mouth, this meek thought
From an abased heart, deign accept,
Lord, I beg Thee! For Thou art salvation,
My God, my Hope, my Sustinance...

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Song II

Why flatter thyself, Tyrant,
In ways great in evil?
The Lord's goodness ceases not
Keeping watch on the pious.

Keener yet than the keenest
Blade, thy tongue watches
To generate wild untruth
And plot slander' gainst the good.

Evil's thy love, not sacred virtues;
A lier's thy love, not a truthsayer;
Thine own accursed eye in joy
Gazes at treason most infectious.

For this the Lord God shall fling
Thee from the midst of His people;
Grinding thee to dust, aye, thy home
He'll rend asunder from the very earth.

Seeing this, he who was wronged
Shall fear the power of the Lord;
With the evil one swifty dispensed,
In safety shall he rejoice.

Saying: "So for him who in evil
Lay his trust, in power, in clever device;
Who mocked those lamenting in plight,
Whilst his own God he'd forgot.

But I, like unto an Olive tree
Grafted in the Lord's garden,
Unfearing I'll blossom forth
In my hope of heaven's defence.

And unto everyone, Lord, Thee
Would I claim iniquity's slayer;
And having in Thee my trust,
All manner of afflictions I'll bear."

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Song III

Have mercy on me, my Lord,
For a foe treds o'er me and strives
Mindfully that time and again
I be wearied by all adversity.

Cruelly he treds, proud in his throng,
Stifling me with cruelness undue;
Never's the day I'm free of him,
Nor is my night empty of grim fear.

Yet, be it day, be it night when
Pondrous fear doth oppress, kind Father,
Thou, my Defender, art my hope,
And in each need to the end shall be.

Whilst I, Lord, being assured
In Thy promises, neither blind
Human connivance, nor fierce threat,
Nor battle's dread would I fear.

Whatever I say, they wrongly construe;
To my each deed they give rebuke;
Impious ones have turned all care
To rendering me most loatheful.

In temples by veiled treachery
Or open offence they conspire
To smite me; my every path they mark,
No safety would they afford me.

And this Thou wouldst suffer, just Lord?
Evil ones are to rejoice in such doings?
Wouldst Thou waiver bringing unrising
Ruin to a Temple of such calumny?

I know, verily I know, Lord eternal,
That my every defeat Thou dost reckon,
Tears from sad eyes Thou dost retain,
And dread afflictions' cause Thou dost know;

Work of evildoers Thou turnst to naught,
But to me a kindly ear dost lend,
And brights signs of Thy benevolence
And constant love to me Thou dost reveal.

Whilst I, Lord, being assured
In Thy promises, neither blind
Human connivance, nor fierce threat,
Nor battle's dread would I fear.

And ever to Thee, fatherly guard
Of my being, fuli praise I'll offer

In fitting song; unhindered, I'll feign
Not giving, free by thy grace, my avowed

Sacrifice. With Thine aid, my feet
Shall stray not from Thy sacred path,
For such time as my spirit's abode
In this frail body be, O my Lord!

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Song IV

Downcast midst vile sins,
From my innermost heart
I cry out, God unbounded!
Hear the mournful plaints
Of my grievous voice,
And in Thy compassion
Lend an ear of mercy!

Wouldst Thou our evils
Weigh, kind Father,
On Thine own justice's scale,
Who'd know such fortune,
Who in virtues be so firm,
That coming for true judgment,
Would not be condemned?

But Thou, gracious judge,
Punish not our erring ways
With deserved severity;
Thy law, with mercy filled,
And Thy faithful words, O Lord,
That wouldst pluck me from this ill,
Inspire in me certain trust.

'Tis why, whether roseal dawn
Brings forth a beaming sun,
Or night, arrayed in darkening clouds,
In darkness doth lead on,
Let doubt not dissuade
Those people so chosen
From resolute trust in their Lord.

For a treasure inexhaustible
Is His eternal compassion;
He'll idle not in healing wounds
Or raising one who's stumbled;
He, past all measure of doubt,
Shall forget not His own people,
And to salvation shall lead them.

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Song V

To Thee, eternal Defender of all creation,
I call, frail, commiserate, nowhere secure.
Keep me in close watch, and in my each anxiety,
Hasten to bring aid to my wretched soul.

With Thy rod, do but quell the blind flesh
So laden with vain, lowly, ill-working lust;
For shame it seeks sway o'er its own soul:
Fairer if what's to decay serves what's forever!

And ye, cov'tous hosts (Lord God, my Defence),
Show your heels and take your infamy unending,
Ye who deny God's creation the wealth (whence you
Were forced) and the praise to thine own Maker.

My Bliss, my Praise, let them fast feel shame
Who sing me sweetness of other praise, not Thee.
What hath man not Thine? Yet who in Thy gifts
Be vain, eternal King, Thy gifts would he lose.

So happy, so jubilant they who confess
That the good be Thine, who seek Thee
And adornment unending, who take pains
To love Thee alone full-willing, O Lord.

Aye, reckon me in that count, kind Father,
Whilst here, grant me but mark I'm lowly dust
And, unmatched for a tempest's heavy ordeals,
May I know as my strengths thy great mercies.

Still who's content, arrayed yet in mail
Of adamant, if war long and hard he endures?
So I beg: Thou who in battle art Defender,
Tarry not, Peace redeeming, giving unto us Thyself!

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Song VI

Our almighty Lord, eternal, unfathomed,
To Thee Cherubin proclaim "Holy, holy, holy!"
To Thee too, Seraph, true love's pure brand;
A fiery firmament tho marks Thy glory's stead.

And tho Thou art in all, 'tis there my teary eyes
I lift, and there doth my longing heart sigh;
For my senses' strengths match not their afflictions,
Like servants of masters, Thy mercies they crave.

And my will, to Thy will no whining slave,
Like a lowly maid of a lady, awaits Thee
To fast lend her a hand, and in Thy just
Compassion, alleve the burden's force.

O compassionate Father, whose fontheads
Of goodness no weir of sin car divert,
Have mercy on us, have mercy:
Long we overflow in infamies of our wrong!

No more doth the heart pang, it dies forthwith,
As force of ingrates tears our allotment and honor,
As lofty pride casts a downward eye on us,
Not marking that Thine eyes scorn us not.

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Sonnet I

Alas, hardpressed the whirling orbs
And swift Titan hie fleeting hours,
And cleave delights with woe avid
Death might - fast on us, she strides!

Whilst I, onward, mark more the deep
Shadow of my wrongs that prey untold
On a heart cowed now by constant woe,
And with tears, my youthful faults I rue.

Power, delights, wealth, such ado,
Tho ne'er for naught, 'tis ill they work,
For our desire they turn astray
From its rightful bliss (God we name).

Brief gains! O blissful a hundredfold
Who knows quick these shadows' true shape!

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Sonnet II

In shame is man conceived, through pain is born,
And brief the time upon this earth he goes
In life inconstant, full of fears and woes.
He dies, a shadow by the sun forlorn.

And yet from such a man (O Endless God,
Within Thyself glorified and blissfully
Living through Thyself) almost wistfully
Dost Thou desire--from him!--both love and laud.

Wondrous the works of Thy charity are,
At which Cherubim (comprehension's crest)
Wonder bemused and righteous burns afar
The flame, the Seraphim, in love's sweet zest.

O most Holy Lord, would that we too had,
To give thee back, that which thou have hast bade!

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Sonnet III (To the Virgin Mary)

Unequalled Virgin, the second ornament
Of the human race, whose dignity has not diminished
Her humility, nor has humility lessened her generosity of heart,
O rare Mother of her own Creator!

You have crushed the head of the serpent whose venom
Has poisoned the entire world.
You assumed your place in Heaven above the angels' choir
And there, glorified, you partake of eternal joy.

For our souls you are like a moon
Which reflects the rays of eternal
Charity, as our grievous sinfulness

Descends on us like a night's dark shadow.
Lead us to the morning dawn
And show us the light of your Sun which we all desire.

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Sonnet IV

Peace is happiness, but war is our plight
Under the heavens. He -- prince of the night,
Severe captain-- and the World's vanity
Work for our corruption diligently.

Not enough is this, mighty Lord of all!
The Body, our home for fleeting pleasures,
Envies heedlessly the Spirit's treasures
Constantly craving our eternal fall.

How shall I wage a battle so terrible,
Frail, yet headstrong, a soul in isolation?
King Universal, Peace most veritable,
In Thee alone is hope of my salvation!

Do Thou, Lord, place me safely next to Thee
I will battle and win decisively!

Mikolaj Sep Szarzynski

Sonnet V

'Tis hard to love not, whilst to love
Be sad joy, if by lust misled,
Thoughts too sweetly gaze on things
That perforce must change and decay.

Who's the man could savour his fill
Of gold, fame, sceptre, delights, false
Count'nance fair, that a heart he'd
Have sated and all cares might allay?

Love's surely our being's just course,
Aye, but 'tis flesh, from matter wrought,
Praising what knows like inception,
Guiles the soul, for which all's little

If Thee, Beauty real and e'erlasting,
It sees not, its love's true object.

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Sonnet VI

Tomicki, if they'd not chide him
Who lights a praising lamp to Light
Praised, sacred and boundless Itself,
Whence every light's glow doth stem,

Then by none I'd be called fickle
If I sing virtue's beauty in thee
That's enlightened all. But learned,
Water I've sipped little, so daren't try.

Take well my wish, God marks it so;
Should the Muses tho with my lack comply,
Thy pluck, firm'ty, wisdom and manners,
Which thy state (high itself) far excede,

Shall for my verse sport unending
Be. What? True glory they'd be!

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