

Classic Poetry Series

Patrick Moloney

- poems -

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A Regret

O sweet Queen-city of the golden South,
Piercing the evening with thy star-lit spires,
Thou wert a witness when I kissed the mouth
Of her whose eyes outblazed the skyey fires.
I saw the parallels of thy long streets,
With lamps like angels shining all a-row,
While overhead the empyrean seats
Of gods were steeped in paradisiic glow.
The Pleiades with rarer fires were tipt,
Hesper sat throned upon his jewelled chair,
The belted giant's triple stars were dipt
In all the splendour of Olympian air,
On high to bless, the Southern Cross did shine,
Like that which blazed o'er conquering Constantine.

Patrick Moloney

Melbourne

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Sonnets - Ad Innuptam

I

I MAKE not my division of the hours
By dials, clocks, or waking birds' acclaim,
Nor measure seasons by the reigning flowers,
The spring's green glories, or the autumn's flame.
To me thy absence winter is, and night,
Thy presence spring, and the meridian day.
From thee I draw my darkness and my light,
Now swart eclipse, now more than heavenly ray.
Thy coming warmeth all my soul like fire,
And through my heartstrings melodies do run,
As poets fabled the Memnonian lyre
Hymned acclamation to the rising sun.
My heart hums music in thy influence set:
So winds put harps Aeolian on the fret.

II

The rude rebuffs of bay-besieging winds
But make the anchored ships towards them turn,
So thy unkindness unto me but finds
My love tow'rd's thee with keener ardour burn;
As myrrh incised bleeds odoriferous gum,
I am become a poet through my wrong,
For through the sad-mouthed heart-wounds in me come
These earthly echoes of celestial song.
My thoughts as birds make flutter in my heart,
Poor muffled choristers! whose sad refrain
Gives sorrow sleep, and bids that woe depart
Whose heavy burden weighs upon my strain.
Imprisoned larks pipe sweeter than when free,
And I, enslaved, have learnt to sing for thee.

III

Thy throne is ringed by amorous cavaliers,
And all the air is heavy with the sound
Of tiptoe compliment, whilst anxious fears
Strike dumb the lesser satellites around.
One clasps thy hand, another squires thy chair,
Some bask in light shed from the eyes of thee,
Some taste the perfume shaken from thy hair,
Some watch afar their worshipped deity.
All have their orbits, and due distance keep,
As round the sun concentric planets move;
Smiles light yon lord, whilst I, at distance, weep
In the sad twilight of uncertain love.
'Thwart thee, my sun, how many a mincer slips,
Whose constant transits make for me eclipse.

IV

Know that the age of Pyrrha is long passed,
And though thy form is eternized in stone,
The sculptor's doings cannot Time outlast,
Nor Beauty live save but in blood and bone;
Though new Pygmalions should again arise
Idolatrous of images like thee,
Time the iconoclast e'en stone destroys,
As steadfast rocks are splintered by the sea.
Thou shouldst indeed a hamadryad be,
Inhabiting some knotted oak alone,
And so revive the worship of the Tree
Which, by succession, outlives barren stone.
Though thus transformed still worshippers would woo,
As Daphne-laurels poets yet pursue.

V

Why dost thou like a Roman vestal make
The whole long year unmarriageable May,
And, like the phoenix, no companion take
To share the wasteful burthen of decay?
See this rich climate, where the airs that blow
Are heavenly suspirings, and the skies
Steep day from head to heel in summer glow,
And moons make mellow mornings as they rise;
As brides white-veiled that come to marry earth,
Now each mist-morning sweet July attires,
Now moon-night mists are not of earthly birth,
But silver smoke blown down from heavenly fires.
Skies kiss the earth, clouds join the land and sea,
All Nature marries, only thou art free.

VI

O what an eve was that which ushered in
The night that crowned the wish I cherished long!
Heaven's curtains oped to see the night begin,
And infant winds broke lightly into song;
Methought the hours in softly-swelling sound
Wailed funeral dirges for the dying light;
I seemed to stand upon a neutral ground
Between the confines of the day and night;
For o'er the east Night stretched her sable rod,
And ranked her stars in glittering array,
While, in the west, the golden twilight trod
With [burning] crimsons on the verge of day.
Bright bars of cloud formed in the glowing even
A Jacob-ladder joining earth and heaven.

VII

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