

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Rene Francois Armand  
Prudhomme**  
**- poems -**

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## **At The Water's Edge**

To sit and watch the wavelets as they flow  
Two - side by side;  
To see the gliding clouds that come and  
And mark them glide;

If from low roofs the smoke is wreathing pale,  
To watch it wreath;  
If flowers around breathe perfume on the gale,  
To feel them breathe;

If the bee sips the honeyed fruit that glistens,  
To sip the dew;  
If the bird warbles while the forest listens,  
To listen too;

Beneath the willow where the brook is singing,  
To hear its song;  
Nor feel, while round us that sweet dream is clinging  
The hours too long;

To know one only deep over mastering passion -  
The love we share;  
To let the world go worrying in its fashion  
Without one care -

We only, while around all weary grow,  
Unwearied stand,  
And midst the fickle changes others knows,  
Love - hand in hand

Rene Francois Armand Prudhomme

## **Broken Vase**

The vase where this verbena is dying  
was cracked by a blow from a fan.  
It must have barely brushed it,  
for it made no sound.

But the slight wound,  
biting into the crystal day by day,  
surely, invisibly crept  
slowly all around it.

The clear water leaked out drop by drop.  
The flowers' sap was exhausted.  
Still no one suspected anything.  
Don't touch! It's broken.

Thus often does the hand we love,  
barely touching the heart, wound it.  
Then the heart cracks by itself  
and the flower of its love dies.

Still intact in the eyes of the world,  
it feels its wound, narrow and deep,  
grow and softly cry.  
It's broken. Don't touch!

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## **Cradles**

Along the quay, the great ships,  
that ride the swell in silence,  
take no notice of the cradles.  
that the hands of the women rock.

But the day of farewells will come,  
when the women must weep,  
and curious men are tempted  
towards the horizons that lure them!

And that day the great ships,  
sailing away from the diminishing port,  
feel their bulk held back  
by the spirits of the distant cradles.

Rene Francois Armand Prudhomme

## **In This World**

In this world all the flow'rs wither,  
The sweet songs of the birds are brief;  
I dream of summers that will last  
Always!

In this world the lips touch but lightly,  
And no taste of sweetness remains;  
I dream of a kiss that will last  
Always.

In this world ev'ry man is mourning  
His lost friendship or his lost love;  
I dream of fond lovers abiding  
Always!

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## **Never To See Or Hear Her**

Never to see or hear her,  
never to name her aloud,  
but faithfully always to wait for her  
and love her.

To open my arms and, tired of waiting,  
to close them on nothing,  
but still always to stretch them out to her  
and to love her.

To only be able to stretch them out to her,  
and then to be consumed in tears,  
but always to shed these tears,  
always to love her.

Never to see or hear her,  
never to name her aloud,  
but with a love that grows ever more tender,  
always to love her. Always!

Rene Francois Armand Prudhomme

## **On The Water**

The sound of bank and water is all I hear,  
The sad resignation of a weeping spring  
Or a rock that hourly sheds a tear,  
And the birch leaves' vague quivering.

I do not see the river bear the boat along  
The flowering shore flits past, and I remain;  
And in the watery depths that I skim,  
The reflected blue sky flutters like a curtain.

Meandering in their sleep, you might say the waters  
Waver, no longer sure where the bank lies:  
And the flower thrown in hesitates to choose.  
And like this flower, all that man desires  
Can settle on the river of my life,  
Without teaching me which way my wishes lie.

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