Classic Poetry Series

Sara Coleridge

- poems -

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From “Phantasmion” - He Came Unlook'd For

HE came unlook’d for, undesir’d,
A sunrise in the northern sky,
More than the brightest dawn admir’d,
To shine and then forever fly.

His love, conferr’d without a claim,
Perchance was like the fitful blaze,
Which lives to light a steadier flame,
And, while that strengthens, fast decays.

Glad fawn along the forest springing,
Gay birds that breeze-like stir the leaves,
Why hither haste, no message bringing,
To solace one that deeply grieves?

Thou star that dost the skies adorn,
So brightly heralding the day,
Bring one more welcome than the morn,
Or still in night’s dark prison stay.

Sara Coleridge

From “Phantasmion” - One Face Alone

ONE face alone, one face alone,
    These eyes require;
But, when that long’d-for sight is shown,
    What fatal fire
Shoots through my veins a keen and liquid flame,
That melts each fibre of my wasting frame!

One voice alone, one voice alone,
    I pine to hear;
But, when its meek mellifluous tone
    Usurps mine ear,
Those slavish chains about my soul are wound,
Which ne’er, till death itself, can be unbound.

One gentle hand, one gentle hand,
    I fain would hold;
But, when it seems at my command,
    My own grows cold;
Then low to earth I bend in sickly swoon,
Like lilies drooping ’mid the blaze of noon.

Sara Coleridge

O sleep, my babe

O sleep, my babe, hear not the rippling wave,
Nor feel the breeze that round thee ling'ring strays
To drink thy balmy breath,
And sigh one long farewell.

Soon shall it mourn above thy wat'ry bed,
And whisper to me, on the wave-beat shore,
Deep murm'ring in reproach,
Thy sad untimely fate.

Ere those dear eyes had open'd on the light,
In vain to plead, thy coming life was sold,
O waken'd but to sleep,
Whence it can wake no more!

A thousand and a thousand silken leaves
The tufted beech unfolds in early spring,
All clad in tenderest green,
All of the self-same shape:

A thousand infant faces, soft and sweet,
Each year sends forth, yet every mother views
Her last not least beloved
Like its dear self alone.

No musing mind hath ever yet foreshaped
The face to-morrow's sun shall first reveal,
No heart hath e'er conceived
What love that face will bring.

O sleep, my babe, nor heed how mourns the gale
To part with thy soft locks and fragrant breath,
As when it deeply sighs
O'er autumn's latest bloom.

Sara Coleridge

The Child

See yon blithe child that dances in our sight!
Can gloomy shadows fall from one so bright?
Fond mother, whence these fears?
While buoyantly he rushes o'er the lawn,
Dream not of clouds to stain his manhood's dawn,
Nor dim that sight with tears.

No cloud he spies in brightly glowing hours,
But feels as if the newly vested bowers
For him could never fade:
Too well we know that vernal pleasures fleet,
But having him, so gladsome, fair, and sweet,
Our loss is overpaid.

Amid the balmiest flowers that earth can give
Some bitter drops distil, and all that live
A mingled portion share;
But, while he learns these truths which we lament,
Such fortitude as ours will sure be sent,
Such solace to his care.

Sara Coleridge

The Months

January brings the snow,
makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes loud and shrill,
stirs the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,
Scatters daises at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs,
Skipping by their fleecy damns.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,
Fills the children's hand with posies.

Hot july brings cooling showers,
Apricots and gillyflowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,
Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm september brings the fruit,
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Fresh October brings the pheasents,
Then to gather nuts is pleasent.

Dull November brings the blast,
Then the leaves are whirling fast.

Chill December brings the sleet,
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

Sara Coleridge