# **Classic Poetry Series**

# **William Barnes**

- poems -

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## William Barnes (1801-1886)

William Barnes was born at Blackmoor Vale in Dorset, the son of a farmer. He took a Bachelor of Divinity degree on a part-time basis at St. John's College, Cambridge, and became a clergyman in 1848. The poems he wrote about his birthplace on themes such as love, natural landscape and regional life brought him a lot of public acclaim. But he also had many other interests, especially languages. Apart from the classical languages, he also learned Welsh, Hindustani, Persian, Hebrew and a handful of European languages. His great interest in different kinds of knowledge made him write on different subjects such as mathematics, astronomy and geography. His real talent, however, lay in exploiting his poetic gift in the writing of folklore, thus setting the stage for people like Thomas Hardy.

#### **Blackmwore Maidens**

THE PRIMRWOSE in the shade do blow, The cowslip in the zun, The thyme upon the down do grow, The clote where streams do run; An' where do pretty maidens grow An' blow, but where the tow'r Do rise among the bricken tuns, In Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you could zee their comely gait, An' pretty faces' smiles, A-trippen on so light o' waight, An' steppen off the stiles; A-gwain to church, as bells do swing An' ring 'ithin the tow'r, You'd own the pretty maidens' place Is Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road, To Stower or Paladore, An' all the farmers' housen show'd Their daughters at the door; You'd cry to bachelors at hwome—"Here, come: 'ithin an hour You 'll vind ten maidens to your mind, In Blackmwore by the Stour."

An' if you look'd 'ithin their door,
To zee em in their place,
A-doen housework up avore
Their smilen mother's face;
You'd cry—"Why, if a man would wive
An' thrive, 'ithout a dow'r,
Then let en look en out a wife
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

As I upon my road did pass A school-house back in May, There out upon the beäten grass Wer maïdens at their play An' as the pretty souls did tweil An' smile, I cried, "The flow'r O' beauty, then, is still in bud In Blackmore by the Stour."

#### **Mater Dolorosa**

I'D a dream to-night
As I fell asleep,
O! the touching sight
Makes me still to weep:
Of my little lad,
Gone to leave me sad,
Ay, the child I had,
But was not to keep.

As in heaven high,
I my child did seek,
There in train came by
Children fair and meek,
Each in lily white,
With a lamp alight;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
O it did not burn!
He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half turn'd about,
'Your tears put it out;
Mother, never mourn.'

#### The Broken Heart

News o' grief had overteaken
Dark-eyed Fanny, now vorseaken;
There she zot, wi' breast a-heaven,
While vrom zide to zide, wi' grieven,
Vell her head, wi' tears a-creepen
Down her cheaks, in bitter weepen.
There wer still the ribbon-bow
She tied avore her hour ov woe,
An' there wer still the hans that tied it
Hangen white,
Or wringen tight,
In ceare that drowned all ceare bezide it.

When a man, wi' heartless slighten, Mid become a maiden's blighten, He mid cearelessly vorseake her, But must answer to her Meaker; He mid slight, wi' selfish blindness, All her deeds o' loven-kindness, God wull waigh 'em wi' the slighten That mid be her love's requiten; He do look on each deceiver, He do know What weight o' woe Do break the heart ov ev'ry griever.

#### The Castle Ruins

A HAPPY day at Whitsuntide, As soon 's the zun begun to vall, We all stroll'd up the steep hill-zide To Meldon, gret an' small; Out where the Castle wall stood high A-mwoldren to the zunny sky.

An' there wi' Jenny took a stroll Her youngest sister, Poll, so gay, Bezide John Hind, ah! merry soul, An' mid her wedlock fay; An' at our zides did play an' run My little maid an' smaller son.

Above the baten mwold upsprung The driven doust, a-spreaden light, An' on the new-leav'd thorn, a-hung, Wer wool a-quiv'ren white; An' corn, a-sheenen bright, did bow, On slopen Meldon's zunny brow.

There, down the roofless wall did glow The zun upon the grassy vloor, An' weakly-wandren winds did blow, Unhinder'd by a door; An' smokeless now avore the zun Did stan' the ivy-girded tun.

My bwoy did watch the daws' bright wings A-flappen vrom their ivy bow'rs; My wife did watch my maid's light springs, Out here an' there vor flow'rs; And John did zee noo tow'rs, the place Vor him had only Polly's face.

An' there, of all that pried about The walls, I overlook'd em best, An' what o' that? Why, I made out Noo mwore than all the rest: That there wer woonce the nest of zome That wer a-gone avore we come.

When woonce above the tun the smoke Did wreathy blue among the trees, An' down below, the liven vo'k Did tweil as brisk as bees: Or zit wi' weary knees, the while The sky wer lightless to their tweil

## **The Surprise**

As there I left the road in May,
And took my way along a ground,
I found a glade with girls at play,
By leafy boughs close-hemmed around,
And there, with stores of harmless joys,
They plied their tongues, in merry noise:
Though little did they seem to fear
So queer a stranger might be near;
Teeh-hee! Look here! Hah! ha! Look there!
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

And one would dance as one would spring,
Or bob or bow with leering smiles,
And one would swing, or sit and sing,
Or sew a stitch or two at whiles,
And one skipped on with downcast face,
All heedless, to my very place,
And there, in fright, with one foot out,
Made one dead step and turned about.
Heeh, hee, oh! oh! ooh! oo!—Look there!
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

Away they scampered all, full speed, By boughs that swung along their track, As rabbits out of wood at feed, At sight of men all scamper back. And one pulled on behind her heel, A thread of cotton, off her reel, And oh! to follow that white clue, I felt I fain could scamper too. Teeh, hee, run here. Eeh! ee! Look there! And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

#### The Wife A-Lost

Since I noo mwore do zee your fe{'a}ce, Up ste{'a}rs or down below, I'll zit me in the lwonesome ple{'a}ce, Where flat-bough'd beech do grow; Below the beeches' bough, my love, Where you did never come, An' I don't look to meet ye now, As I do look at hwome.

Since you noo mwore be at my zide, In walks in zummer het, I'll goo alwone where mist do ride, Drough trees a-drippèn wet; Below the ra{'i}n-wet bough, my love, Where you did never come, An' I don't grieve to miss ye now, As I do grieve at hwome.

Since now bezide my dinner-bwoard Your va{'i}ce do never sound, I'll eat the bit I can avword, A-vield upon the ground; Below the darksome bough, my love, Where you did never dine, An' I don't grieve to miss ye now, As I at hwome do pine.

Since I do miss your va{'i}ce an' fe{'a}ce
In pra{'y}er at eventide,
I'll pray wi' woone sad va{'i}ce vor gre{'a}ce
To goo where you do bide;
Above the tree an' bough, my love,
Where you be gone avore,
An' be a-w{'a}itèn vor me now,
To come vor evermwore.

#### **Tokens**

Green mwold on zummer bars do show
That they've a-dripped in winter wet;
The hoof-worn ring o' groun' below
The tree do tell o' storms or het;
The trees in rank along a ledge
Do show where woonce did bloom a hedge;
An' where the vurrow-marks do stripe
The down the wheat woonce rustled ripe.
Each mark ov things a-gone vrom view—
To eyezight's woone, to soulzight two.

The grass agean the mwoldren door 'S a token sad o' vo'k a-gone, An' where the house, bwoth wall an' vloor, 'S a-lost, the well mid linger on. What tokens, then, could Meary gi'e That she a-lived, an' lived vor me, But things a-done vor thought an' view? Good things that nwone agean can do, An' every work her love ha' wrought, To eyezight's woone, but two to thought.

### Wife A-Lost, The

Since you noo mwore be at my zide,
In walks in zummer het,
I'll goo alwone where mist do ride,
Drough trees a-drippèn wet;
Below the ra{"i}n-wet bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
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#### **Woak Hill**

When sycamore leaves wer a-spreadèn Green-ruddy in hedges, Bezide the red doust o' the ridges, A-dried at Woak Hill;

I packed up my goods all a sheenèn Wi' long years o' handlèn, On dousty red wheel ov a waggon, To ride at Woak Hill.

The brown thatchen ruf o' the dwellèn, I then wer a-le{'a}vèn, Had shelter'd the sleek head o' Me{'a}ry, My bride at Woak Hill.

But now vor zome years, her light voot-vall 'S a-lost vrom the vlooren.

Too soon vor my ja{'y} an' my childern,
She died at Woak Hill.

But still I do think that, in soul, She do hover about us; To ho vor her motherless childern, Her pride at Woak Hill.

Zoo--lest she should tell me hereafter I stole off 'ithout her, An' left her, uncall'd at house-riddèn, To bide at Woak Hill--

I call'd her so fondly, wi' lippèns All soundless to others, An' took her wi' a{'i}r-reachèn hand, To my zide at Woak Hill.

On the road I did look round, a-talkèn To light at my shoulder, An' then led her in at the doorway, Miles wide vrom Woak Hill.

An' that's why vo'k thought, vor a season, My mind wer a-wandrèn Wi' sorrow, when I wer so sorely A-tried at Woak Hill.

But no; that my Me{'a}ry mid never Behold herzelf slighted, I wanted to think that I guided My guide vrom Woak Hill.

#### **Woone Smile Mwore**

O! MARY, when the zun went down,
Woone night in spring, w' viry rim,
Behind the nap wi' woody crown,
An' left your smilen face so dim;
Your little sister there, inside,
Wi' bellows on her little knee,
Did blow the vire, a-glearen wide
Drough window-panes, that I could zee,—
As you did stan' wi' me, avore
The house, a-parten,—woone smile mwore.

The chatt'ren birds, a-risen high,
An' zinken low, did swiftly vlee
Vrom shrinken moss, a-growen dry,
Upon the lanen apple tree.
An' there the dog, a-whippen wide
His hairy tail, an' comen near,
Did fondly lay agan you zide
His coal-black nose an' russet ear:
To win what I 'd a-won avore,
Vrom your gay; face, his woone smile mwore.

An' while your mother bustled sprack,
A-getten supper out in hall,
An' cast her shade, a-whiv'ren black
Avore the vire, upon the wall;
Your brother come, wi' easy pace,
In drough the slammen gate, along
The path, wi' healthy-bloomen face,
A-whis'len shrill his last new zong:
An' when he come avore the door,
He met vrom you his woone smile mwore.

Now you that wer the daughter there, Be mother on a husband's vloor, An' mid ye meet wi' less o' care Than what your harty mother bore; An' if abroad I have to rue The bitter tongue, or wrongvul deed, Mid I come hwome to share wi' you What 's needvul free o' pinchen need: An' vind that you ha' still in store My evenen meal, an' woone smile mwore.

#### **Zummer An' Winter**

When I led by zummer streams
The pride o' Lea, as naighbours thought her,
While the zun, wi' evenen beams,
Did cast our sheades athirt the water;
Winds a-blowen,
Streams a-flowen,
Skies a-glowen,
Tokens ov my jay zoo fleeten,
Heightened it, that happy meeten.

Then, when maid an' man took pleaces, Gay in winter's Chris'mas dances, Showen in their merry feaces Kindly smiles an' glisnen glances; Stars a-winken, Day a-shrinken, Sheades a-zinken, Brought anew the happy meeten, That did meake the night too fleeten.