

Classic Poetry Series

Albert Durrant Watson
- poems -

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Albert Durrant Watson(January 8, 1859 - May 3, 1926)

A doctor, astronomer, editor, poet and psychical researcher, Watson was born on 8 January 1859 in Dixie, Canada West (now Ontario), and was the son of William Youle Watson and Mary Ann Aldred. On 23 September 1885 he married Sarah Anne Grimshaw Clare (1861-1937), the daughter of Samuel Clare, in Toronto. They had seven children (two daughters and five sons). Watson died in Toronto on 3 May 1926.

He graduated from Victoria University, and Edinburgh University. He practiced medicine for more than thirty years in the city of Toronto.

He held a series of seances from 1918 to 1920 by medium Louis Benjamin.

A Prayer

O THOU whose finger-tips,
From out the unveiled universe around,
Can touch my human lips
With harmonies beyond the range of sound;

Whose living word,
All vital truth revealing,
My soul hath stirred
To raptures holy, comforting and healing;

Beneath, around, above,
Breathe on me atmospheres
Of universal Love—
The music of the timeless years;

Upon my soul,
Pour vast eternities of might,
Up through my being roll
Deep seas of light
To urge me onward to the Goal,
The Infinite, the Whole.

Albert Durrant Watson

Breeze And Billow

A FAIR blue sky,
A far blue sea,
Breeze o'er the billows blowing!
The deeps of night o'er the waters free,
With mute appeal to the soul of me
In billows and breezes flowing;

The stars that watch
While sunbeams sleep,
Breeze o'er the billows blowing!

The soft-winged zephyrs that move the deep
And rock my barque in a dreamy sweep;
The moonlight softly glowing;

The glint of wave,
The gleam of star,
Breeze o'er the billows blowing!
The surf-line music on beach and bar,
The voice of nature near and far,
The night into morning growing;

And I afloat
With canvas free,
Breeze o'er the billows blowing!
At one with the heart of eternity,
The fair blue sky and the far blue sea,-
And the breeze o'er the billows blowing.

Albert Durrant Watson

Cromwell

SAY not to me:

'Cromwell, thou diest.' Save thy timid breath.
Do not the wild winds noise it o'er the world?
Shall he alone who made God's word his guide
And put the yoke of England on the seas
Not know the face of death when all God's foes
Whisper and say: 'The Lord Protector dies'?

Suppose ye he will tremble, gasp, turn pale,
At hint of death, which he so often dared?
Life's shuttle drifts across the web of time,
And if posterity see but one strand
Of purpose fair, or trace amid the woof
One feeble pattern to some worthy end,
Life was not vain. My sword my spokesman was;
It speaks no more, yet all the world doth know
It curbed the pride of kings.

Play not the role

Of simulated tears, but draw ye near,
For there are some words still Cromwell would say,
Even though his word be silent. Nearer still,
Lest nature's furious voice baffle your ears
With roaring winds and thunders pierced with fire.
The toils of state—these do not matter much;
But that the people love not righteousness,
Know not reality, bowing their souls
To musty precedents—that matters much.
That warders of the realm would still with words
The groans that from the battle's whirlwind call,
With paper promises and inky lies
Would heal the hurt of England, matters more.
That they whose thought doth show no real fact;
Whose words show something other than their thought;

Whose office, tricked with gaudy trappings, struts
So loud with blare of brass they cannot hear
The voice of God; so big with littleness,

They cannot see the lawful rights of man-
That matters all.

This too remember well-
I learned it late: None but a tyrant makes
That good prevail that is not in men's hearts,
And tyranny is questionable good.
Therefore must all men learn by liberty,
And with what pain their doings on them bring.

Give these my words to those who care to hear;
My thanks to you that ye report them true,
And for your patience now. I cannot hear
Your words, nor can I more, so stand apart,
That, undistracted by the storms of state
Or any human presence, I may come
Before the King of kings in hope and faith
For pardon of my sins.

Albert Durrant Watson

Dream-Valley

I KNOW a vale where the oriole swings
Her nest to the breeze and the sky,
The iris opens her petal wings
And a brooklet ripples by;
In the far blue is a cloud-drift,
And the witch-tree dresses,
With a rare charm in the warm light,
Her long dream-tresses.

But yestermorn—or was it a dream?
When daisies were drinking the dew,
I wandered down by the little stream,
And who was there but you?
Though nature smiled with the old joy
To the boldest comer,
It was your voice and the wild-bird's
Were the soul of summer.

When bowed with the toils of many years,
I would rest, if it be Love's will,
In a vale where the bird songs to my ears
Come floating across the hill,
With the sweet breath of the June air
And the purple clover,
And the lone dream of the old love,
And the blue skies over.

Albert Durrant Watson

From 'Love And The Universe'

THE voiceless symphony of moor and highland,
The rainbow on the mist,
The white moon-shield above the slumber-island,
The mirror-lake, star-kist,
The life of budding leaf and spray and branches,
The dew upon the sod,
The roar of downward-rushing avalanches
Are eloquent of God.

My eye sweeps far-extended plains of vision
And golden seas of light;

Upon my ear fall cadences elysian,
Like music in the night;
But all the glories to my sense appealing
Can no such raptures win
As come with majesty and joy of healing
From love and light within.

How shall the Universe its own creation,
Life of its life, destroy?
How bring to nothingness of desolation
The soul of its own joy?
The echo of itself, not merely fashioned
Of clay, God's outer part,
But fibre of His being, love-impassioned,
The glory of His heart!

Drive on, then, Winds of God, drive on forever
Across the shoreless sea;
The soul's a boundless deep, exhausted never
By full discovery.
The atmosphere and storms, the roll of ocean,
The paths by planets trod,
Are time-expressions of a Soul's emotion,
Are will and thought of God.
In storm or calm, that soundless ocean sweeping

Is still the sailor's goal;
The destiny of every man is leaping
To birth in his own soul.

Albert Durrant Watson

From 'The Hills Of Life'

ERE yet the dawn
Pushed rosy fingers up the arch of day
And smiled its promise to the voiceless prime,
Love sat and patterns wove at life's great loom.

He flung the suns into the soundless arch,
Appointed them their courses in the deep,
To keep His great time-harmonies, and blaze
As beacons in the ebon fields of night.
Love balanced them and held them firm and true,
Poised 'twixt attractive and repulsive drift
Amid the throngs of heaven. What though this power
Was ever known to us as gravity,
Its first and last celestial name is Love.

Love spake the word omnipotent, and lo!
Upon the distant and mid deep, the earth
Was flung, robed in blue skies and summer lands,
Green-garlanded with leaves and bright with flowers,
While songsters fluttered in the rosy skies.
But sometimes, moaning through the dark-leaved pines,
Or sobbing down the lonely shores of time,
Or wailing in the tempest-arch of night,
Love moved unresting and unsatisfied.
The faces of the hills in beauty smiled,
The night's deep vault blazed with configured stars,
Fair nature throbbed through all her frame of light,
And everywhere was Love's fine energy;

But fields and forests, flowers and firmaments
Had not attained to understand the throb
And thrill of life, so Love made human hearts
That mightily could feel and understand;

Made them his constant home, centre and sweep,
Channel and instrument of life and truth,
The word of God on earth, Love's other self,
The high ambassadors of truth and light;

And Love was free where Life was wholly true.

Albert Durrant Watson

God And Man

GOD is eternity, the sky, the sea,
The consciousness of universal space,
The source of energy and living grace,
Of life and light, of love and destiny,
God is that deep, ethereal ocean, free,
Whose billows keep their wide unbarriered place
Amid the stars that move before His face
In robes of hurricane and harmony.

A light that twinkles in a distant star,
A wave of ocean surging on the shore,
One substance with the sea; a wing to soar
Forever onward to the peaks afar,
A soul to love, a mind to learn God's plan,
A child of the eternal—such is man.

Albert Durrant Watson

The Comet

SPECTRAL, mysterious, flame-like thing
Cleaving the western night,
Waking from chrysalis-dream to fling
Out of thy spirit's long chastening
Far-flashing streams of light,

Tell us thy thought of the things that are;
How doth the morning sing?
What hast thou seen in the worlds afar?
Tell us thy dream, O thou silvery star,
Bird with the white-flame wing.

What though the glow of thy fading ray
Dim and elusive seem,
Constant thou art to the sun's bright sway
Faithful and true in thy tireless way,
True in thy spectral gleam.

Rising anew from thine ancient pyre,
Vapour and dust thy frame,
Still art thou Psyche, the soul's desire,
Wingless, save when from reefs of fire
Mounting in shaft of flame.

Albert Durrant Watson

The Lily

EMBLEM of beauty and sorrow,
Twine with each wistful to-morrow
The past with its memories teeming
And all its dear innocent dreaming.
Go thou, O Lily, and o'er her cast
The drifting breath of the wind-swept hills;
Sing her the music of forest rills;
Whisper a dream of the sacred past;
Lie on her heart till the angels wake
Her deathless love for the old time's sake.

Still to that love I am turning
Though beyond reach of my yearning;
And never the vision shall vanish
Nor time nor eternity banish
That dream so splendid of love and tears
That still transfigures the lonely years.

Go, Lily, go with my love and lie
Close to her heart and never die;

Albert Durrant Watson

The Sacrament

THE World was builded out of flame and storm.
The oak, blast-beaten on the hills, stands forth,
Stalwart and strong. The ore is broken, crushed
And sifted in the fiery crucible;
The remnant is pure gold. Brave hearts must dare
The billowy surge beneath the stern white stars
To net the finny harvests of the sea.
No boon is won, but some true hero dies.

Therefore is every gift a sacrament,
And every service is a holy thing,–
Not unto him whose filthy pence unearned
The treasure buys, but to the one who takes
The gift with reverence from that unknown
Who went forth brave and strong, came broken back,
But won for us a rare and priceless pearl.

Albert Durrant Watson

Usury

HEIR to the wealth of all the storied past,
A thousand generations pour their life
 Into this heart of mine;
'Twere base indeed if these should be the last,
Life's standard bearing in some noble strife,
 To advance the battle line.

Let life grow richer by its cost to me,
Till hope, too strong for dream of weak despair,
 Seize each momentous goal;
No monster of chimeric mystery,
Or fabled horror with its deathful stare,
 Palsy my dauntless soul.

Lord of this heritage of life and hope,
Dowered with what gifts the ages could achieve
 By dint of toil and tears,
I, in my turn, with some new problem cope,
And gratefully the sure solution leave
 For all the coming years.

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