

Classic Poetry Series

Angela Morgan
- poems -

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Angela Morgan(1875 - 24 January 1957)

Born in Washington, D.C. Educated by private tutors, the public schools, and by special University courses. Miss Morgan entered the journalistic field while still a young girl and did very brilliant work on papers of Chicago and New York. Her work covered all phases of life from those of society to the slums. She visited police courts, jails, and all places where humanity suffers and struggles, and it was no doubt her early work in the newspaper field that gave to her later work, both in poetry and fiction, its strong social bias. Probably no poet of the present time responds more keenly to the social needs of the period, nor has a keener sense of the opportunity for service. Miss Morgan was one of the delegates to the First International Congress of Women, at The Hague, during the first year of the war, and has appeared frequently in readings from her own work.

In recognition of her literary accomplishments Angela Morgan was awarded in 1942 an honorary degree (Litt.D.) by the Golden State University, Los Angeles. She died on January 24, 1957 at Mt. Marion, New York at the home of her friends Mr. and Mrs. Warren Meyer with whom she had spent the last years of her life.

Her poems and writings are full of hope and voice of optimism despite her financial problems.

Choice

I'd rather have the thought of you
To hold against my heart,
My spirit to be taught of you
With west winds blowing,
Than all the warm caresses
Of another love's bestowing,
Or all the glories of the world
In which you had no part.

I'd rather have the theme of you
To thread my nights and days,
I'd rather have the dream of you
With faint stars glowing,
I'd rather have the want of you,
The rich, elusive taunt of you
Forever and forever and forever unconfessed
Than claim the alien comfort
Of any other's breast.

O lover! O my lover,
That this should come to me!
I'd rather have the hope for you,
Ah, Love, I'd rather grope for you
Within the great abyss
Than claim another's kiss --
Alone I'd rather go my way
Throughout eternity.

Angela Morgan

God The Artist

God, when you thought of a pine tree,
How did you think of a star?
How did you dream of the Milky Way
To guide us from afar.
How did you think of a clean brown pool
Where flecks of shadows are?

God, when you thought of a cobweb,
How did you think of dew?
How did you know a spider's house
Had shingles bright and new?
How did you know the human folk
Would love them like they do?

God, when you patterned a bird song,
Flung on a silver string,
How did you know the ecstasy
That crystal call would bring?
How did you think of a bubbling throat
And a darling speckled wing?

God, when you chiseled a raindrop,
How did you think of a stem,
Bearing a lovely satin leaf
To hold the tiny gem?
How did you know a million drops
Would deck the morning's hem?

Why did you mate the moonlit night
With the honeysuckle vines?
How did you know Madeira bloom
Distilled ecstatic wines?
How did you weave the velvet disk
Where tangled perfumes are?
God, when you thought of a pine tree,

How did you think of a star?

Angela Morgan

In Spite Of War

In spite of war, in spite of death,
In spite of all man's sufferings,
Something within me laughs and sings
And I must praise with all my breath.
In spite of war, in spite of hate
Lilacs are blooming at my gate,
Tulips are tripping down the path
In spite of war, in spite of wrath.
"Courage!" the morning-glory saith;
"Rejoice!" the daisy murmureth,
And just to live is so divine
When pansies lift their eyes to mine.

The clouds are romping with the sea,
And flashing waves call back to me
That naught is real but what is fair,
That everywhere and everywhere
A glory liveth through despair.
Though guns may roar and cannon boom,
Roses are born and gardens bloom;
My spirit still may light its flame
At that same torch whence poppies came.
Where morning's altar whitely burns
Lilies may lift their silver urns
In spite of war, in spite of shame.

And in my ear a whispering breath,
"Wake from the nightmare! Look and see
That life is naught but ecstasy
In spite of war, in spite of death!"

Angela Morgan

The Unknown Soldier

He is known to the sun-white Majesties
Who stand at the gates of dawn.
He is known to the cloud-borne company
Whose souls but late have gone.
Like wind-flung stars through lattice bars
They throng to greet their own,
With voice of flame they sound his name
Who died to us unknown.

He is hailed by the time-crowned brotherhood,
By the Dauntless of Marathon,
By Raymond, Godfrey and Lion Heart
Whose dreams he carried on.
His name they call through the heavenly hall
Unheard by earthly ear,
He is claimed by the famed in Arcady
Who knew no title here.

Oh faint was the lamp of Sirius
And dim was the Milky Way.
Oh far was the floor of Paradise
From the soil where the soldier lay.
Oh chill and stark was the crimson dark
Where huddled men lay deep;
His comrades all denied his call
Long had they lain in sleep.

Oh strange how the lamp of Sirius
Drops low to the dazzled eyes,
Oh strange how the steel-red battlefields
Are floors of Paradise.
Oh strange how the ground with never a sound
Swings open, tier on tier,
And standing there in the shining air
Are the friends he cherished here.

They are known to the sun-shod sentinels
Who circle the morning's door,
They are led by a cloud-bright company

Through paths unseen before.
Like blossoms blown, their souls have flown
Past war and reeking sod,
In the book unbound their names are found
They are known in the courts of God!

Angela Morgan

When Nature Wants A Man

When Nature wants to drill a man
And thrill a man,
And skill a man,
When Nature wants to mould a man
To play the noblest part;
When she yearns with all her heart
To create so great and bold a man
That all the world shall praise-

Watch her method, watch her ways!
How she ruthlessly perfects
Whom she royally elects;
How she hammers him and hurts him
And with mighty blows converts him
Into trial shapes of clay which only Nature understands-

While his tortured heart is crying and he lifts beseeching hands! -
How she bends, but never breaks,
When his good she undertakes....
How she uses whom she chooses
And with every purpose fuses him,
By every art induces him
To try his splendor out-
Nature knows what she's about.

When Nature wants to take a man
And shake a man
And wake a man;
When Nature wants to make a man
To do the Future's will;
When she tries with all her skill
And she yearns with all her soul
To create him large and whole....
With what cunning she prepares him!

How she goads and never spares him,
How she whets him and she frets him
And in poverty begets him....
How she often disappoints

Whom she sacredly anoints,
With what wisdom she will hide him,
Never minding what betide him
Though his genius sob with slighting and his pride may not forget!
Bids him struggle harder yet.
Makes him lonely
So that only
God's high messages shall reach him
So that she may surely teach him
What the Hierarchy planned.

Though he may not understand
Gives him passions to command-
How remorselessly she spurs him,
With terrific ardor stirs him
When she poignantly prefers him!

When Nature wants to name a man
And fame a man
And tame a man;
When Nature wants to shame a man
To do his heavenly best....
When she tries the highest test
That her reckoning may bring-
When she wants a god or king! -
How she reins him and restrains him
So his body scarce contains him
While she fires him
And inspires him!
Keeps him yearning, ever burning for a tantalising goal-
Lures and lacerates his soul.
Sets a challenge for his spirit,
Draws it higher when he's near it-
Makes a jungle, that he clear it;
Makes a desert, that he fear it
And subdue it if he can-
So doth Nature make a man.

Then, to test his spirit's wrath
Hurls a mountain in his path-
Puts a bitter choice before him
And relentlessly stands o'er him.

'Climb, or perish! ' so she says....
Watch her purpose, watch her ways!

Nature's plan is wondrous kind
Could we understand her mind...
Fools are they who call her blind.
When his feet are torn and bleeding
Yet his spirit mounts unheeding,
All his higher powers speeding
Blazing newer paths and fine;
When the force that is divine
Leaps to challenge every failure and his ardor still is sweet
And love and hope are burning in the presence of defeat....

Lo, the crisis! Lo, the shout
That must call the leader out.
When the people need salvation
Doth he come to lead the nation....
Then doth Nature show her plan
When the world has found- a man!

Angela Morgan