

Classic Poetry Series

Gertrude Bartlett
- poems -

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Gertrude Bartlett(1876-1942)

Gertrude Bartlett (1876-1942) was a Canadian poet.

Life

Bartlett was born in New Haven, New York, to Mary Moulton and William Cheever Bartlett. She came to Montreal at 17 and found work in Macdonald and Marsh, the law firm of Sir John A. Macdonald. In 1891 she married English artist John W.C. Taylor, and spent a year in England. The couple had one daughter.

Ballade Of Barren Roses

THERE sounds his step receding on the stair,
The bridegroom's, that my love could not detain;
For whose captivity the woman's snare
Of veiled brows was woven all in vain.
A rose I held he keeps with tender care.
Tell him, dear Jesu, that no blossom blows
For its own beauty, howsoever rare.
The Lord of Life loves not a barren rose.

The destiny of roses is to bear
Their scarlet fruit through drear autumnal rain;
To hold upon the crystal drifting air
Of winter days the cups that pour again
New springtime loveliness for earth to wear,
When all the verdure now her bounds enclose
Is gone forever, lily with the tare.
For this our Lord loves not a barren rose.

What thought of his is left for me to share
Aroused from that rapt dream in which we twain
Lighted our little lamps of joy, to flare
Along a single path to Love's domain?
Will he, in that mysterious region where
The ruby chalice on his vision glows,
Exceeding all the stars, remembrance spare
To one his Lord loves not, a barren rose?

Envoy

O Mystic Rose, the heart of Jesu, fair
Creative source from which all beauty flows,
Ever transfusing Love, hear now my prayer:
Resume for Love's own sake one barren rose.

Gertrude Bartlett

Ballade Of Tristram's Last Harping

THE end that Love doth seek, what bard can say,
In that fair season when the tender green
Of opening leaves doth roof the woods of May,
And sweet wild buds from out their places lean
To touch the dainty feet that heedless stray
Among them, with a youth in knight's attire?
His lady's will capricious to obey,
This is the end of dawning Love's desire.

And when amid the summer's bright array
Of blossoms, are the crimson roses seen,
And one young maid, fairer than any spray
In perfect bloom, wanders their lines between,
What blessed solace can the lover pray
Of her compassion, for his heart of fire?
With kisses on her mouth all words to stay—
This is the end of eager Love's desire.

With driven clouds the lowering sky is grey;
The winds above the frozen hills are keen,
And all fair buds have fallen in decay;
What joy hath now the true knight of his Queen
No rapture less exultant can allay
His need, than softly craves this faulty lyre:
To answer all his pleading with sweet 'Yea'—
This is the end of yearning Love's desire.

Envoy

Beloved, now is done our life's brief day;
Not with the day howe'er doth Love expire.
Within thine arms the night to dream away—
This is the end of Love's supreme desire.

Gertrude Bartlett

Put By The Flute

O LOVE, put by the flute.
Too slight the tender, liquid strain
We heard amid the April rain
Of wild white blooms, to voice the spell
Whereof our lips are mute.
Let organ diapasons tell
The music of the waves which roll
From that unfathomed Sea, the Soul.
So, Love, put by the flute.

The flute, O Love, put by;
For we unto the wonder-strand
Are come, from out the valley land
Upon the Great Adventure bound.
Here river reed notes die
Within the larger pulse of sound.
Lest list'ning for the luring call
We lose the greater rhythm's fall,
The flute, dear Love, put by.

Put by the flute, O Love.
And yet, so piercing keen the tone
Once heard in yon far vale, wind-blown
Down that bright stream, whose brim we twain
With laughter leaned above,
The joy thereof do we retain
Among our mighty chords, that so
How sweet is youth all men may know—
Put by the flute, O Love.

Gertrude Bartlett

The Gunners

WHO may the victors be, not yet we know;
Our care, all sights set true, the shell in place,
The flame outleaping, sending death apace
To check the rush of the oncoming foe
And then, as sounds of thund'rous hoof-beats grow,
With grind of wheels 'neath allies' guns at race,
We hear a shriek the air brings nigh and face
Our instant doom. Then tumults cease; and lo!—

The shining dead men, rank on rank, appear,
Their voices raised in one great cry, to hail
The gunners prone, for whom reveille clear
Their silver bugles blow in morning pale.
Your battle, God! to make men great; and here,
In that cause, dead, unvanquished, we prevail.

Gertrude Bartlett