

Classic Poetry Series

Theophile Gautier

- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Theophile Gautier(1811-1872)

Pierre Jules Théophile Gautier (August 30, 1811 – October 23, 1872) was a French poet, dramatist, novelist, journalist, and literary critic.

While Gautier was an ardent defender of Romanticism, his work is difficult to classify and remains a point of reference for many subsequent literary traditions such as Parnassianism, Symbolism, Decadence and Modernism. He was widely esteemed by writers as diverse as Balzac, Baudelaire, the Goncourt brothers, Flaubert and Oscar Wilde.

Towards the end of 1830, Gautier began to frequent meetings of Le Petit Cénacle, a group of artists who met in the studio of Jehan Du Seigneur. The group was a more irresponsible version of Hugo's Cénacle. The group counted among its members the artists Gérard de Nerval, Alexandre Dumas, père, Petrus Borel, Alphonse Brot, Joseph Bouchardy and Philothée O'Neddy. Le Petit Cénacle soon gained a reputation for extravagance and eccentricity, but also for being a unique refuge from society.

Gautier began writing poetry as early as 1826 but the majority of his life was spent as a contributor to various journals, mainly La Presse, which also gave him the opportunity for foreign travel and for meeting many influential contacts in high society and in the world of the arts. Throughout his life, Gautier was well-traveled, taking trips to Spain, Italy, Russia, Egypt and Algeria. Gautier's many travels inspired many of his writings including Voyage en Espagne (1843), Trésors d'Art de la Russie (1858), and Voyage en Russie (1867). Gautier's travel literature is considered by many as being some of the best from the nineteenth century, often written in a more personal style, it provides a window into Gautier's own tastes in art and culture.

A Deux Beaux Yeux

Theophile Gautier

A Travers Les Soupairs, Les Plaintes Et Le Rôle

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A Une Robe Rose

Theophile Gautier

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Theophile Gautier

Bûchers Et Tombeaux

Theophile Gautier

Caerulei Oculi

Theophile Gautier

Camélia Et Pâquerette

Theophile Gautier

Carmen - From Émaux Et Camées

Carmen est maigre, - un trait de bistre
Cerne son oeil de gitana.
Ses cheveux sont d'un noir sinistre,
Sa peau, le diable la tanna.

Les femmes disent qu'elle est laide,
Mais tous les hommes en sont fous:
Et l'archevêque de Tolède
Chante la messe à ses genoux;

Car sur sa nuque d'ambre fauve
Se tord un énorme chignon
Qui, dénoué, fait dans l'alcôve
Une mante à son corps mignon.

Et, parmi sa pâleur, éclate
Une bouche aux rires vainqueurs;
Piment rouge, fleur écarlate,
Qui prend sa pourpre au sang des coeurs.

Ainsi faite, la moricaude
Bat les plus altières beautés,
Et de ses yeux la lueur chaude
Rend la flamme aux satiétés.

Elle a, dans sa laideur piquante,
Un grain de sel de cette mer
D'où jaillit, nue et provocante,
L'âcre Vénus du gouffre amer.

Theophile Gautier

Ce Que Disent Les Hirondelles

Theophile Gautier

Consolation

Theophile Gautier

Contralto

Theophile Gautier

Coquetterie Posthume

Theophile Gautier

Dans La Sierra

Theophile Gautier

Dernier Voeu

Theophile Gautier

Diamant Du Coeur

Theophile Gautier

En Allant À La Chartreuse De Miraflores

Theophile Gautier

Étoiles, Qui D'En Haut Voyez Valses Les Mondes

Theophile Gautier

Fantaisies D'Hiver

Theophile Gautier

Fumée

Theophile Gautier

In Deserto

Theophile Gautier

J'Ai Dans Mon Coeur...

Theophile Gautier

J'Ai Lissé De Mon Sein De Neige

Theophile Gautier

J'Étais Monté Plus Haut...

Theophile Gautier

La Bonne Soirée

Theophile Gautier

La Caravane

Theophile Gautier

La Chimère

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La Fellah

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La Fleur Qui Fait Le Printemps

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La Mansarde

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La Mort Est Multiforme...

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La Rose-Thé

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Le Laurier Du Generalife

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Le Pin Des Landes

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Le Poème De La Femme

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Le Poète Et La Foule

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Le Roi Solitaire

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Le Souper Des Armures

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Le Spectre De La Rose

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L'Escurial

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L'Horloge

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Theophile Gautier

L'Obélisque De Paris

Theophile Gautier

Me Voilà Revenu De Ce Voyage Sombre

Theophile Gautier

Ne Me Sois Pas Marâtre, Ô Nature Chérie

Theophile Gautier

Noël

Theophile Gautier

Odelette Anacréontique

Theophile Gautier

Pendant La Tempête

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Perspective

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Pluie

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Premier Sourire Du Printemps

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Rondalla

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Séguidille

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Sur Le Carnaval De Venise Ii - Sur Les Lagunes

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Sur Le Carnaval De Venise Iii - Carnaval

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Sur Le Carnaval De Venise Iv - Clair De Lune Sentimental

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Symphonie En Blanc Majeur

Theophile Gautier

The Phantom Of The Rose

Sweet lady, let your lids unclose.--
Those lids by maiden dreams caressed;
I am the phantom of the rose
You wore last night upon your breast.
Like pearls upon my petals lay
The weeping fountain's silver tears,
Ere in the glittering array
You bore me proudly 'mid your peers.

O lady, 'twas for you I died--
Yet have I come and will I stay;
My rosy phantom by your side
Will linger till the break of day.
Yet fear not, lady; naught claim I--
Nor mass, nor hymn, or funeral prayer;
My soul is but a perfumed sigh,
Which pure from Paradise I bear.

My death is as my life was--sweet;
Who would not die as I have done?
A fate like mine who would not meet,
Your bosom fair to lie upon?
A poet on my sentient tomb
Engraved this legend with a kiss:
'Here lies a rose of fairest bloom;
E'en kings are jealous of its bliss.

Theophile Gautier

The Supper Of Armor

Bjorn, a strange cœnobite,
On the plateau of a bare rock,
Inhabits, out of the world and time,
The tower of a fortress demolished.

At his door the modern spirit
In vain lifts up the weighty knocker.
Bjorn bolts his postern shut
And his castle keeps tight-locked.

When every eye is toward the dawn
Bjorn, perched upon his dungeon,
Gazes still the horizon upon
At the place of the setting sun.

Retrospective soul, he lodges
In his fortress in the past,
The pendulum of his grandfather clock
Some centuries ago worked last.

Underneath his ogives feudal
He wanders, waking up the echoes,
And his steps, the flagstones moot all,
Seem to be followed by even steps.

He sees no laymen nor any presters,
Nor gentlemen, nor men of town,
But the portraits of his ancestors
Talk with him again and now.

And certain nights, to lend him spice,
Finding dinner alone a bore there,
Bjorn, a funerary caprice,
Asks to supper all his forebears.

The phantoms, when tolls the midnight bell,
Arrive in armor pie-a-cap,
Bjorn, who shivers in spite of himself,
Salutes by lifting high his hanap.

To seat itself, each panoply
With its kneejoint makes an angle,
Whose articulation yields
Grating like an old doorbolt.

And all of a piece, the suit of armor,
Gauche casket of a body not there,
Making a dull and hollow murmur,
Falls twixt the arms of an easy chair.

Landgraves, rhinegraves, also burgraves,
Come from heaven or from hell,
They are all there, silent and grave,
Stiff convives of hardened steel!

In the dark, a wild beam plays
On a monster, wyvern, two-necked eagle,
From the heraldic bestiary
Upon their crests by many blows mangled.

From the snout of beats deformed
Raising up their nails arrogant,
Spring forth varied plumes enormous,
Lambrequins extravagant,

But the open helmets are void
As the timbre on coats of arms;
Only two flames that are livid
Gleam within like strange alarms.

Every bit of scrap iron sits
In the hall of the old manor,
And, on the wall, a shadow flits
Giving each guest a page of honor.

The liquors in the fire of candles
Are purplish with a tint that's suspect,
Each course within its red sauce spangled
Takes on a singularmost aspect.

Now and again a corslet sparkles,

A morion shines for just a moment,
A piece that's come unhinged quite tumbles
Down upon the tablecloth groaning.

One listens to the beating wings
Of bats that are invisible,
And along the wainscoting
Flags of infidel nations tremble.

With the most fantastical movements
Curling their phalanges of bronze
Gauntlets pour into the helmets
Glassfuls of the Rhineland's wines,

Or with a dagger's edge, they cut
On golden plates a wild boar...
While vague noises pass from out
The organs of the corridor.

With a voice that still is hoarse
From the dampness of the tomb,
Max hums, playful drunkenness,
A lied, in thirteen hundred, new.

Albrecht, having wine that's fierce,
Quarrels with his quondam cousins,
Whom he pounds on, humped and beastly,
As he did the Saracens.

Overheated, Fritz unhelms,
Where no skull was ever sunk,
Never thinking his unmasked self
Looks just like a headless trunk.

Quickly now they roll pell-mell
Beneath the table, among the crocks,
Head below, showing the sole
Of their shoes curvate with hooks.

It's a hideous battlefield
Where an armet hits a pot,
Where the dead by each cut yield

No blood but each course in a vomit.

And Bjorn, his fist upon his thigh,
Contemplates them, drawn and haggard,
Whileas, through the Swiss stained glass,
Sunup casts its blue regard.

The troupe, whom a sunbeam crosses,
Grows pale like a torch at noon,
And the drunkenmost back tosses
The stirrup cup before the tomb.

The cock crows, the specters fly
And with a lofty air replete,
On the marble pillow lay
Their heads still aching from the feast!

Theophile Gautier

Tristesse En Mer

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Une Âme

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Unknown Shores

Okay, my starsick beauty! -
blue jeans and tilting breasts,
child of Canaverel -
where would you like to go?

Shall we set course for Mars,
or Venus; green sea,
Aldebaran the golden,
or Tycho Brahe's Nova,
the moons of Sagitta,
or Vega's colonies?

School-minching, bronze Diane,
bane of the launching-pads-
may not ask again:
wherever you would go

my rocket-head can turn
at will to your command-
top luck the flowers of snow
that grow on Pluto, or
capella-wards, to pluck
roots of asphodel?

I may not ask again:
where would you like to go?

Have you a star; she says,
O any faithful sun
Where love does not eclipse?
The countdown slurs and slips).
-Ah child, if that star shines,
is in chartless skies,

I do not know of such!
But come, where will you go?

Theophile Gautier

Vieux De La Vieille

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