

Selected Poems of Thomas Moore (1779-1852)

“The Meeting of the Waters”

There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet;
Oh! the last rays of feeling and life must depart,
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.

Yet it was not that nature had shed o'er the scene
Her purest of crystal and brightest of green;
'Twas not her soft magic of streamlet or hill,
Oh! no—it was something more exquisite still.

'Twas that friends, the beloved of my bosom, were near,
Who made every dear scene of enchantment more dear,
And who felt how the best charms of nature improve,
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.

Sweet vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love best,
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should
cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.

She is Far from the Land

'She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps,
And lovers around her are sighing,
But coldly she turns from their gaze, and weeps,
For her heart in his grave is lying.

She sings the wild songs of her dear native plains,
Every note which he loved awaking:
Ah! little they think who delight in her strains,
How the heart of the minstrel is breaking!

He had lived for his love, for his country he died,
They were all that to life had entwined him;
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be dried,
Nor long will his love stay behind him.

O, make her a grave where the sunbeams rests
When they promise a glorious morrow;
They'll shine o'er her sleep, like a smile from the west,
From her own loved island of sorrow!

Let Erin Remember the Days of Old

'Let Erin remember the days of old,
Ere her faithless sons betray'd her;
When Malachi wore the collar of gold,
Which he won from the proud invader,
When her kings, with standard of green unfurl'd,
Led the Red-branch Knights to danger—
Ere the emerald gem of the western world
Was set in the crown of a stranger.

On Lough Neagh's bank, as the fisherman strays
In the calm, cold eve's declining,
He sees the Round Towers of other days
In the wave beneath him shining.
Thus shall memory often, in dreams sublime,

Catch a glimpse of the days that are over;
Thus, sighing, look through the waves of time
For the long-faded glories they cover.'

“Dear harp of my Country”

'Dear harp of my Country! In darkness I found thee,
The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee long,
When proudly, my own island Harp, I unbound thee,
And gave all thy choords to light, freedom, and song!
The warm lay of love and the light note of gladness
Have waken'd thy fondest, thy liveliest thrill;
But, so oft hast thou echo'd the deep sign of sadness,
That ev'n in thy mirth it will steal from thee still.

Dear harp of my Country! farewell to thy numbers,
This sweet wreath of song is the last we shall twine!
Go, sleep with the sunshine of Fame on thy slumbers,
Till touch'd by some hand less unworthy than mine;
if the pulse of the patriot, soldier, or lover,
Have throbb'd at our lay, 'tis thy glory alone;
I was but as the wind, passing heedlessly over,
and all the wide sweetness I wak'd was thy own.'

Oh! Blame not the bard

'On Lough Neagh's bank, as the fisherman strays
In the calm, cold eve's declining,
He sees the Round Towers of other days
In the wave beneath him shining.
Thus shall memory often, in dreams sublime,
Catch a glimpse of the days that are over;
Thus, sighing, look through the waves of time
For the long-faded glories they cover.

Oh! blame not the bard, if he fly to the bowers
Where Pleasure lies carelessly smiling at fame,
He was born for much more, and in happier hours
His soul might have burned with a holier flame;
The string that now languishes loose o'er the lyre
Might have bent a proud bow to the warrior's dart;
And the lip which now breathes but the song of desire,
Might have poured the full tide of a patriot's heart.

But alas for his country! —her pride has gone by,
And that spirit is broken, which never would bend;
O'er the ruin her children in secret must sigh,
For 'tis treason to love her, and death to defend.
Unprized are her sons, till they've learned to betray;
Undistinguish'd they live, if they shame not their sires;
And the torch, that would light them through dignity's
way,
Must be caught from the pile where their country
expires.

Then blame not the bard, if in pleasure's soft dream
He should try to forget what he never can heal.'

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“**Believe me, if all those endearing young charms**”, / Which I gaze on so fondly today, / Were to change by tomorrow, and fleet in my arms, / Like fairy gifts, fading away, / Thou wouldst still be ador’d, as this moment thou art, / Let thy loveliness fade as it will, / And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart / Would entwine itself verdantly still. // It is not while beauty and youth are thine own, / And thy cheeks unprofan’d by a tear, / That the fervour and faith of a soul can be known, / To which time will but make thee more dear; / No, the heart that has truly lov’d never forgets, / But as truly loves on to the close, / As the sunflower turns on her god, when he sets, / The same look which she turn’d when he rose.’

“**I Saw From the Beach**”: ‘I saw from the beach, when the morning was shining, / A bark o’er the waters move gloriously on; / I came when the sun from that beach was declining, / The bark was still there, but the waters were gone. // And such is the fate of our life’s early promise, / So passing the spring-tide of joy we have known; / Each wave, that we danced on at morning, ebbs from us, / And leaves us, at eve, on the bleak shore alone. // Ne’er tell me of glories, serenely adorning / The close of our day, the calm eve of our night; / Give me back, give me back the wild freshness of Morning, / Her clouds and her tears are worth Evening’s best light.’

“**O, Ye Dead!**”: ‘Oh, ye Dead! oh, ye Dead! whom we know by the light you give / From your cold gleaming eyes, though you move like men who live, / Why leave you thus your graves, / In far off fields and waves, / Where the worm and the sea-bird only know your bed, / To haunt this spot where all / Those eyes that wept your fall, / And the hearts that wail’d you, like your own, lie dead? // It is true, it is true, we are shadows cold and wan; / And the fair and the brave whom we loved on earth are gone; / But still thus ev’n in death, / So sweet the living breath / Of the fields and the flow’rs in our youth we wandered o’er, / that ere, condemn’d, we go / To freeze, ’mid Hecla’s snow, / We would taste awhile, and think we live once more!’

[Note that these verses, sung by Plunket Greene in Dublin in 1906, caused Stanislaus Joyce to write to James Joyce about the eerie effect produced by the singer in this the second stanza where he whimpered as if speaking with the voice of the dead. In this way, the verses may be said to have inspired Joyce’s best-known short story “The Dead”. See Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* [1959] 1965 Edn., p.253.)]

“The Last Rose of Summer”

’Tis the last rose of summer	So soon may I follow,
Left blooming alone;	When friendships decay,
All her lovely companions	And from Love’s shining
Are faded and gone;	circle
No flower of her kindred,	The gems drop away.
No rosebud is nigh,	When true hearts lie withered
To reflect back her blushes,	And fond ones are flown,
To give sigh for sigh.	Oh! who would inhabit
	This bleak world alone?
I’ll not leave thee, thou lone one!	
To pine on the stem;	
Since the lovely are sleeping,	
Go, sleep thou with them.	
Thus kindly I scatter	
Thy leaves o’er the bed,	
Where thy mates of the garden	
Lie scentless and dead.	

Letter to [Sir] John Stevenson (1807): ‘I feel very anxious that a Work of this kind should be undertaken. We have too long neglected the only talent for which our English neighbours ever deigned to allow us any credit. Our National Music has never been properly collected; and while the composers of the Continent have enriched their operas and sonatas which melodies borrowed from Ireland - very often without even the honesty of acknowledgement - we have left these treasures in a great degree unclaimed and fugitive. Thus our airs, like too many of our countrymen, for want of protection at home, have passed into the service of foreigners. But we are come, I hope, to a better period both of politics and music; and how much they are connected, in Ireland at least, appears too plainly in the tone of sorrow and depression which characterises most of our early songs. - The task which you propose to me, of adapting words to these airs, is by no means easy. The poet, who would follow the various sentiments which they express, must feel and understand that rapid fluctuation of spirits, that unaccountable mixture of gloom and levity, which composes the character of my countrymen, and has deeply tinged their music. Even in their liveliest strains we find some melancholy note intrude - some minor third or flat seventh which throws its shade as it passes and makes even mirth interesting. If Burns had been an Irishman (and I would willingly give up all our claims upon Ossian for him,) his heart would have been proud of such music, and his genius would have made it immortal. (Letters, ed. W. S. Dowden, OUP 1964, pp.116-17; quoted in Michèle Kohler, Introduction to Thomas Moore: catalogue of 530 items offered for sale by C. C. Kohler, 12 Horsham Rd., Dorking, Surrey, RG4 3JL, England [?1996], p.vii-viii; also in W. S. Dowden, ed., Letters, OUP 1964, pp.116-17, and [in part] Robert Welch, *Changing States: Transformations in Modern Irish Writing*, 1993, p.13.)