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# The Broken Wing

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE  
GOLDEN THRESHOLD

INTRODUCTION BY  
ARTHUR SYMONS

*Portrait Frontispiece. Cloth. \$1.00 net*

"The poems are exquisitely musical  
and they are genuine expressions of the  
mysterious heart of Asia."

—*Literary Digest.*

THE  
BIRD OF TIME

*SONGS OF LIFE, DEATH AND THE SPRING*

INTRODUCTION BY  
EDMUND GOSSE

*Portrait Frontispiece. Cloth. \$1.00 net*

"Her folk-songs are rarely beautiful  
and her serious poems reveal a burning  
fervency that is fixed upon the pursuit  
of the eternal."—*Review of Reviews.*

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The Broken Wing  
Songs of Love, Death & Destiny  
1915—1916

*By*  
Sarojini Naidu

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*To the Dream of To-Day*  
*and*  
*The Hope of To-Morrow*

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## Foreword

IN the radiant and far-off yesterdays of our history, it was the sacred duty of Indian womanhood to kindle and sustain the hearth-fires, the beacon-fires and the altar-fires of the nation.

The Indian woman of to-day is once more awake and profoundly alive to her splendid destiny as the guardian and interpreter of the Triune Vision of national life—the Vision of Love, the Vision of Faith, the Vision of Patriotism.

Her renascent consciousness is everywhere striving for earnest expression in song or speech, service or self-sacrifice, that shall prove an offering not unworthy of the Great Mother in the eyes of the world that honour her.

Poignantly aware of the poverty of my gift, I still venture to make my offering with joined palms uplifted in a Salutation of Song.

SAROJINI NAIDU.

HYDERABAD, DECCAN, 1916

I offer all due acknowledgments to the editors of  
the various European and Oriental journals in  
which my poems have appeared.



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# The Broken Wing

Songs of Life and Death



## The Broken Wing

*"Why should a song-bird like you have a broken wing?"*

G. K. GOKHALE

### QUESTION

THE great dawn breaks, the mournful night is past,  
From her deep age-long sleep she wakes at last!  
Sweet and long-slumbering buds of gladness ope  
Fresh lips to the returning winds of hope,  
Our eager hearts renew their radiant flight  
Towards the glory of renascent light,  
Life and our land await their destined spring . . .  
Song-bird why dost *thou* bear a broken wing?

### ANSWER

Shall spring that wakes mine ancient land again  
Call to my wild and suffering heart in vain?  
Or Fate's blind arrows still the pulsing note  
Of my far-reaching, frail, unconquered throat ?

Or a weak bleeding pinion daunt or tire  
My flight to the high realms of my desire?  
Behold! I rise to meet the destined spring  
And scale the stars upon my broken wing!



## The Gift of India

Is there aught you need that my hands withhold,  
Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold?  
Lo! I have flung to the East and West  
Priceless treasures torn from my breast,  
And yielded the sons of my stricken womb  
To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom.

Gathered like pearls in their alien graves  
Silent they sleep by the Persian waves,  
Scattered like shells on Egyptian sands,  
They lie with pale brows and brave, broken hands,  
They are strewn like blossoms mown down by chance  
On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders and France.

Can ye measure the grief of the tears I weep  
Or compass the woe of the watch I keep?

Or the pride that thrills thro' my heart's despair,  
And the hope that comforts the anguish of prayer?  
And the far sad glorious vision I see  
Of the torn red banners of Victory?

When the terror and tumult of hate shall cease  
And life be refashioned on anvils of peace,  
And your love shall offer memorial thanks  
To the comrades who fought in your dauntless ranks,  
And you honour the deeds of the deathless ones  
Remember the blood of thy martyred sons!

*August 1915*

## The Temple

PRIEST

AWAKE, it is Love's radiant hour of praise!  
Bring new-blown leaves his temple to adorn,  
Pomegranate-buds and ripe sirisha-sprays,  
Wet sheaves of shining corn.

PILGRIM

*O priest! only my broken lute I bring  
For Love's praise-offering!*

PRIEST

Behold! the hour of sacrifice draws near.  
Pile high the gleaming altar-stones of Love  
With delicate burdens of slain woodland deer  
And frail white mountain dove.

PILGRIM

*O priest! only my wounded heart I bring  
For Love's blood-offering!*

PRIEST

Lo! now it strikes Love's solemn hour of prayer,  
Kindle with fragrant boughs his blazing shrine,  
Feed the sweet flame with spice and incense rare  
Curds of rose-pastured kine.

PILGRIM

*O priest! only my stricken soul I bring  
For Love's burnt-offering!*

## Lakshmi, the Lotus-Born

*Goddess of Fortune*

THOU who didst rise like a pearl from the ocean,  
Whose beauty surpasseth the splendour of morn!  
Lo! We invoke thee with eager devotion,  
Hearken, O Lotus-born!

Come! with sweet eyelids and fingers caressing,  
With footfalls auspicious our thresholds adorn,  
And grant us the showers and the sheaves of thy blessing,  
Hearken, O Lotus-born!

Prosper our cradles and kindred and cattle,  
And cherish our hearth-fires and coffers and corn,  
O watch o'er our seasons of peace and of battle,  
Hearken, O Lotus-born!

For our dear Land do we offer oblation,  
O keep thou her glory unsullied, unshorn,  
And guard the invincible hope of our nation,  
Hearken, O Lotus-born!

*Lakshmi Puja Day, 1915*

## The Victor

THEY brought their peacock-lutes of praise  
And carven gems in jasper trays,  
Rich stores of fragrant musk and myrrh,  
And wreaths of scarlet nenuphar . . .  
I had no offering that was meet,  
And bowed my face upon his feet.

They brought him robes from regal looms,  
Inwrought with pearl and silver blooms,  
And sumptuous footcloths broiderèd  
With beetle-wings and gleaming thread . . .  
I had no offering that was meet,  
And spread my hands beneath his feet.

They filled his courts with gifts of price,  
With tiers of grain and towers of spice,

Tall jars of golden oil and wine,  
'And heads of camel and of kine . . .  
I had no offering that was meet,  
'And laid my life before his feet.



## The Imam Bara

*Of Lucknow*

### I

OUT of the sombre shadows,  
Over the sunlit grass,  
Slow in a sad procession  
The shadowy pageants pass  
Mournful, majestic, and solemn,  
Stricken and pale and dumb,  
Crowned in their peerless anguish  
The sacred martyrs come.  
Hark, from the brooding silence  
Breaks the wild cry of pain  
Wrung from the heart of the ages  
*Ali! Hassan! Hussain!*

## II

Come from this tomb of shadows,  
Come from this tragic shrine  
That throbs with the deathless sorrow  
Of a long-dead martyr line.  
Love! let the living sunlight  
Kindle your splendid eyes  
Ablaze with the steadfast triumph  
Of the spirit that never dies.  
So may the hope of new ages  
Comfort the mystic pain  
That cries from the ancient silence  
*Ali! Hassan! Hussain!*

*The Imam Bara is a Chapel of Lamentation where Mussulmans of the Shiah Community celebrate the tragic martyrdom of Ali, Hassan, and Hussain, during the mourning month of Moharram. A sort of passion-play takes place to the accompaniment of the refrain, Ali! Hassan! Hussain!*

## A Song from Shiraz

THE singers of Shiraz are feasting afar  
To greet the Nauraz with sarang and cithar, . . .  
But what is their music that calleth to me,  
From glimmering garden and glowing minar?

*The stars shall be scattered like jewels of glass,  
And Beauty be tossed like a shell in the sea,  
Ere the lutes of their magical laughter surpass  
The lutes of thy tears, O Mohamed Ali!*

From the Mosque-towers of Shiraz ere daylight begin  
My heart is disturbed by the loud muezzin,  
But what is the voice of his warning to me,  
That waketh the world to atonement of sin?

*The stars shall be broken like mirrors of brass,  
And Rapture be sunk like a stone in the sea,  
Ere the carpet of prayer or of penance surpass  
Thy carpet of dreams, O Mohamed Ali!*

In the silence of Shiraz my soul shall await,  
Untroubled, the wandering Angel of Fate. . . .  
What terror or joy shall his hands hold for me,  
Who bringeth the goblet of guerdon too late?

*The stars shall be mown and uprooted like grass,  
And glory be flung like a weed in the sea,  
Ere the goblet of doom or salvation surpass  
Thy goblet of love, O Mohamed Ali!*

## Imperial Delhi

IMPERIAL City! dowered with sovereign grace,  
To thy renascent glory still there clings  
The splendid tragedy of ancient things,  
The regal woes of many a vanquished race;  
And memory's tears are cold upon thy face  
E'en while thy heart's returning gladness rings  
Loud on the sleep of thy forgotten kings,  
Who in thine arms sought Life's last resting-place.

Thy changing kings and kingdoms pass away,  
The gorgeous legends of a by-gone day,  
But thou dost still immutably remain  
Unbroken symbol of proud histories,  
Unageing priestess of old mysteries  
Before whose shrine the spells of Death are vain.

# Memorial Verses

## I. Ya Mahbub! \*

ARE these the streets that I used to know—  
Was it yesterday or æons ago?  
Where are the armies that used to wait—  
The pilgrims of Love—at your palace gate?  
The joyous pæans that thrilled the air  
The pageants that shone thro' your palace square?  
And the minstrel music that used to ring  
Thro' your magic kingdom . . . when you were king?  
O hands that succoured a people's need  
With the splendour of Haroun-al-Rasheed!

*\*"Ya Mahbub," which means O Beloved, was the device on the State banner of the late Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Mahbub Ali Khan, the well-beloved of his people.*

O heart that solaced a sad world's cry  
With the sumptuous bounty of Hatim Tai!  
Where are the days that were winged and clad  
In the fabulous glamour of old Baghdad,  
And the bird of glory that used to sing  
In your magic kingdom . . . when you were king?

. . . . .

O king, in your kingdom there is no change,  
'Tis only my soul that hath grown so strange,  
So faint with sorrow it cannot hear  
Aught save the chant at your rose-crowned bier.  
My grieving bosom hath grown too cold  
To clasp the beauty it treasured of old,  
—The grace of life and the gifts of spring,  
And the dreams I cherished . . . when you were king!

*August 29, 1911*

## II. Gokhale \*

HEROIC Heart! lost hope of all our days!  
Need'st thou the homage of our love or praise?  
Lo! let the mournful millions round thy pyre  
Kindle their souls with consecrated fire  
Caught from the brave torch fallen from thy hand,  
To succour and to serve our suffering land  
And in a daily worship taught by thee  
Upbuild the temple of her Unity.

*February 19, 1915*

*\* Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the great saint  
and soldier of our national righteousness.  
His life was a sacrament, and his death was  
a sacrifice in the cause of Indian unity.*



### III. In Salutation to my Father's Spirit

*Aghorenath Chattopadhyay*

FAREWELL, farewell, O brave and tender Sage.  
O mystic jester, golden-hearted Child!  
Selfless, serene, untroubled, unbeguiled  
By trivial snares of grief and greed or rage;  
O splendid dreamer in a dreamless age  
Whose deep alchemic vision reconciled  
Time's changing message with the undefiled  
Calm wisdom of thy Vedic heritage!

Farewell, great spirit, without fear or flaw,  
Thy life was love and liberty thy law,  
And Truth thy pure imperishable goal . . .  
All hail to thee in thy transcendant flight  
From hope to hope, from height to heav'nlier  
height,  
Lost in the rapture of the Cosmic Soul.

*January 28, 1915*

## The Flute-Player of Brindaban \*

WHY didst thou play thy matchless flute  
'Neath the Kadamba tree,  
'And wound my idly dreaming heart  
With poignant melody,  
So where thou goest I must go  
My flute-player with thee?

Still must I like a homeless bird  
Wander, forsaking all  
The earthly loves and worldly lures  
That held my life in thrall,  
'And follow, follow, answering  
Thy magical flute-call.

*\* Krishna, the Divine Flute-player of Brindaban, who plays the tune of the Infinite that lures every Hindu heart away from mortal cares and attachments.*

To Indra's golden-flowering groves  
Where streams immortal flow,  
Or to sad Yama's silent Courts  
Engulfed in lampless woe,  
Where'er thy subtle flute I hear  
Belovèd I must go!

No peril of the deep or height  
Shall daunt my wingèd foot;  
No fear of time-unconquered space,  
Or light untravelled route,  
Impede my heart that pants to drain  
The nectar of thy flute!

## Farewell

FAREWELL, O eager faces that surround me,  
Claiming the tender service of my days,  
Farewell, O joyous spirits that have bound me  
With the love-sprinkled garlands of your praise!

O golden lamps of hope, how shall I bring you  
Life's kindling flame from a forsaken fire?  
O glowing hearts of youth, how shall I sing you  
Life's glorious message from a broken lyre?

To you what further homage shall I render,  
Victorious City girdled by the sea,  
Where breaks in surging tides of woe and splendour  
The age-long tumult of Humanity?

Need you another tribute for a token  
Who reft from me the pride of all my years?  
Lo! I will leave you with farewell unspoken,  
Shrine of dead dream! .O temple of my tears!

## The Challenge

THOU who dost quell in thy victorious tide  
Death's ravaged secret and life's ruined pride,  
Shall thy great deeps prevail, O conquering Sea,  
O'er Love's relentless tides of memory?

Sweet Earth, though in thy lustrous bowl doth shine  
The limpid flame of hope's perennial wine,  
Thou art too narrow and too frail to bear  
The harsh, wild vintage of my heart's despair.

O valiant skies, so eager to uphold  
High laughing burdens of sidereal gold,  
Swift would your brave brows perish to sustain  
The radiant silence of my sleepless pain.

## Wandering Beggars

FROM the threshold of the Dawn  
On we wander, always on  
Till the friendly light be gone  
*Y' Allah! Y' Allah!*

We are free-born sons of Fate,  
What care we for wealth or state  
Or the glory of the great?  
*Y' Allah! Y' Allah!*

Life may grant us or withhold  
Roof or raiment, bread or gold,  
But our hearts are gay and bold.  
*Y' Allah! Y' Allah!*

Time is like a wind that blows,  
The future is a folded rose,  
Who shall pluck it no man knows,  
*Y' Allah! Y' Allah!*

So we go a fearless band,  
The staff of freedom in our hand  
Wandering from land to land,  
*Y' Allah! Y' Allah!*

Till we meet the Night that brings  
Both to beggars and to kings  
The end of all their journeyings,  
*Y' Allah! Y' Allah!*



## The Lotus

*To M. K. Gandhi*

O MYSTIC Lotus, sacred and sublime,  
In myriad-petalled grace inviolate,  
Supreme o'er transient storms of tragic Fate,  
Deep-rooted in the waters of all Time,  
What legions loosed from many a far-off clime  
Of wild-bee hordes with lips insatiate,  
And hungry winds with wings of hope or hate,  
Have thronged and pressed round thy miracu-  
    lous prime  
To devastate thy loveliness, to drain  
The midmost rapture of thy glorious heart . . .  
But who could win thy secret, who attain  
Thine ageless beauty born of Brahma's breath,  
Or pluck thine immortality who art  
Coeval with the Lords of Life and Death?

## The Prayer of Islam

WE praise Thee, O Compassionate!  
Master of Life and Time and Fate,  
Lord of the labouring winds and seas,  
*Ya Hameed! Ya Hafeez!*

Thou art the Radiance of our ways,  
Thou art the Pardon of our days,  
Whose name is known from star to star,  
*Ya Ghani! Ya Ghaffar!*

Thou art the Goal for which we long,  
Thou art our Silence and our Song,  
Life of the sunbeam and the seed—  
*Ya Wahab! Ya Waheed!*

Thou dost transmute from hour to hour  
Our mortal weakness into power,  
Our bondage into liberty,  
*Ya Quadeer! Ya Quavi!*

We are the shadows of Thy Light,  
We are the secrets of Thy might,  
The visions of thy primal dream,  
*Ya Rahman! Ya Raheem!\**

*Id-uz-Zoha, 1915*

*\* These are some of the Ninety-nine Beautiful  
Arabic Names of God as used by followers of  
Islam.*

## Bells

### *Anklet-bells*

ANKLET-BELLS! frail anklet-bells!  
That hold Love's ancient mystery  
As hide the lips of limpid shells  
Faint tones of the remembered sea,  
You murmur of enchanted rites,  
Of sobbing breath and broken speech,  
Sweet anguish of rose-scented nights  
And wild mouths calling each to each  
Or mute with yearning ecstasy.

### *Cattle-bells*

Cattle-bells! soft cattle-bells!  
What gracious memories you bring  
Of drowsy fields and dreaming wells,

And weary labour's folded wing,  
Of frugal mirth round festal fires,  
Brief trysts that youth and beauty keep.  
Of flowering roofs and fragrant byres  
White heifers gathered in for sleep,  
Old songs the wandering women sing.

*Temple-bells*

Temple-bells! deep temple-bells!  
Whose urgent voices wreck the sky!  
In your importunate music dwells  
Man's sad and immemorial cry  
That cleaves the dawn with wings of praise,  
That cleaves the dark with wings of prayer,  
Craves pity for our mortal ways,  
Seeks solace for our life's despair,  
And peace for suffering hearts that die!

## The Garden Vigil

IN the deep silence of the garden-bowers  
Only the stealthy zephyr glides and goes,  
Rifling the secret of *sirisha* flowers,  
And to the new-born hours  
Bequeathes the subtle anguish of the rose.

Pain-weary and dream-worn I lie awake,  
Counting like beads the blazing stars o'erhead;  
Round me the wind-stirred champak branches shake  
Blossoms that fall and break  
In perfumed rain across my lonely bed.

Long ere the sun's first far-off beacons shine,  
Or her prophetic clarions call afar,  
The gorgeous planets wither and decline,  
Save in its eastern shrine,  
Unquenched, unchallenged, the proud morning star.

O glorious light of hope beyond all reach!  
O lovely symbol and sweet sign of him  
Whose voice I yearn to hear in tender speech  
To comfort me or teach,  
Before whose gaze thy golden fires grow dim!

I care not what brave splendours bloom or die  
So thou dost burn in thine appointed place,  
Supreme in the still dawn-uncoloured sky,  
And daily grant that I  
May in thy flame adore his hidden face.

## Invincible

O FATE, betwixt the grinding-stones of Pain,  
Tho' you have crushed my life like broken grain,  
Lo! I will leaven it with my tears and knead  
The bread of Hope to comfort and to feed  
The myriad hearts for whom no harvests blow  
Save bitter herbs of woe.

Tho' in the flame of sorrow you have thrust  
My flowering soul and trod it into dust,  
Behold, it doth reblossom like a grove  
To shelter under quickening boughs of Love  
The myriad souls for whom no gardens bloom  
Save bitter buds of doom.



## The Pearl

How long shall it suffice

Merely to hoard in thine unequalled rays  
The bright sequestered colours of the sun,  
O pearl above all price,  
And beautiful beyond all need of praise,  
World-coveted but yet possessed of none,  
Content in thy proud self-dominion?

Shall not some ultimate

And unknown hour deliver thee, and attest  
Life's urgent and inviolable claim  
To bind and consecrate  
Thy glory on some pure and bridal breast,  
Or set thee to enhance with flawless flame  
A new-born nation's coronal of fame?

Or wilt thou self-denied

Forego such sweet and sacramental ties

As weld Love's delicate bonds of ecstasy,

And in a barren pride

Of cold, unfruitful freedom that belies

The inmost secret of fine liberty

Return unblest into the primal sea?

## Three Sorrows

How shall I honour thee, O sacred grief?  
Fain would my love transmute  
My suffering into music and my heart  
Into a deathless lute!

How shall I cherish thee, O precious pain?  
Fain would my trembling hand  
Fashion and forge of thee a deathless sword  
To serve my stricken land!

And thou, sweet sorrow, terrible and dear,  
Most bitter and divine?  
O I will carve thee with deep agony  
Into a deathless shrine!

## Kali the Mother

*All Voices:* O TERRIBLE and tender and divine!  
O mystic mother of all sacrifice,  
We deck the sombre altars of thy shrine  
With sacred basil leaves and saffron rice;  
All gifts of life and death we bring to  
thee,  
*Uma Haimavati!*

*Maidens:* We bring thee buds and berries from the  
wood!

*Brides:* We bring the rapture of our bridal  
prayer!

*Mothers:* And we the sweet travail of mother-  
hood!

- Widows:* And we the bitter vigils of despair!
- All Voices:* All gladness and all grief we bring to thee,  
*Ambika! Parvati!*
- Artisans:* We bring the lowly tribute of our toil!
- Peasants:* We bring our new-born goats and budded wheat!
- Victors:* And we the swords and symbols of our spoil!
- Vanquished:* And we the shame and sorrow of defeat!
- All Voices:* All triumph and all tears we bring to thee,  
*Girija! Shambhavi!*
- Scholars:* We bring the secrets of our ancient arts.
- Priests:* We bring the treasures of our ageless creeds.
- Poets:* And we the subtle music of our hearts.

*Patriots:* And we the sleepless worship of our  
deeds.

*All Voices:* All glory and all grace we bring to thee,  
*Kali! Maheshwari!\**

*\* These are some of the many names of Kali the  
Eternal Mother of Hindu worship.*

## Awake! \*

*To Mohamed Ali Jinnah*

WAKEN, O mother! thy children implore thee,  
Who kneel in thy presence to serve and adore thee!  
The night is aflush with a dream of the morrow,  
Why still dost thou sleep in thy bondage of sorrow?  
Awaken and sever the woes that enthrall us,  
And hallow our hands for the triumphs that call us!

Are we not thine, O Belov'd, to inherit  
The manifold pride and power of thy spirit?  
Ne'er shall we fail thee, forsake thee or falter,  
Whose hearts are thy home and thy shield and thine  
altar.

Lo! we would thrill the high stars with thy story,  
And set thee again in the forefront of glory.

*\* Recited at the Indian National Congress, 1915*

*Hindus:* Mother! the flowers of our worship have  
crowned thee!

*Parsis:* Mother! the flame of our hope shall  
surround thee!

*Mussulmans:* Mother! the sword of our love shall  
defend thee!

*Christians:* Mother! the song of our faith shall  
attend thee!

*All Creeds:* Shall not our dauntless devotion avail  
thee?

Hearken! O queen and O goddess, we  
hail thee!



# The Flowering Year

*"A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread."*

SHELLEY



## The Call of Spring

*To Padmaja and Lilamani*

CHILDREN, my children, the spring wakes anew,  
And calls through the dawn and the daytime  
For flower-like and fleet-footed maidens like you,  
To share in the joy of its play-time.

O'er hill-side and valley, through garden and grove,  
Such exquisite anthems are ringing  
Where rapturous bulbul and maina and dove  
Their carols of welcome are singing.

I know where the ivory lilies unfold  
In brooklets half-hidden in sedges,  
And the air is aglow with the blossoming gold  
Of thickets and hollows and hedges.

I know where the dragon-flies glimmer and glide,  
And the plumes of wild peacocks are gleaming,  
Where the fox and the squirrel and timid fawn hide  
And the hawk and the heron lie dreaming.

The earth is ashine like a humming-bird's wing,  
And the sky like a kingfisher's feather,  
O come, let us go and play with the spring  
Like glad-hearted children together.

## The Coming of Spring

O SPRING! I cannot run to greet  
Your coming as I did of old,  
Clad in a shining veil of gold,  
With champa-buds and blowing wheat  
And silver anklets on my feet.

Let others tread the flowering ways  
And pluck new leaves to bind their brows,  
And swing beneath the quickening boughs  
A bloom with scented spikes and sprays  
Of coral and of chrysoprase.

But if against this sheltering wall  
I lean to rest and lag behind,  
Think not my love untrue, unkind,  
Or heedless of the luring call  
To your enchanting festival.

O Sweet! I am not false to you—  
    Only my weary heart of late  
    Has fallen from its high estate  
Of laughter and has lost the clue  
To all the vernal joy it knew.

There was a song I used to sing—  
    But now I seek in vain, in vain  
    For the old lilting glad refrain—  
I have forgotten everything—  
Forgive me, O my comrade Spring!

*Vasant Panchami Day, 1916*

## The Magic of Spring

I BURIED my heart so deep, so deep,  
Under a secret hill of pain,  
And said, "O broken pitiful thing,  
Even the magic spring  
Shall ne'er awake thee to life again,  
Tho' March woods glimmer with opal rain  
And passionate koels sing."

The kimshuks burst into dazzling flower,  
The seemuls burgeoned in crimson pride,  
The palm-groves shone with the oriole's wing,  
The koels began to sing,  
And soft clouds broke in a twinkling tide . . .  
My heart leapt up in its grave and cried,  
*"Is it the spring, the spring?"*

## Summer Woods

O I AM tired of painted roofs and soft and silken floors,  
And long for wind-blown canopies of crimson *gul-*  
*mohurs!*

O I am tired of strife and song and festivals and fame,  
And long to fly where cassia-woods are breaking into  
flame.

Love, come with me where koels call from flowering  
glade and glen,  
Far from the toil and weariness, the praise and prayers  
of men.



O let us fling all care away, and lie alone and dream  
'Neath tangled boughs of tamarind and *molsari* and  
*neem!*

And bind our brows with jasmine sprays and play on  
carven flutes,  
To wake the slumbering serpent-kings among the ban-  
yan roots,

And roam at fall of eventide along the river's brink,  
And bathe in water-lily pools where golden panthers  
drink!

You and I together, Love, in the deep blossoming  
woods  
Engirt with low-voiced silences and gleaming solitudes,  
Companions of the lustrous dawn, gay comrades of  
the night,  
Like Krishna and like Radhika, encompassed with  
delight.

## June Sunset

HERE shall my heart find its haven of calm,  
By rush-fringed rivers and rain-fed streams  
That glimmer thro' meadows of lily and palm.  
Here shall my soul find its true repose  
Under a sunset sky of dreams  
Diaphanous, amber and rose.  
The air is aglow with the glint and whirl  
Of swift wild wings in their homeward flight,  
Sapphire, emerald, topaz, and pearl,  
Afloat in the evening light.

A brown quail cries from the tamarisk bushes  
A bulbul calls from the cassia-plume,  
And thro' the wet earth the gentian pushes  
Her spikes of silvery bloom.

Where'er the foot of the bright shower passes  
Fragrant and fresh delights unfold;  
The wild fawns feed on the scented grasses,  
Wild bees on the cactus-gold.

An ox-cart stumbles upon the rocks,  
And a wistful music pursues the breeze  
From a shepherd's pipe as he gathers his flocks  
Under the *pipal*-trees.

And a young *Banjara* driving her cattle  
Lifts up her voice as she glitters by  
In an ancient ballad of love and battle  
Set to the beat of a mystic tune,  
And the faint stars gleam in the eastern sky  
To herald a rising moon.

## The Time of Roses

LOVE, it is the time of roses!  
In bright fields and garden closes  
How they burgeon and unfold!  
How they sweep o'er tombs and towers  
In voluptuous crimson showers  
And untrammelled tides of gold!

How they lure wild bees to capture  
All the rich mellifluous rapture  
Of their magical perfume,  
And to passing winds surrender  
And their frail and dazzling splendour  
Rivalling your turban-plume!

How they cleave the air adorning  
The high rivers of the morning

In a blithe, bejewelled fleet!  
How they deck the moonlit grasses  
In thick rainbow tinted masses  
Like a fair queen's bridal sheet!

Hide me in a shrine of roses,  
Drown me in a wine of roses  
Drawn from every fragrant grove!  
Bind me on a pyre of roses,  
Burn me in a fire of roses,  
Crown me with the rose of Love!



# The Peacock-Lute

Songs for Music

*"Iram's soft lute, with sorrow in its strings"*

OMAR KHAYYAM





## Silver Tears

MANY tributes Life hath brought me,  
Delicate and touched with splendour . . .  
Of all gracious gifts and tender  
She hath given no gift diviner  
Than your silver tears of sorrow  
For my wild heart's suffering.

Many evils Time hath wrought me,  
Happiness and health hath broken . . .  
Of all joy or grief for token  
He hath left no gift diviner  
Than your silver tears of Sorrow  
For my wild heart's suffering.

## Caprice

YOU held a wild-flower in your finger-tips,  
Idly you pressed it to indifferent lips,  
Idly you tore its crimson leaves apart, . .  
Alas! it was my heart.

You held a wine-cup in your finger-tips,  
Lightly you raised it to indifferent lips,  
Lightly you drank and flung away the bowl . . .  
Alas! it was my soul.

## Destiny

IT chanced on the noon of an April day  
A dragon-fly passed in its sunward play  
And furlèd his flight for a passing hour  
To drain the life of a passion-flower. . . .  
Who cares if a ruined blossom die,  
O bright blue wandering dragon-fly?

Love came, with his ivory flute,  
His pleading eye, and his wingèd foot.  
"I am weary," he murmured; "O let me rest  
In the sheltering joy of your fragrant breast."  
At dawn he fled and he left no token. . . .  
Who cares if a woman's heart be broken?

## Ashoka Blossom

IF a lovely maiden's foot  
Treads on the Ashoka root,  
Its glad branches sway and swell,  
So our eastern legends tell,  
Into gleaming flower,  
Vivid clusters golden-red  
To adorn her brow or bed  
Or her marriage bower.

If your glowing foot be prest  
O'er the secrets of my breast,  
Love, my dreaming head would wake,  
And its joyous fancies break  
Into lyric bloom  
To enchant the passing world  
With melodious leaves unfurled  
And their wild perfume.

## Atonement

DEEP in a lonely garden on the hill,  
Lulled by the low sea-tides,  
A shadow set in shadows, soft and still,  
A wandering spirit glides,  
Smiting its pallid palms and making moan  
*O let my Love atone!*

Deep in a lonely garden on the hill  
Among the fallen leaves  
A shadow lost in shadows, vague and chill,  
A wandering spirit grieves,  
Beating its pallid breast and making moan  
*O let my Death atone!*

## Longing

ROUND the sadness of my days  
Breaks a melody of praise  
Like a shining storm of petals,  
Like a lustrous rain of pearls,  
From the lutes of eager minstrels,  
From the lips of glowing girls.

Round the sadness of my nights  
Breaks a carnival of lights. . . .  
But amid the gleaming pageant  
Of life's gay and dancing crowd  
Glides my cold heart like a spectre  
In a rose-encircled shroud.

Love, beyond these lonely years  
Lies there still a shrine of tears,

A dim sanctuary of sorrow  
Where my grieving heart may rest,  
And on some deep tide of slumber  
Reach the comfort of your breast?

## Welcome

WELCOME, O fiery Pain!  
My heart unseared, unstricken,  
Drinks deep thy fervid rain,  
My spirit-seeds to quicken.

Welcome, O tranquil Death!  
Thou hast no ills to grieve me,  
Who can'st with Freedom's breath  
From sorrow to retrieve me.

Open, O vast unknown,  
Thy sealed mysterious portals!  
I go to seek mine own,  
Vision of Love immortal.



## The Festival of Memory

DOth rapture hold a feast,  
Doth sorrow keep a fast  
For Love's dear memory  
Whose sweetness shall outlast  
The changing winds of Time,  
Secret and unsurpassed?

Shall I array my heart  
In Love's vermeil attire?  
O shall I fling my life  
Like incense in Love's fire?  
Weep unto sorrow's lute?  
Dance unto rapture's lyre?

What know the world's triune  
Of gifts so strange as this

Twin-nurtured boon of Love,  
Deep agony and bliss,  
Fulfilment and farewell  
Concentred in a kiss?

No worship dost thou need,  
O miracle divine!  
Silence and song and tears  
Delight and dreams are thine,  
Who mak'st my burning soul  
Thy sacrament and shrine.

# The Temple

## A Pilgrimage of Love

*"My passion shall burn as the flame of Salvation,  
The flower of my love shall become the ripe  
fruit of Devotion"*

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



# I. The Gate of Delight

## I. The Offering

WERE beauty mine, Beloved, I would bring it  
Like a rare blossom to Love's glowing shrine;  
Were dear youth mine, Beloved, I would fling it  
Like a rich pearl into Love's lustrous wine.

Were greatness mine, Beloved, I would offer  
Such radiant gifts of glory and of fame,  
Like camphor and like curds to pour and proffer  
Before Love's bright and sacrificial flame.

But I have naught save my heart's deathless passion  
That craves no recompense divinely sweet,  
Content to wait in proud and lowly fashion,  
And kiss the shadow of Love's passing feet.

## 2. The Feast

BRING no fragrant sandal-paste,  
Let me gather, Love, instead  
The entranced and flowering dust  
You have honoured with your tread  
For mine eyelids and mine head.

Bring no scented lotus-wreath  
Moon-awakened, dew-caressed;  
Love, thro' memory's age-long dream  
Sweeter shall my wild heart rest  
With your foot-prints on my breast.

Bring no pearls from ravished seas,  
Gems from rifled hemispheres;  
Grant me, Love, in priceless boon  
All the sorrow of your years,  
All the secret of your tears.

### 3. Ecstasy

LET spring illumine the western hills with blossoming  
brands of fire,  
And awake with rods of budded flame the valleys of  
the south—  
But I have plucked you, O miraculous Flower of my  
desire,  
And crushed between my lips the burning petals of  
your mouth!

Let spring unbind upon the breeze tresses of rich per-  
fume  
To lure the purple honey-bees to their enchanted  
death—  
But sweeter madness drives my soul to swift and  
sweeter doom  
For I have drunk the deep, delicious nectar of your  
breath!

Let spring unlock the melodies of fountain and of flood,  
And teach the wingèd wind of man to mock the wild  
bird's art,  
But wilder music thrilled me when the rivers of your  
blood  
Swept o'er the flood-gates of my life to drown my  
waiting heart!



#### 4. The Lute-Song

WHY need you a burnished mirror of gold,  
O bright and imperious face?  
Mine eyes be the shadowless wells of desire  
For the sun of your glory and grace!

Why need you the praises of ivory lutes,  
O proud and illustrious name?  
My voice be the journeying lute of delight  
For the song of your valour and fame!

Why need you pavilions and pillows of silk,  
Soft foot-cloths of azure, O Sweet?  
My heart be your tent and your pillow of rest,  
And a place of repose for your feet!

Why need you sad penance or pardon or prayer  
For life's passion and folly and fears?  
My soul be your living atonement, O Love,  
In the flame of immutable years!

## 5. If You Call Me

IF you call me I will come  
    Swifter, O my Love,  
Than a trembling forest deer  
    Or a panting dove,  
Swifter than a snake that flies  
    To the charmer's thrall . . .

If you call me I will come  
    Fearless what befall.

If you call me, I will come  
    Swifter than desire,  
Swifter than the lightning's feet  
    Shod with plumes of fire.  
Life's dark tides may roll between,  
    Or Death's deep chasms divide—

If you call me I will come  
    Fearless what betide.

## 6. The Sins of Love

FORGIVE me the sin of mine eyes,  
O Love, if they dared for a space  
Invade the dear shrine of your face  
With eager, insistent delight,  
Like wild birds intrepid of flight  
That raid the high sanctuaried skies—  
O pardon the sin of mine eyes!

Forgive me the sin of my hands. . . .  
Perchance they were bold overmuch  
In their tremulous longing to touch  
Your beautiful flesh, to caress,  
To clasp you, O Love, and to bless  
With gifts as uncounted as sands . . .  
O pardon the sin of my hands!

Forgive me the sin of my mouth,  
O Love, if it wrought you a wrong,  
With importunate silence or song  
Assailed you, encircled, oppress'd,  
And ravished your lips and your breast  
To comfort its anguish of drouth  
O pardon the sin of my mouth!

Forgive me the sin of my heart,  
If it trespassed against you and strove  
To lure or to conquer your love  
Its passionate love to appease,  
To solace its hunger and ease  
The wound of its sorrow or smart  
O pardon the sin of my heart!

## 7. The Desire of Love

O COULD I brew my soul like wine  
    To make you strong,  
O could I carve you Freedom's sword  
    Out of my song!

Instil into your mortal flesh  
    Immortal breath,  
Triumphantly to conquer Life  
    And trample Death.

What starry height of sacrifice  
    Were left untrod,  
So could my true love fashion you  
    Into a God?

## 8. The Vision of Love

O LOVE! my foolish heart and eyes  
Have lost all knowledge save of you,  
And everywhere—in blowing skies  
And flowering earth—I find anew  
The changing glory of your face  
The myriad symbols of your grace.

To my enraptured sight you are  
Sovereign and sweet reality,  
The splendour of the morning star,  
The might and music of the sea,  
The subtle fragrance of the spring,  
Rich fruit of all Time's harvesting.

O Love! my foolish soul and sense  
Have lost all vision save of you,

My sacred fount of sustenance  
From which my spirit drinks anew  
Sorrow and solace, hope and power  
From life to life and hour to hour.

O poignant sword! O priceless crown,  
O temple of my woe and bliss!  
All pain is compassed by your frown,  
All joy is centred in your kiss.  
You are the substance of my breath  
And you the mystic pang of Death.



## II. The Path of Tears

### I. The Sorrow of Love

WHY did you turn your face away?

Was it for grief or fear

Your strength would fail or your pride grow weak,

If you touched my hand, if you heard me speak,

After a life-long year?

Why did you turn your face away?

Was it for love or hate?

Or the spell of that wild miraculous hour

That hurled our souls with relentless power

In the eddying fires of Fate?

Turn not your face from me, O Love!

Shall Sorrow or Death conspire

To set our suffering spirits free

From the passionate bondage of Memory

Or the thrall of the old desire?

## 2. The Silence of Love

SINCE thus I have endowed you with the whole  
Joy of my flesh and treasure of my soul,  
And your life debt to me looms so supreme,  
Shall my love wax ungenerous as to seem  
By sign or supplication to demand  
An answering gift from your reluctant hand?

Give what you will . . . if aught be yours to  
give!

But tho' you are the breath by which I live  
And all my days are a consuming pyre  
Of unaccomplished longing and desire,  
How shall my love beseech you or beset  
Your heart with sad remembrance and regret?

Quenched are the fervent words I yearn to speak,  
And tho' I die, how shall I claim or seek  
From your full rivers one reviving shower,  
From your resplendent years one single hour?  
Still for Love's sake I am foredoomed to bear  
A load of passionate silence and despair.

### 3. The Menace of Love

How long, O Love, shall ruthless pride avail you  
Or wisdom shield you with her gracious wing,  
When the sharp winds of memory shall assail you  
In all the poignant malice of the spring?

All the sealed anguish of my blood shall taunt you  
In the rich menace of red-flowering trees;  
The yearning sorrow of my voice shall haunt you  
In the low wailing of the midnight seas.

The tumult of your own wild heart shall smite you  
With strong and sleepless pinions of desire,  
The subtle hunger in your veins shall bite you  
With swift and unrelenting fangs of fire.

When youth and spring and passion shall betray you  
And mock your proud rebellion with defeat,  
God knows, O Love, if I shall save or slay you  
As you lie spent and broken at my feet!

#### 4. Love's Guerdon

FIERCE were the wounds you struck me, O my Love,  
And bitter were the blows! . . .  
Sweeter from your dear hands all suffering  
Than rich love-tokens other comrades bring  
Of crimson oleander and of rose.

Cold was your cruel laughter, O my Love,  
And cruel were your words! . . .  
Sweeter such harshness on your lips than all  
Love-orisons from tender lips that fall,  
And soft love-music of chakora-birds.

You plucked my heart and broke it, O my Love,  
And bleeding, flung it down! . . .  
Sweeter to die thus trodden of your feet,  
Than reign apart upon an ivory seat  
Crowned in a lonely rapture of renown.

## 5. If You Were Dead

IF you were dead I should not weep!  
How sweetly would my sad heart rest  
Close-gathered in a dreamless sleep  
Among the garlands on your breast,  
Happy at last and comforted  
If you were dead!

For life is like a burning veil  
That keeps our yearning souls apart,  
Cold Fate a wall no hope may scale,  
And pride a severing sword, Sweetheart!  
And love a wide and troubled sea  
'Twixt you and me.

If you were dead I should not weep—  
How sweetly would our hearts unite

In a dim, undivided sleep,  
Locked in Death's deep and narrow night,  
All anger fled, all sorrow past,  
O Love, at last!



## 6. Supplication

LOVE, it were not such deep unmeasured wrong  
To wreck my life of youth and all delight,  
Bereave my days of sweetness and to blight  
My hidden wells of slumber and of song,  
Had your atoning mercy let me keep  
For sole and sad possession to assuage  
The loss of my heart's radiant heritage,  
Power of such blessed tears as mortals weep.

But I, O Love, am like a withered leaf  
Burnt in devouring noontides of distress  
And tossed upon dim pools of weariness,  
Mute to the winds of gladness or of grief.

The changing glory of the earth and skies  
Kindles no answering tribute in my breast,  
My loving dead go streamwards to their rest  
Unhonoured by the homage of mine eyes.

Restore me not the rapture that is gone,  
The hope forbidden and the dream denied,  
The ruined purpose and the broken pride,  
Lost kinship with the starlight and the dawn.  
But you whose proud, predestined hands control  
My springs of sorrow, ecstasy and power,  
Grant in the brief compassion of an hour  
A gift of tears to save my stricken soul!

## 7. The Slayer

LOVE, if at dawn some passer-by should say,  
"Lo! doth thy garment drip with morning dew?  
Thy face perchance is drenched with cold sea-  
                  spray,  
Thy hair with fallen rain?"

Make answer: "*Nay,  
These be the death-drops from sad eyes I slew  
With the quick torch of pain.*"

And if at dusk a reveller should cry,  
"What rare vermilion vintage hast thou spilled,  
Or is thy robe splashed with the glowing dye  
Of some bruised crimson leaf?"

O Love reply:  
"*These be the life-drops of a heart I killed  
With the swift spear of grief.*"

## 8. The Secret

THEY come, sweet maids and men with shining tribute,  
Garlands and gifts, cymbals and songs of praise. . . .  
How can they know I have been dead, Beloved,  
These many mournful days?

Or that my delicate dreaming soul lies trampled  
Like crushed ripe fruit, chance-trodden of your feet,  
And how you flung the throbbing heart that loved you  
To serve wild dogs for meat?

They bring me saffron veils and silver sandals  
Rich crowns of honour to adorn my head—  
For none save you may know the tragic secret,  
O Love, that I am dead!

### III. The Sanctuary

#### I. The Fear of Love

O COULD my love devise  
A shield for you from envious lips and eyes  
That desecrate the sweetness of your days  
With tumults of their praise!

O could my love design  
A secret, sealed, invulnerable shrine  
To hide you, happy and inviolate,  
From covetous Time and Fate.

Love, I am drenched with fear  
Lest the uncounted avarice of the year  
Add to the triumph of all garnered grace  
The rapture of your face!

I tremble with despair  
Lest the far-journeying winds and sunbeams  
    bear  
Bright rumours of your luring brows and breath  
Unto the groves of Death.

What sanctuary can I pledge  
Whose very love of you is sacrilege?  
O I would save you from the ravening fire  
Of my own heart's desire!

## 2. The Illusion of Love

BELOVED, you may be as all men say

Only a transient spark

Of flickering flame set in a lamp of clay—

I care not . . . since you kindle all my dark

With the immortal lustres of the day.

And as all men deem, dearest, you may be

Only a common shell

Chance-winnowed by the sea-winds from the sea—

I care not . . . since you make most audible

The subtle murmurs of eternity.

And tho' you are, like men of mortal race,

Only a hapless thing

That Death may mar and destiny efface—

I care not . . . since unto my heart you bring

The very vision of God's dwelling-place.

### 3. The Worship of Love

CRUSH me, O Love, betwixt thy radiant fingers  
Like a frail lemon leaf or basil bloom,  
Till aught of me that lives for thee or lingers  
Be but the wraith of memory's perfume,  
And every sunset wind that wandereth  
Grow sweeter for my death!

Burn me, O Love! as in a glowing censer  
Dies the rich substance of a sandal grain,  
Let my soul die till nought but an intenser  
Fragrance of my deep worship doth remain—  
And every twilight star shall hold its breath  
And praise thee for my death!



#### 4. Love Triumphant

IF your fair mind were quenched with dark distress,  
Your dear hands stained with fierce blood-guiltiness,  
Or your sweet flesh fell rotting from the bone,  
Should not my deep unchanging love atone  
And shield you from the sore decree of Fate  
And the world's storm of horror and of hate?

What were to me your dire disease or crime,  
The scorn of men, the cold revenge of Time?  
Has life a suffering still I shall not dare,  
Love, for your sake to conquer or to bear,  
If I might yield you solace, succour, rest,  
And hush your awful anguish on my breast?

## 5. Love Omnipotent

O LOVE, is there aught I should fail to achieve for your  
sake?

Your need would invest my frail hands with invincible  
power

To tether the dawn and the darkness, to trample and  
break

The mountains like sea-shells, and crush the fair moon  
like a flower,

And drain the wide rivers as dew-drops and pluck  
from the skies

The sunbeams like arrows, the stars like proud im-  
potent eyes.

O Love, is there aught I should fear to fulfil at your  
word?

Your will my weak hands with such dauntless delight  
would endow

To capture and tame the wild tempest to sing like a  
bird,  
And bend the swift lightning to fashion a crown for  
your brow,  
Unfurl the sealed triumph of Time like a foot-cloth  
outspread,  
And rend the cold silence that conquers the lips of  
the dead.

## 6. Love Transcendent

WHEN Time shall cease and the world be ended  
And Fate unravel the judgment scroll,  
And God shall hear—by His hosts attended—  
The secret legend of every soul,

And each shall pass to its place appointed,  
And yours to His inmost paradise,  
To sit encrowned mid the peace-anointed,  
O my saint with the sinless eyes!

My proud soul shall be unforgiven  
For a passionate sin it will ne'er repent,  
And I shall be doomed, O Love, and driven  
And hurled from Heaven's high battlement.

Down the deep ages, alone, unfrightened,  
Flung like a pebble thro' burning space;  
But the speed of my fall shall be sweet and  
    brightened  
By the memoried joy of your radiant face!

Whirled like a leaf from æon to æon,  
Tossed like a feather from flame to flame,  
Love, I shall chant a glorious pæan  
To thrill the dead with your deathless name.

So you be safe in God's mystic garden,  
Inclosed like a star in His ageless skies,  
My outlawed spirit shall crave no pardon,  
O my saint with the sinless eyes!

## 7. Invocation

STOOP not from thy proud, lonely sphere,  
Star of my Trust!  
But shine implacable and pure,  
Serene and just;  
And bid my struggling spirit rise  
Clean from the dust!

Still let thy chastening wrath endure.  
O be thou still  
A radiant and relentless flame,  
A crucible  
To shatter and to shape anew  
My heart and will.

Still be thy scorn the burning height  
    My feet must tread,  
Still be thy grief the bitter crown  
    That bows my head,  
Thy stern, arrainging silences  
    My daily bread!

So shall my yearning love at last  
    Grow sanctified,  
Thro' sorrow find deliverance  
    From mortal pride,  
So shall my soul, redeemed, re-born,  
    Attain thy side.

## 8. Devotion

TAKE my flesh to feed your dogs if you choose,  
Water your garden-trees with my blood if you will,  
Turn my heart into ashes, my dreams into dust—  
Am I not yours, O Love, to cherish or kill?

Strangle my soul and fling it into the fire!  
Why should my true love falter or fear or rebel?  
Love, I am yours to lie in your breast like a flower,  
Or burn like a weed for your sake in the flame of hell.









