

**YEATS
WILLIAM
BUTLER**

THE GREEN HELMET AND
OTHER POEMS

William Butler Yeats

The Green Helmet and Other Poems

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HIS DREAM

Crying amid the glittering sea,
Naming it with ecstatic breath,
Because it had such dignity
By the sweet name of Death.

Though I'd my finger on my lip,
What could I but take up the song?
And fish and crowd and gaudy ship
Cried out the whole night long,

And fishes bubbling to the brim
Cried out upon that thing beneath,
It had such dignity of limb,
By the sweet name of Death.

And though I would have hushed the crowd
There was no mother's son but said,
"What is the figure in a shroud
Upon a gaudy bed?"

I swayed upon the gaudy stern
The butt end of a steering oar,
And everywhere that I could turn
Men ran upon the shore.

A WOMAN HOMER SUNG

For she had fiery blood
When I was young,
And trod so sweetly proud
As 'twere upon a cloud,
A woman Homer sung,
That life and letters seem
But an heroic dream.

Whereon I wrote and wrought,
And now, being gray,
I dream that I have brought
To such a pitch my thought
That coming time can say,
“He shadowed in a glass
What thing her body was.”

If any man drew near
When I was young,
I thought, “He holds her dear,”
And shook with hate and fear.
But oh, 'twas bitter wrong
If he could pass her by
With an indifferent eye.

THAT THE NIGHT COME

She lived in storm and strife.
Her soul had such desire
For what proud death may bring
That it could not endure
The common good of life,
But lived as 'twere a king
That packed his marriage day
With banneret and pennon,
Trumpet and kettledrum,
And the outrageous cannon,
To bundle Time away
That the night come.

THE CONSOLATION

That had she done so who can say
What would have shaken from the sieve?
I might have thrown poor words away
And been content to live.

That every year I have cried, “At length
My darling understands it all,
Because I have come into my strength,
And words obey my call.”

And I grew weary of the sun
Until my thoughts cleared up again,
Remembering that the best I have done
Was done to make it plain;

I had this thought awhile ago,
“My darling cannot understand
What I have done, or what would do
In this blind bitter land.”

FRIENDS

Now must I these three praise —
Three women that have wrought
What joy is in my days;
One that no passing thought,
Nor those unpassing cares,
No, not in these fifteen
Many times troubled years,
Could ever come between
Heart and delighted heart;
And one because her hand
Had strength that could unbind
What none can understand,
What none can have and thrive,
Youth's dreamy load, till she
So changed me that I live
Labouring in ecstasy.
And what of her that took
All till my youth was gone
With scarce a pitying look?
How should I praise that one?
When day begins to break
I count my good and bad,
Being wakeful for her sake,
Remembering what she had,
What eagle look still shows,
While up from my heart's root
So great a sweetness flows
I shake from head to foot.

NO SECOND TROY

Why should I blame her that she filled my days
With misery, or that she would of late
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
Or hurled the little streets upon the great,
Had they but courage equal to desire?
What could have made her peaceful with a mind
That nobleness made simple as a fire,
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
That is not natural in an age like this,
Being high and solitary and most stern?
Why, what could she have done being what she is?
Was there another Troy for her to burn?

RECONCILIATION

Some may have blamed you that you took away
The verses that could move them on the day
When, the ears being deafened, the sight of the eyes blind
With lightning you went from me, and I could find
Nothing to make a song about but kings,
Helmets, and swords, and half-forgotten things
That were like memories of you – but now
We'll out, for the world lives as long ago;
And while we're in our laughing, weeping fit,
Hurl helmets, crowns, and swords into the pit.
But, dear, cling close to me; since you were gone,
My barren thoughts have chilled me to the bone.

KING AND NO KING

“Would it were anything but merely voice!”
The No King cried who after that was King,
Because he had not heard of anything
That balanced with a word is more than noise;
Yet Old Romance being kind, let him prevail
Somewhere or somehow that I have forgot,
Though he’d but cannon – Whereas we that had thought
To have lit upon as clean and sweet a tale
Have been defeated by that pledge you gave
In momentary anger long ago;
And I that have not your faith, how shall I know
That in the blinding light beyond the grave
We’ll find so good a thing as that we have lost?
The hourly kindness, the day’s common speech,
The habitual content of each with each
When neither soul nor body has been crossed.

THE COLD HEAVEN

Suddenly I saw the cold and rook delighting Heaven
That seemed as though ice burned and was but the more ice,
And thereupon imagination and heart were driven
So wild, that every casual thought of that and this
Vanished, and left but memories, that should be out of season
With the hot blood of youth, of love crossed long ago;
And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,
Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,
Riddled with light. Ah! when the ghost begins to quicken,
Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent
Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken
By the injustice of the skies for punishment?

PEACE

Ah, that Time could touch a form
That could show what Homer's age
Bred to be a hero's wage.
"Were not all her life but storm,
Would not painters paint a form
Of such noble lines" I said.
"Such a delicate high head,
So much sternness and such charm,
Till they had changed us to like strength?"
Ah, but peace that comes at length,
Came when Time had touched her form.

AGAINST UNWORTHY PRAISE

O heart, be at peace, because
Nor knave nor dolt can break
What's not for their applause,
Being for a woman's sake.
Enough if the work has seemed,
So did she your strength renew,
A dream that a lion had dreamed
Till the wilderness cried aloud,
A secret between you two,
Between the proud and the proud.

What, still you would have their praise!
But here's a haughtier text,
The labyrinth of her days
That her own strangeness perplexed;
And how what her dreaming gave
Earned slander, ingratitude,
From self-same dolt and knave;
Aye, and worse wrong than these.
Yet she, singing upon her road,
Half lion, half child, is at peace.

THE FASCINATION OF WHAT'S DIFFICULT

The fascination of what's difficult
Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent
Spontaneous joy and natural content
Out of my heart. There's something ails our colt
That must, as if it had not holy blood,
Nor on an Olympus leaped from cloud to cloud,
Shiver under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt
As though it dragged road metal. My curse on plays
That have to be set up in fifty ways,
On the day's war with every knave and dolt,
Theatre business, management of men.
I swear before the dawn comes round again
I'll find the stable and pull out the bolt.

A DRINKING SONG

Wine comes in at the mouth
And love comes in at the eye;
That's all we shall know for truth
Before we grow old and die.
I lift the glass to my mouth,
I look at you, and I sigh.

THE COMING OF WISDOM WITH TIME

Though leaves are many, the root is one;
Through all the lying days of my youth
I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
Now I may wither into the truth.

**ON HEARING THAT THE STUDENTS OF
OUR NEW UNIVERSITY HAVE JOINED THE
ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS AND THE
AGITATION AGAINST IMMORAL LITERATURE**

Where, where but here have Pride and Truth,
That long to give themselves for wage,
To shake their wicked sides at youth
Restraining reckless middle-age.

TO A POET, WHO WOULD HAVE ME PRAISE CERTAIN BAD POETS, IMITATORS OF HIS AND MINE

You say, as I have often given tongue
In praise of what another's said or sung,
'Twere politic to do the like by these;
But where's the wild dog that has praised his fleas?

THE ATTACK ON THE “PLAY BOY”

Once, when midnight smote the air,
Eunuchs ran through Hell and met
Round about Hell's gate, to stare
At great Juan riding by,
And like these to rail and sweat,
Maddened by that sinewy thigh.

A LYRIC FROM AN UNPUBLISHED PLAY

“Put off that mask of burning gold
With emerald eyes.”

“O no, my dear, you make so bold
To find if hearts be wild and wise,
And yet not cold.”

“I would but find what’s there to find,
Love or deceit.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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