

THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

(From the PUBLISHER'S NOTE: "The present Household Edition of Mr. Longfellow's Poetical Writings . . . contains all his original verse that he wished to preserve, and all his translations except the Divina Commedia. The poems are printed as nearly as possible in chronological order . . . Boston, Autumn, 1902." Houghton Mifflin Company.)

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VOICES OF THE NIGHT

<Greek poem here—Euripides.>

PRELUDE.

Pleasant it was, when woods were green, And winds were soft and
low, To lie amid some sylvan scene. Where, the long drooping
boughs between, Shadows dark and sunlight sheen Alternate
come and go;

Or where the denser grove receives No sunlight from above, But
the dark foliage interweaves In one unbroken roof of
leaves, Underneath whose sloping eaves The shadows hardly
move.

Beneath some patriarchal tree I lay upon the ground; His hoary
arms uplifted he, And all the broad leaves over me Clapped their
little hands in glee, With one continuous sound;—

A slumberous sound, a sound that brings The feelings of a
dream, As of innumerable wings, As, when a bell no longer
swings, Faint the hollow murmur rings O'er meadow, lake, and
stream.

And dreams of that which cannot die, Bright visions, came to
me, As lapped in thought I used to lie, And gaze into the summer
sky, Where the sailing clouds went by, Like ships upon the sea;

Dreams that the soul of youth engage Ere Fancy has been
quelled; Old legends of the monkish page, Traditions of the saint
and sage, Tales that have the rime of age, And chronicles of Eld.

And, loving still these quaint old themes, Even in the city's throng I
feel the freshness of the streams, That, crossed by shades and

sunny gleams, Water the green land of dreams, The holy land of song.

Therefore, at Pentecost, which brings The Spring, clothed like a bride,
When nestling buds unfold their wings, And bishop's-caps have golden rings,
Musing upon many things, I sought the woodlands wide.

The green trees whispered low and mild; It was a sound of joy!
They were my playmates when a child, And rocked me in their arms so wild!
Still they looked at me and smiled, As if I were a boy;

And ever whispered, mild and low, "Come, be a child once more!"
And waved their long arms to and fro, And beckoned solemnly and slow;
O, I could not choose but go Into the woodlands hoar,—

Into the blithe and breathing air, Into the solemn wood, Solemn and silent everywhere
Nature with folded hands seemed there Kneeling at her evening prayer!
Like one in prayer I stood.

Before me rose an avenue Of tall and sombrous pines; Abroad their fan-like branches grew,
And, where the sunshine darted through, Spread a vapor soft and blue,
In long and sloping lines.

And, falling on my weary brain, Like a fast-falling shower, The dreams of youth came back again,
Low lispings of the summer rain, Dropping on the ripened grain,
As once upon the flower.

Visions of childhood! Stay, O stay! Ye were so sweet and wild!
And distant voices seemed to say, "It cannot be! They pass away!
Other themes demand thy lay; Thou art no more a child!

"The land of Song within thee lies, Watered by living springs; The lids of Fancy's sleepless eyes
Are gates unto that Paradise, Holy thoughts, like stars, arise,
Its clouds are angels' wings.

"Learn, that henceforth thy song shall be, Not mountains capped with snow,
Nor forests sounding like the sea, Nor rivers flowing ceaselessly,
Where the woodlands bend to see The bending

heavens below.

"There is a forest where the din Of iron branches sounds! A
mighty river roars between, And whosoever looks therein Sees the
heavens all black with sin, Sees not its depths, nor bounds.

"Athwart the swinging branches cast, Soft rays of sunshine
pour; Then comes the fearful wintry blast Our hopes, like withered
leaves, fail fast; Pallid lips say, 'It is past! We can return no more!,

"Look, then, into thine heart, and write! Yes, into Life's deep
stream! All forms of sorrow and delight, All solemn Voices of the
Night, That can soothe thee, or affright,— Be these henceforth thy
theme."

HYMN TO THE NIGHT.

[Greek quotation]

I heard the trailing garments of the Night Sweep through her
marble halls! I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light From the
celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might, Stoop o'er me from
above; The calm, majestic presence of the Night, As of the one I
love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight, The manifold, soft
chimes, That fill the haunted chambers of the Night Like some
old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air My spirit drank
repose; The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,— From
those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear What man has borne
before! Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care, And they
complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer! Descend with
broad-winged flight, The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most

fair, The best-beloved Night!

A PSALM OF LIFE. WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO THE PSALMIST.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers, Life is but an empty dream! For
the soul is dead that slumbers, And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal; Dust thou
art, to dust returnest, Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow, Is our destined end or way; But to
act, that each to-morrow Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting, And our hearts, though stout and
brave, Still, like muffled drums, are beating Funeral marches to
the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle, In the bivouac of Life, Be not
like dumb, driven cattle! Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant! Let the dead Past bury its
dead! Act,—act in the living Present! Heart within, and God
o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us We can make our lives
sublime, And, departing, leave behind us Footprints on the sands
of time;—

Footprints, that perhaps another, Sailing o'er life's solemn main, A
forlorn and shipwrecked brother, Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing, With a heart for any fate; Still
achieving, still pursuing, Learn to labor and to wait.

THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS.

There is a Reaper, whose name is Death, And, with his sickle
keen, He reaps the bearded grain at a breath, And the flowers that
grow between.

"Shall I have naught that is fair?" saith he; "Have naught but the bearded grain? Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me, I will give them all back again."

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes, He kissed their drooping leaves; It was for the Lord of Paradise He bound them in his sheaves.

"My Lord has need of these flowerets gay," The Reaper said, and smiled; "Dear tokens of the earth are they, Where he was once a child.

"They shall all bloom in fields of light, Transplanted by my care, And saints, upon their garments white, These sacred blossoms wear."

And the mother gave, in tears and pain, The flowers she most did love; She knew she should find them all again In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath, The Reaper came that day; 'T was an angel visited the green earth, And took the flowers away.

THE LIGHT OF STARS.

The night is come, but not too soon; And sinking silently, All silently, the little moon Drops down behind the sky.

There is no light in earth or heaven But the cold light of stars; And the first watch of night is given To the red planet Mars.

Is it the tender star of love? The star of love and dreams? O no! from that blue tent above, A hero's armor gleams.

And earnest thoughts within me rise, When I behold afar, Suspended in the evening skies, The shield of that red star.

O star of strength! I see thee stand And smile upon my pain; Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand, And I am strong again.

Within my breast there is no light But the cold light of stars; I give

the first watch of the night To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will, He rises in my breast, Serene,
and resolute, and still, And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whosoe'er thou art, That readest this brief
psalm, As one by one thy hopes depart, Be resolute and calm.

O fear not in a world like this, And thou shalt know ere long, Know
how sublime a thing it is To suffer and be strong.

FOOTSTEPS OF ANGELS.

When the hours of Day are numbered, And the voices of the
Night Wake the better soul, that slumbered, To a holy, calm
delight;

Ere the evening lamps are lighted, And, like phantoms grim and
tall, Shadows from the fitful firelight Dance upon the parlor wall;

Then the forms of the departed Enter at the open door; The
beloved, the true-hearted, Come to visit me once more;

He, the young and strong, who cherished Noble longings for the
strife, By the roadside fell and perished, Weary with the march of
life!

They, the holy ones and weakly, Who the cross of suffering
bore, Folded their pale hands so meekly, Spake with us on earth
no more!

And with them the Being Beauteous, Who unto my youth was
given, More than all things else to love me, And is now a saint in
heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep Comes that messenger
divine, Takes the vacant chair beside me, Lays her gentle hand in
mine.

And she sits and gazes at me With those deep and tender
eyes, Like the stars, so still and saint-like, Looking downward from

the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended, Is the spirit's voiceless
prayer, Soft rebukes, in blessings ended, Breathing from her lips
of air.

Oh, though oft depressed and lonely, All my fears are laid aside, If
I but remember only Such as these have lived and died!

FLOWERS.

Spake full well, in language quaint and olden, One who dwelleth by
the castled Rhine, When he called the flowers, so blue and
golden, Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history, As astrologers and
seers of eld; Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery, Like the
burning stars, which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous, God hath written in
those stars above; But not less in the bright flowerets under
us Stands the revelation of his love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation, Written all over this great
world of ours; Making evident our own creation, In these stars of
earth, these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing, Sees, alike in stars and
flowers, a part Of the self-same, universal being, Which is
throbbing in his brain and heart.

Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining, Blossoms flaunting in
the eye of day, Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining, Buds
that open only to decay;

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues, Flaunting gayly in
the golden light; Large desires, with most uncertain
issues, Tender wishes, blossoming at night!

These in flowers and men are more than seeming; Workings are
they of the self-same powers, Which the Poet, in no idle

dreaming, Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing, Some like stars, to tell us
Spring is born; Others, their blue eyes with tears o'er-
flowing, Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn;

Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing, And in Summer's green-
emblazoned field, But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing, In
the centre of his brazen shield;

Not alone in meadows and green alleys, On the mountain-top, and
by the brink Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys, Where the
slaves of nature stoop to drink;

Not alone in her vast dome of glory, Not on graves of bird and
beast alone, But in old cathedrals, high and hoary, On the tombs
of heroes, carved in stone;

In the cottage of the rudest peasant, In ancestral homes, whose
crumbling towers, Speaking of the Past unto the Present, Tell us
of the ancient Games of Flowers;

In all places, then, and in all seasons, Flowers expand their light
and soul-like wings, Teaching us, by most persuasive
reasons, How akin they are to human things.

And with childlike, credulous affection We behold their tender buds
expand; Emblems of our own great resurrection, Emblems of the
bright and better land.

THE BELEAGUERED CITY.

I have read, in some old, marvellous tale, Some legend strange
and vague, That a midnight host of spectres pale Beleaguered the
walls of Prague.

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream, With the wan moon
overhead, There stood, as in an awful dream, The army of the
dead.

White as a sea-fog, landward bound, The spectral camp was

seen, And, with a sorrowful, deep sound, The river flowed
between.

No other voice nor sound was there, No drum, nor sentry's
pace; The mist-like banners clasped the air, As clouds with clouds
embrace.

But when the old cathedral bell Proclaimed the morning
prayer, The white pavilions rose and fell On the alarmed air.

Down the broad valley fast and far The troubled army fled; Up
rose the glorious morning star, The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvellous heart of man, That strange and
mystic scroll, That an army of phantoms vast and wan Beleaguer
the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream, In Fancy's misty
light, Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam Portentous through the
night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground The spectral camp is seen, And,
with a sorrowful, deep sound, Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice nor sound is there, In the army of the grave; No
other challenge breaks the air, But the rushing of Life's wave.

And when the solemn and deep churchbell Entreats the soul to
pray, The midnight phantoms feel the spell, The shadows sweep
away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar The spectral camp is
fled; Faith shineth as a morning star, Our ghastly fears are dead.

MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING YEAR

Yes, the Year is growing old, And his eye is pale and
bleared! Death, with frosty hand and cold, Plucks the old man by
the beard, Sorely, sorely!

The leaves are falling, falling, Solemnly and slow; Caw! caw! the

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