

# THE RUBAIYAT OF A SOUTHERN NIGHTINGALE

Wake, dreamer, for the world to rest has gone,  
And thou, thou slothful one, hast slumbered on.  
The moon, now hanging o'er yon purple hill,  
Tells many hours have fitted since night's dawn.

Drained from the chalice of the day that's fled,  
The ruby wine has stained the night sky red,  
And still man's work goes on, and, breathless, they  
Toil laboriously and slow, the living dead.

The glowworm's fire display tonight is fine  
Perchance they's fill this aching void of mine;  
What matter if I quenched a hundred lamps,  
Tomorrow night a thousand more would shine.

Is that the smell of rose leaves in the air?  
Or perfume from a maiden's dusky hair?  
Who knows? Perchance their spirits, blent in one,  
Now once more passing in yon garden fair.  
Is that the smell of rose leaves in the air?  
I'll sing of love tonight, for love is best,  
Though often it is followed by unrest;  
But who would question if 'twere pain or bliss  
When Love's red flower glowed warmly on his  
breast?

How calm the streamlet flows at midnight's hour,  
Whispering placidly of dormant power;

Strange, passing strange, it seemeth thus content  
To be a stream, and not a bird or flower.

And yonder where those seeming shadows play,  
A woman sometimes comes at close of day  
And sobs above a mound with vines o'ergrown.  
Strange, strange to week o'er just a bit of clay.

Still drift the petals from the fading rose,  
And still their sweetness in the south wind blows,  
But ah, the happiness of yesterday's  
Fast fading flower has gone where no one knows.

I sometimes think the moon mists, floating gray,  
Are garments by the angels thrown away,  
And voices that whisper in our dreams  
Are spirits from some other world astray.

The poppies not within the garden close,  
The dove grieves softly where the willow blows,  
The low winds tell their beads unto the night,  
And star smiles back to star where the water flows.

Now near they seem! In fancy I could reach  
The one above yon solitary beech.  
And yet, should I succeed, of what avail?  
Since myriad stars have failed their truth to teach.

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