

50 Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie,  
 And from his native land resolved to go,  
 And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;  
 With pleasure drugg'd, he almost long'd for woe,  
 And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

From *Canto the Third*

["ONCE MORE UPON THE WATERS"]

1

Is thy face like thy mothers, my fair child!  
 ADA!<sup>8</sup> sole daughter of my house and heart?  
 When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,  
 And when we parted,—not as now we part,  
 But with a hope.—

Awaking with a start,

6 The waters heave around me; and on high  
 The winds lift up their voices: I depart,  
 Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,  
 When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

2

10 Once more upon the waters! yet once more!  
 And the waves bound beneath me as a steed  
 That knows his rider. Welcome, to their roar!  
 Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!  
 15 Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,  
 And the rent canvass fluttering strew the gale,  
 Still must I on; for I am as a weed,  
 Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail  
 Where'er the surge may sweep, or tempest's breath prevail.

3

20 In my youth's summer<sup>9</sup> I did sing of One,  
 The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;  
 Again I seize the theme, then but begun,  
 And bear it with me, as the rushing wind  
 Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find  
 The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,  
 25 Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,  
 O'er which all heavily the journeying years  
 Plod the last sands of life,—where not a flower appears.

8. Byron's daughter Augusta Ada, born in December 1815, a month before her parents separated. Byron's "hope" (line 5) had been for a rec-

conciliation, but he was never to see Ada again.  
 9. Byron wrote canto I at age twenty-one; he is now twenty-eight.

4

Since my young days of passion—joy, or pain,  
 Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,  
 30 And both may jar:<sup>1</sup> it may be, that in vain  
 I would essay as I have sung to sing,  
 Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling;  
 So that it wean me from the weary dream  
 Of selfish grief or gladness—so it fling  
 35 Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem  
 To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

5

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,  
 In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,  
 So that no wonder waits him; nor below  
 40 Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,  
 Cut to his heart again with the keen knife  
 Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell  
 Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife  
 With airy images, and shapes which dwell  
 45 Still unimpair'd, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

6

'Tis to create, and in creating live  
 A being more intense, that we endow  
 With form our fancy, gaining as we give  
 The life we image, even as I do now.  
 50 What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,  
 Soul of my thought!<sup>2</sup> with whom I traverse earth,  
 Invisible but gazing, as I glow  
 Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,  
 And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.

7

55 Yet must I think less wildly:—I have thought  
 Too long and darkly, till my brain became,  
 In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,  
 A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:  
 And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,  
 60 My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late!  
 Yet am I changed; though still enough the same  
 In strength to bear what time can not abate,  
 And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

1. Sound discordant.

2. I.e., Childe Harold, his literary creation.

8

Something too much of this:—but now 'tis past,  
 And the spell closes with its silent seal.<sup>3</sup>  
 Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last;  
 He of the breast which fain no more would feel,  
 Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal;  
 Yet Time, who changes all, had alter'd him  
 In soul and aspect as in age: years steal  
 Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;  
 And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

9

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he found  
 The dregs were wormwood; but he fill'd again,  
 And from a purer fount, on holier ground,  
 And deem'd its spring perpetual; but in vain!  
 Still round him clung invisibly a chain  
 Which gall'd for ever, fettering though unseen,  
 And heavy though it clank'd not; worn with pain,  
 Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,  
 Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

10

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd  
 Again in fancied safety with his kind,  
 And deem'd his spirit now so firmly fix'd  
 And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,  
 That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk'd behind;  
 And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand  
 Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find  
 Fit speculation; such as in strange land  
 He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

11

But who can view the ripen'd rose, nor seek  
 To wear it? who can curiously behold  
 The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,  
 Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?  
 Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold  
 The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?  
 Harold, once more within the vortex, roll'd  
 On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,  
 Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond<sup>o</sup> prime. *foolish*

12

But soon he knew himself the most unfit  
 Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held  
 Little in common; untaught to submit  
 His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd  
 In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd,  
 He would not yield dominion of his mind  
 To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;  
 Proud though in desolation; which could find  
 A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

13

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;  
 Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;  
 Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,  
 He had the passion and the power to roam;  
 The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,  
 Were unto him companionship; they spake  
 A mutual language, clearer than the tome<sup>o</sup> *book*  
 Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake,  
 For Nature's pages glass'd<sup>o</sup> by sunbeams on the lake. *made glassy*

14

Like the Chaldean,<sup>4</sup> he could watch the stars,  
 Till he had peopled them with beings bright  
 As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,  
 And human frailties, were forgotten quite:  
 Could he have kept his spirit to that flight  
 He had been happy; but this clay will sink  
 Its spark immortal, envying it the light  
 To which it mounts, as if to break the link  
 That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

15

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing  
 Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,  
 Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,  
 To whom the boundless air alone were home:  
 Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,  
 As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat  
 His breast and beak against his wiry dome  
 Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat  
 Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

3. I.e., he sets the seal of silence on his personal tale ("spell").

4. A people of ancient Babylonia, expert in astronomy.

16

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,  
 With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom;  
 The very knowledge that he lived in vain,  
 That all was over on this side the tomb,  
 140 Had made Despair a smilingness assume,  
 Which, though 'twere wild,—as on the plunder'd wreck  
 When mariners would madly meet their doom  
 With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck,—  
 Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forebore to check.

[WATERLOO]

17

145 Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!  
 An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!  
 Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust?  
 Nor column trophied for triumphal show?<sup>5</sup>  
 None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,  
 150 As the ground was before, thus let it be;—  
 How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!  
 And is this all the world has gain'd by thee,  
 Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory?

18

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,  
 155 The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo;<sup>6</sup>  
 How in an hour the power which gave annals  
 Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!  
 In "pride of place" here last the eagle flew,<sup>7</sup>  
 Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,  
 160 Pierced by the shaft of banded nations<sup>8</sup> through;  
 Ambitions life and labours all were vain;  
 He wears the shatter'd links of the world's broken chain.<sup>9</sup>

19

Fit retribution! Gaul<sup>1</sup> may champ the bit  
 And foam in fetters;—but is Earth more free?  
 165 Did nations combat to make *One* submit;  
 Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?

5. Referring to the triumphal arches erected in ancient Rome to honor conquering generals, a custom Napoleon had revived.

6. Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, near Brussels, had occurred only the year before, on June 18, 1815. The battlefield, where almost fifty thousand English, Prussian, and French soldiers were killed in a single day, quickly became a gruesome tourist attraction. See "Romantic Literature and Wartime," p. 741.

7. "Pride of place," is a term of falconry, and

means the highest pitch of flight [Byron's note, which continues by referring to the use of the term in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* 2.4]. The eagle was the symbol of Napoleon.

8. The Grand Alliance formed in opposition to Napoleon.

9. Napoleon was then a prisoner at St. Helena.

1. France. Byron, like other liberals, saw the defeat of the Napoleonic tyranny as a victory for tyrannical kings and the forces of reaction throughout Europe.

What! shall reviving Thraldom again be  
 The patch'd-up idol of enlighten'd days?  
 Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we  
 170 Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze  
 And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove*<sup>2</sup> before ye praise!

20

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no more!  
 In vain fair cheeks were furrow'd with hot tears;  
 For Europe's flowers long rooted up before  
 175 The trampler of her vineyards; in vain years  
 Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,  
 Have all been borne, and broken by the accord  
 Of roused-up millions: all that most endears  
 Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword  
 180 Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.<sup>3</sup>

[NAPOLEON]

36

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,<sup>4</sup>  
 Whose spirit antithetically mixt  
 One moment of the mightiest, and again  
 On little objects with like firmness fixt,  
 320 Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,  
 Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;  
 For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st  
 Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,<sup>5</sup>  
 And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

37

325 Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!  
 She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name  
 Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now  
 That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,  
 Who woo'd thee once, thy vassal, and became  
 330 The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert  
 A god unto thyself; nor less the same  
 To the astounded kingdoms all inert,  
 Who deem'd thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert,

38

335 Oh, more or less than man—in high or low,  
 Battling with nations, flying from the field;  
 Now making monarchs' necks thy footstool, now

killed Hipparchus, tyrant of Athens.

4. Napoleon, here portrayed with many characteristics of the Byronic hero.

2. Await the test (proof) of experience.

3. In 514 B.C.E. Harmodius and Aristogeiton, hiding their daggers in myrtle (symbol of love),

More than thy meanest° soldier taught to yield;  
An empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,  
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,  
340 However deeply in men's spirits skill'd,  
Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,  
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star.

39

Yet well thy soul hath brook'd the turning tide  
With that untaught innate philosophy,  
345 Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,  
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.  
When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,  
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled  
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;—  
350 When Fortune fled her spoil'd and favourite child,  
He stood unbow'd beneath the ills upon him piled.

40

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them  
Ambition steel'd thee on too far to show  
That just habitual scorn which could condemn  
355 Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to feel, not so  
To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,  
And spurn the instruments thou wert to use  
Till they were turn'd unto thine overthrow;  
'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose;  
360 So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose.<sup>5</sup>

41

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,  
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,  
Such scorn of man had help'd to brave the shock;  
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy  
throne,  
365 Their admiration thy best weapon shone;  
The part of Philip's son<sup>6</sup> was thine, not then  
(Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)  
Like stern Diogenes<sup>7</sup> to mock at men;  
For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.

5. Referring to the tournament...  
6. Napoleon's Great, son of Philip of Macedon.  
7. The Greek philosopher of Cynicism, contemporary of Alexander. It is related that Alexander was so struck by his independence of mind that he said, "If I were not Alexander, I should wish to be Diogenes."

lowest

42

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,  
370 And there hath been thy bane; there is a fire  
And motion of the soul which will not dwell  
In its own narrow being, but aspire  
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;  
375 And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,  
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire  
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,  
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

43

This makes the madmen who have made men mad  
380 By their contagion; Conquerors and Kings,  
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add  
Sophists,<sup>8</sup> Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things  
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,  
And are themselves the fools to those they fool;  
385 Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings  
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school  
Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule:

44

Their breath is agitation, and their life  
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,  
390 And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,  
That should their days, surviving perils past,  
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast  
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;  
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste  
395 With its own flickering, or a sword laid by,  
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

45

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find  
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;  
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,  
400 Must look down on the hate of those below.  
Though high above the sun of glory glow,  
And far beneath the earth and ocean spread,  
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow  
Contending tempests on his naked head,  
405 And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.<sup>9</sup>

8. Learned men. But the term often carries a derogatory sense—thinkers with a penchant for tricky reasoning.  
9. In the stanzas here omitted, Harold is sent sailing up the Rhine, meditating on the "thousand battles" that "have assailed thy banks."

52

460 Thus Harold inly said, and pass'd along,  
Yet not insensibly to all which here  
Awoke the jocund birds to early song  
In glens which might have made even exile dear:  
Though on his brow were graven lines austere,  
465 And tranquil sternness which had ta'en the place  
Of feelings fierier far but less severe,  
Joy was not always absent from his face,  
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with transient trace.

53

470 Nor was all love shut from him, though his days  
Of passion had consumed themselves to dust.  
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze  
On such as smile upon us; the heart must  
Leap kindly back to kindness, though disgust  
475 Hath wean'd it from all worldlings: thus he felt,  
For there was soft remembrance, and sweet trust  
In one fond breast,<sup>1</sup> to which his own would melt,  
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwelt.

54

480 And he had learn'd to love,—I know not why,  
For this in such as him seems strange of mood,—  
The helpless looks of blooming infancy,  
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,  
To change like this, a mind so far imbued  
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;  
But thus it was; and though in solitude  
485 Small power the nipp'd affections have to grow,  
In him this glow'd when all beside had ceased to glow.

55

490 And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,  
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties  
Than the church links withal; and, though unwed,  
That love was pure, and, far above disguise,  
Had stood the test of mortal enmities  
Still undivided, and cemented more  
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;  
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore  
495 Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour!

\* \* \*

1. Commentators agree that the reference is to Byron's half-sister, Augusta Leigh.

[SWITZERLAND]<sup>2</sup>

68

Lake Lemano<sup>o</sup> woos me with its crystal face,  
The mirror where the stars and mountains view  
The stillness of their aspect in each trace  
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue:  
There is too much of man here, to look through  
With a fit mind the might which I behold;  
650 But soon in me shall Loneliness renew  
Thoughts hid, but not less cherish'd than of old,  
Ere mingling with the herd had penn'd me in their fold.

Geneva

69

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:  
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,  
655 Nor is it discontent to keep the mind  
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil  
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil  
Of our infection, till too late and long  
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,<sup>o</sup>  
660 In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong  
Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

tumult

70

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years  
In fatal penitence, and in the blight  
Of our own soul turn all our blood to tears,  
665 And colour things to come with hues of Night;  
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight  
To those that walk in darkness: on the sea,  
The boldest steer but where their ports invite,  
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity  
670 Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er shall be.

71

Is it not better, then, to be alone,  
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?  
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,<sup>3</sup>  
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,  
675 Which feeds it as a mother who doth make  
A fair but froward infant her own care,

2. Byron with his traveling companion and physician, John Polidori, spent the gloomy summer of 1816 near Geneva, in a villa rented for its proximity to the household that Percy Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (who would marry Shelley at the end of the year), and her half-sister Claire Clairmont had set up there. The famous ghost-story-telling contest in which these five participated, and which saw the genesis of both

*Frankenstein* and Polidori's "The Vampyre," took place that June. The Shelley household's involvement in *Childe Harold* is extensive. The fair copy of this canto was in fact written out by Claire, and Percy would eventually deliver it to Byron's publisher in London.

3. River rising in Switzerland and flowing through France into the Mediterranean.

Kissing its cries away as these awake;—  
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,  
Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear?

72

I live not in myself, but I become  
680 Portion of that around me; and to me  
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum  
Of human cities torture: I can see  
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be  
685 A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,  
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,  
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain.  
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.<sup>4</sup>

73

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:  
690 I look upon the peopled desert past,  
As on a place of agony and strife,  
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,  
To act and suffer, but remount at last  
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,  
695 Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast  
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,  
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

74

And when, at length, the mind shall be all free  
700 From what it hates in this degraded form,  
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be  
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—  
When elements to elements conform,  
And dust is as it should be, shall I not  
705 Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?  
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?  
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

75

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part  
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?  
Is not the love of these deep in my heart  
710 With a pure passion? should I not contemn  
All objects, if compared with these? and stem  
A tide of suffering, rather than forego

4. During the tour around Lake Geneva that they took in late June 1816, Percy Shelley introduced Byron to the poetry of Wordsworth and

Wordsworth's concepts of nature. Those ideas are reflected in canto 3, but the voice is Byron's own.

Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm  
Of those whose eyes are only turn'd below,  
715 Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not  
glow?

\* \* \*

85

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,  
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing  
Which warns me, with its stillness, for forsake  
800 Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.  
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing  
To waft me from distraction; once I loved  
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring  
Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reprov'd,  
805 That I with stern delights should e'er have been so mov'd.

86

It is the hush of night, and all between  
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,  
Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,  
Save darken'd Jura,<sup>5</sup> whose capt heights appear  
810 Precipitously steep; and drawing near,  
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,  
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear  
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,  
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more;

87

He is an evening reveller, who makes  
815 His life an infancy, and sings his fill;  
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes<sup>o</sup>  
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.  
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,  
820 But that is fancy, for the starlight dew  
All silently their tears of love instil,  
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse  
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

thickets

88

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!  
825 If in your bright leaves we would read the fate  
Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,  
That in our aspirations to be great,  
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,  
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are

5. The mountain range between Switzerland and France, visible from Lake Geneva.

830 A beauty and a mystery, and create  
 In us such love and reverence from afar,  
 That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a  
 star,

89

835 All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,  
 But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;  
 And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:—  
 All heaven and earth are still: From the high host  
 Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,  
 All is concentr'd in a life intense,  
 Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,  
 840 But hath a part of being, and a sense  
 Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

90

845 Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt  
 In solitude, where we are *least* alone;  
 A truth, which through our being then doth melt  
 And purifies from self: it is a tone,  
 The soul and source of music, which makes known  
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,  
 Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,<sup>6</sup>  
 Binding all things with beauty;—'twould disarm  
 850 The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

91

855 Not vainly did the early Persian make  
 His altar the high places and the peak  
 Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take<sup>7</sup>  
 A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek  
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,  
 Uprear'd of human hands. Come, and compare  
 Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,  
 With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,  
 Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

92

860 Thy sky is changed!—and such a change! Oh night,  
 And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,  
 Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light  
 Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,  
 From peak to peak, the rattling crags among  
 865 Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,

But every mountain now hath found a tongue,  
 And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,  
 Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

93

870 And this is in the night:—Most glorious night!  
 Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be  
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—  
 A portion of the tempest and of thee!  
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,  
 And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!  
 875 And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee  
 Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,  
 As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

94

880 Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between  
 Heights which appear as lovers who have parted  
 In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,  
 That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted:  
 Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,  
 Love was the very root of the fond rage  
 Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed—  
 885 Itself expired, but leaving them an age  
 Of years all winters,—war within themselves to wage.

95

890 Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,  
 The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:  
 For here, not one, but many, make their play,  
 And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,  
 Flashing and cast around: of all the band,  
 The brightest through these parted hills hath fork'd  
 His lightnings,—as if he did understand,  
 That in such gaps as desolation work'd,  
 895 There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurk'd.

96

900 Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye!  
 With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul  
 To make these felt and feeling, well may be  
 Things that have made me watchful; the far roll  
 Of your departing voices, is the knoll<sup>8</sup>  
 Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.  
 But where of ye, oh tempests! is the goal?  
 Are ye like those within the human breast?  
 Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

6. The sash of Venus, which conferred the power to attract love.

7. It is to be recollected, that the most beautiful

and impressive doctrines of the Founder of Christianity were delivered, not in the *Temple*, but on the *Mount* [Byron's note].

8. Old form of knell: the sound of a bell.

97

905 Could I embody and unbosom now  
That which is most within me,—could I wreak  
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw  
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,  
910 All that I would have sought, and all I seek,  
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into *one* word,  
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;  
But as it is, I live and die unheard,  
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

98

915 The morn is up again, the dewy morn,  
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,  
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,  
And living as if earth contain'd no tomb,—  
And glowing into day: we may resume  
920 The march of our existence: and thus I,  
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room  
And food for meditation, nor pass by  
Much, that may give us pause, if ponder'd fittingly.

113

1050 I have not loved the world, nor the world me;  
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd  
To its idolatries a patient knee,—  
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles,—nor cried aloud  
In worship of an echo; in the crowd  
1055 They could not deem me one of such; I stood  
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud  
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still  
could,  
Had I not filed<sup>9</sup> my mind, which thus itself subdued.

114

1060 I have not loved the world, nor the world me,—  
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,  
Though I have found them not, that there may be  
Words which are things,—hopes which will not deceive,  
And virtues which are merciful, nor weave  
Snares for the failing: I would also deem  
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;  
1065 That two, or one, are almost what they seem,  
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.

115

My daughter! with thy name this song begun—  
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end—  
I see thee not,—I hear thee not,—but none  
1070 Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend  
To whom the shadows of far years extend:  
Albeit my brow thou never should'st behold,  
My voice shall with thy future visions blend,  
And reach into thy heart,—when mine is cold,—  
1075 A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould.

116

To aid thy mind's development,—to watch  
Thy dawn of little joys,—to sit and see  
Almost thy very growth,—to view thee catch  
Knowledge of objects,—wonders yet to thee!  
1080 To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,  
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss,—  
This, it should seem, was not reserved for me;  
Yet this was in my nature:—as it is,  
I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

117

1085 Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,  
I know that thou wilt love me; though my name  
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught  
With desolation,—and a broken claim:  
Though the grave closed between us,—'twere the same,  
1090 I know that thou wilt love me; though to drain  
My blood from out thy being were an aim,  
And an attainment,—all would be in vain,—  
Still thou would'st love me, still that more than life retain.

118

1095 The child of love,—though born in bitterness  
And nurtured in convulsion,—of thy sire  
These were the elements,—and thine no less.  
As yet such are around thee,—but thy fire  
Shall be more temper'd, and thy hope far higher.  
1100 Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea,  
And from the mountains where I now respire,  
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,  
As, with a sigh, I deem thou might'st have been to me!

9. Defiled. In a note Byron refers to *Macbeth* 3.1.66 ("For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind").