

A Poem of  
Letitia Elizabeth Landon  
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collected by  
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Gifts for the Past

**GIFTS FOR THE PAST.**

*By L. E. L.*

**THE past—now what shall we give the past ?**

**Oh, give it tears.**

**For the sorrows that heavily shadows cast**

**O'er our early years :**

**For friends that are friends to us no more,**

**For the grief behind, and the gloom before :**

**For love that is weeping beside the grave,**

**It will perish by those whom it could not save—**

**Long may it mourn over those beneath,**

**Lingering a life that is worse than death ;**

**For brief is the reign of the sunny hour,**

**Long is that of the shade, and the shower :**

**For pleasures in which we no more take part,**

**For weariness lying like frost on the heart,**

**For an earth worn out—a sky o'ercast,**

**The past—now what shall we give the past ?**

**Oh, give it tears.**

**The past—now what shall we give the past ?**

**Oh, give it smiles.**

**For falsehood, which, ending in truth at last,**

**No more beguiles :**

**For the pleasures from which we turn aside,**

**For the friends whose flattery we now deride—**

**They came to our side in the leaf and the flower,**

**They all fell off in the winter hour :**

For hopes that are colourless now and dead,  
Down at our feet in the dust that we tread ;  
And we marvel that ever we lighted our way  
With hues so painted and false as they :  
For all the deceits we have seen depart,  
For the scorn which fills and hardens the heart,  
For the knowledge so harshly acquired at last,  
The past—now what shall we give the past ?  
Oh, give it smiles.

The past—now what shall we give the past ?  
Forgetfulness.

Oh, for some blessedness veil to cast  
O'er the thoughts which press '  
The heavy heart, wearied and worn,  
With all it bears, and all it has borne.  
We will think no more of the friends of our youth ;  
Folly that ever we trusted their truth !  
Perish the hopes that never again  
Can soothe or solace—delude or sustain.  
Think no more of the love which is fled  
Afar with the faithless, or deep with the dead,  
All that has ever begulled or betray'd,  
Mute be its memory, deep be its shade.  
For all the flowers it to earth has cast,  
The past—Oh ! what shall we give the past ?  
Forgetfulness.