

A Poem in The New Monthly
Magazine
in the year 1824
possibly by
Letitia Elizabeth Landon?
(O.)

compiled by
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The Wind

The poem 'The Wind' is today popularly attributed to Letitia Landon, although it is not included authoritatively in her list of works. It was originally signed 'O.' but, by the late 1820s, it was being republished under the name 'The Improvisatrice', namely Letitia Landon. The pseudonym 'L. E. L.' was her own property.

F. J. Sypher reports that Miss Landon submitted poems to The New Monthly prior to that first published under L. E. L. (namely, Antony and Cleopatra in 1825), so it is possible that 'The Wind' is one such. It does seem strange for such a poem to be the sole production of another poet.

The theme of a ship lost at sea is one that Miss Landon used a number of times and the style is at least compatible with her work, so, although the case remains unproven, I feel it right to record the poem here.

THE WIND.

THE Wind has a language I would I could learn :
Sometimes 'tis soothing, and sometimes 'tis stern,
—Sometimes it comes like a low, sweet song,
And all things grow calm, as the sound floats along,
And the forest is lull'd by the dreamy strain,
And slumber sinks down on the wandering main,
And its crystal arms are folded in rest,
And the tall ship sleeps on its heaving breast.

Sometimes, when Autumn grows yellow and sear,
And the sad clouds weep for the dying year,
It comes like a wizard, and mutters its spell,
—I would that the magical tones I might tell—
And it beckons the leaves with its viewless hand,
And they leap from the branches at its command,
And follow its footsteps with wheeling feet,
Like fairies that dance in the moonlight sweet.

Sometimes it comes in the wintry night,
And I hear the flap of its pinions of might,
And I see the flash of its withering eye,
As it looks from the thunder-cloud sailing on high,
And pauses to gather its fearful breath,
And lifts up its voice, like the angel of death,—
And the billows leap up when the summons they hear,
And the ship flies away, as if winged with fear,
And the uncouth creatures that dwell in the deep,
Start up at the sound from their floating sleep,
And career through the waters, like clouds through the night,
To share in the tumult their joy and delight,—
And when the moon rises, the ship is no more,
Its joys and its sorrows are vanish'd and o'er,
And the fierce storm that slew it, has faded away,
Like the dark dream that flies from the light of the day !

O.