

Poems of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
in
The Juvenile Forget Me Not, 1832

compiled from other sources
by
Peter J. Bolton

Contents

The Dead Robin
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The Evening Prayer

This poem was published again later in *Traits and Trial of Early Life*, 1836 pp145-146. However, as there are minor variations, the text below is transcribed from F. J. Sypher's *Poems from the Annuals*. This poem should have an accompanying plate, "*The Dead Robin*", painted by H. Thomson, R.A. and engraved by W. Greatbach.

THE DEAD ROBIN.

IT is dead—it is dead—it will wake no more
With the earliest light, as it waked before—
And singing, as if it were glad to wake,
And wanted our longer sleep to break;
We found it a little unfledged thing,
With no plume to smooth and no voice to sing;
The father and mother both were gone,
And the callow nursling left alone!

For a wind, as fierce as those from the sea,
Had broken the boughs of the apple tree:
The scattered leaves lay thick on the ground,
And among them the nest and the bird we found.
We warmed it, and fed it, and made it a nest
Of Indian cotton, and watched its rest;
Its feathers grew soft, and its wings grew strong,
And happy it seemed as the day was long.

Do you remember its large dark eye—
How it brightened, when one of us came nigh?
How it would stretch its throat and sing,
And beat the osier cage with its wing—
Till we let it forth?—and it perched on our hand—
It needed not hood nor silken band,
Like the falcons we read of in days gone by,
Linked to the wrist, lest away they should fly.

But our bird knew not of the free blue air,
He had lived in his cage, and his home was there:
No flight had he in the green wood flown—
He pined not for freedom he never had known!
If he had lived amid leaf and bough
It had been cruel to fetter him now;
For I have seen a poor bird die,
And all for love of his native sky.

But our's would come to our cup and sip,
And peck the sugar away from our lip—
Would sit on our shoulder and sing, then creep
And nestle in our hands to sleep.
There is the water, and there is its seed,
Its cage hung round with the green chickweed;
But the food is untouched, the song is unheard—
Cold and stiff lies our beautiful bird!

This poem is drawn from the review in *The Literary Gazette*, 8th October, 1831. It also should have an accompanying plate, "*The Evening Prayer*", by B. E. Duppa, engraved by John Bull.

THE EVENING PRAYER

" Alone, alone!—no other face
Wears kindred smile, or kindred line;
And yet they say my mother's eyes—
They say my father's brow is mine:
And either had rejoiced to see
The other's likeness in my face;
But now it is a stranger's eye
That finds some long-forgotten trace.

I heard them name my father's death,
His home and tomb alike the wave;
And I was early taught to weep
Beside my youthful mother's grave.
I wish I could recall one look—
But only one familiar tone:
If I had aught of memory,
I should not feel so all alone.

My heart is gone beyond the grave,
In search of love I cannot find,
Till I could fancy soothing words
Are whispered by the evening wind.
I gaze upon the watching stars,
So clear, so beautiful above,
Till I could dream they look on me
With something of an answering love.

My mother, does thy gentle eye
Look from those distant stars on me?
Or does the wind at evening bear
A message to thy child from thee?
Dost thou pine for me, as I pine
Again a parent's love to share?
I often kneel beside thy grave,
And pray to be a sleeper there.

The vesper bell!—'tis eventide;
I will not weep, but I will pray—
God of the fatherless, 'tis Thou
Alone canst be the orphan's stay!
Earth's meanest flower, Heaven's mightiest star,
Are equal in their Maker's love,
And I can say, Thy will be done,
With eyes that fix their hope above."