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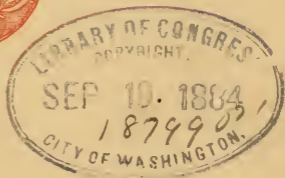






# MELODIES OF VERSE

BY  
BAYARD TAYLOR



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## MELODIES OF VERSE.

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### IMPROVISATIONS.

A GRASS-BLADE is my warlike lance,  
A rose-leaf is my shield ;  
Beams of the sun are, every one,  
My chargers for the field.

The morning gives me golden steeds,  
The moon gives silver-white ;  
The stars drop down, my helm to  
crown,  
When I go forth to fight.

Against me ride in iron mail  
The squadrons of the foe :  
The bucklers flash, the maces crash,  
The haughty trumpets blow.

One touch, and all, with armor cleft,  
Before me turn and yield.

6      *MELODIES OF VERSE.*

Straight on I ride : the world is wide ;  
A rose-leaf is my shield !

Then dances o'er the waterfall  
The rainbow, in its glee ;  
The daisy sings, the lily rings  
Her bells of victory.

So am I armed where'er I go,  
And mounted night or day :  
Who shall oppose the conquering rose,  
And who the sunbeam slay ?



The star o' the morn is whitest,  
The bosom of dawn is brightest ;  
The dew is sown,  
And the blossom blown  
Wherein thou, my Dear, delightest.

Hark, I have risen before thee,  
That the spell of the day be o'er thee ;  
That the flush of my love  
May fall from above,  
And, mixed with the morn, adore thee.

Dark dreams must now forsake thee,  
And the bliss of thy being take thee !

Let the beauty of morn  
In thine eyes be born,  
And the thought of me awake thee !

Come forth to hear thy praises,  
Which the wakening world upraises ;  
Let thy hair be spun  
With the gold o' the sun,  
And thy feet be kissed by the daisies !



Though thy constant love I share,  
Yet its gift is rarer ;  
In my youth I thought thee fair ;  
Thou art older and fairer !

Full of more than young delight  
Now day and night are ;  
For the presence, then so bright,  
Is closer, brighter.

In the haste of youth we miss  
Its best of blisses :

8      *MELODIES OF VERSE.*

Sweeter than the stolen kiss  
Are the granted kisses.

Dearer than the words that hide  
The love abiding,  
Are the words that fondly chide,  
When love needs chiding.

Higher than the perfect song  
For which love longeth,  
Is the tender fear of wrong,  
That never wrongeth.

She whom youth alone makes dear  
May awhile seem nearer :  
Thou art mine so many a year,  
The older, the dearer !



What if we lose the seasons  
That seem of our happiest choice,  
That Life is fuller of reasons  
To sorrow than rejoice,  
That Time is richer in treasons,  
And Hope has a faltering voice ?

The dreams wherewith we were dowered  
Were gifts of an ignorant brain ;  
The truth has at last overpowered  
The visions we clung to in vain :  
But who would resist, as a coward,  
The knowledge that cometh from  
pain ?

For the love, as a flower of the meadow,  
The love that stands firm as a tree —  
For the stars that have vanished in  
shadow,  
The daylight, enduring and free —  
For a dream of the dim Eldorado,  
A world to inhabit have we !



Heart, in my bosom beating  
Fierce as a power at bay !  
Ever thy rote repeating  
Louder, and then retreating,  
Who shall thy being sway ?

Over my will and under,  
Equally king and slave,

Sometimes I hear thee thunder,  
Sometimes falter and blunder  
Close to the waiting grave !

Oft, in the beautiful season,  
Restless thou art, and wild ;  
Oft, with never a reason,  
Turnest and doest me treason,  
Treating the man as a child !

Cold, when passion is burning,  
Quick, when I sigh for rest,  
Kindler of perished yearning,  
Curb and government spurning,  
Thou art lord of the breast !



Near in the forest  
I know a glade ;  
Under the tree-tops  
A secret shade !

Vines are the curtains,  
Blossoms the floor ;  
Voices of waters  
Sing evermore.



There, when the sunset's  
Lances of gold  
Pierce, or the moonlight  
Is silvery cold,

Would that an angel  
Led thee to me —  
So, out of loneliness  
Love should be !

Never the breezes  
Should lisp what we say,  
Never the waters  
Our secret betray !

Silence and shadow,  
After, might reign ;  
But the old life be ours  
Never again !



Through the lonely halls of the night  
My fancies fly to thee :  
Through the lonely halls of the night,  
Alone, I cry to thee.

For the stars bring presages  
 Of love, and of love's delight :  
 Let them bear my messages  
 Through the lonely halls of the night !

In the golden porch of the morn  
 Thou com'st anew to me :  
 In the golden porch of the morn,  
 Say, art thou true to me ?  
 If dreams have shaken thee  
 With the call thou canst not scorn,  
 Let Love awaken thee  
 In the golden porch of the morn !



Come to me, Lalage !  
 Girl of the flying feet,  
 Girl of the tossing hair  
 And the red mouth, small and sweet,  
 Less of the earth than air,  
 So witchingly fond and fair,  
 Lalage !

Touch me, Lalage !  
 Girl of the soft white hand,

Girl of the low white brow  
And the roseate bosom band ;  
Bloom from an orchard bough  
Less downy-soft than thou,  
Lalage !

Kiss me, Lalage !  
Girl of the fragrant breath,  
Girl of the sun of May ;  
As a bird that flutters in death,  
My fluttering pulses say :  
If thou be Death, yet stay,  
Lalage !

## ASSYRIAN NIGHT-SONG.

### I.

THERE is naught, on either hand,  
But the moon upon the sand.  
Pale and glimmering, far and dim,  
To the Desert's utmost rim,  
Flows the inundating light  
Over all the lands of Night.  
Bel, the burning lord, has fled;  
In her blue, uncurtained bed,  
Ishtar, bending from above,  
Seeks her Babylonian love.  
Silver-browed, forever fair,  
Goddess of the dusky hair  
And the jewel-sprinkled breast,  
Give me love, or give me rest !

### II.

I have wandered lone and far  
As the ship of Izdubar,  
When the gathered waters rose  
High on Nizir's mountain snows,

Drifting where the torrent sped  
Over life and glory dead.  
Hear me now ! I stretch my hands  
From the moon-sea of the sands  
Unto thee, or any star  
That was guide to Izdubar !  
Where the bulls with kingly heads  
Guard the way to palace-beds,  
Once I saw a woman go,  
Swift as air and soft as snow,  
Making swan and cypress one,  
Steel and honey, night and sun, —  
Once of death I knew the sting :  
Beauty queen — and I not king !

III.

Where the Hanging Gardens soar  
Over the Euphrates' shore,  
And from palm and clinging vine  
Lift aloft the Median pine,  
Torches flame and wine is poured,  
And the child of Bel is lord !  
I am here alone with thee,  
Ishtar, daughter of the Sea,  
Who of woven dew and air  
Spread'st an ocean, phantom-fair,

With a slow pulse beating through  
Wave of air and foam of dew.  
As I stand, I seem to drift  
With its noiseless fall and lift,  
While a veil of lightest lawn,  
Or a floating form withdrawn,  
Or a glimpse of beckoning hands  
Gleams and fades above the sands.

## IV.

Day, that mixed my soul with men,  
Has it died forever, then ?  
Is there any world but this ?  
If the god deny his bliss,  
And the goddess cannot give,  
What are gods, that men should live ?  
Lo ! the sand beneath my feet  
Hoards the bounty of its heat,  
And thy silver cheeks I see  
Bright with him who burns for thee.  
Give the airy semblance form,  
Bid the dream be near and warm ;  
Or, if dreams but flash and die  
As a mock to heart and eye,  
Then descend thyself, and be,  
Ishtar, sacred bride to me !

## CAMADEVA.

THE sun, the moon, the mystic planets  
seven,

Shone with a purer and serener flame,  
and there was joy on Earth and joy in  
Heaven

When Camadeva came.

The blossoms burst, like jewels of the  
air,

Putting the colors of the morn to  
shame ;

Breathing their odorous secrets every-  
where

When Camadeva came.

The birds, upon the tufted tamarind  
spray,

Sat side by side and cooed in amor-  
ous blame ;

The lion sheathed his claws and left his  
prey

When Camadeva came.

The sea slept, pillowed on the happy  
shore ;

The mountain-peaks were bathed in  
rosy flame ;

The clouds went down the sky, — to  
mount no more

When Camadeva came.

The hearts of all men brightened like  
the morn ;

The poet's harp then first deserved its  
fame,

For rapture sweeter than he sang was  
born

When Camadeva came.

All breathing life a newer spirit quaffed,

A second life, a bliss beyond a name,

And Death, half-conquered, dropped his  
idle shaft

When Camadeva came.



## BEDOUIN SONG.

FROM the Desert I come to thee

On a stallion shod with fire ;  
And the winds are left behind  
In the speed of my desire.

Under thy window I stand,  
And the midnight hears my cry :

I love thee, I love but thee,  
With a love that shall not die

*Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment  
Book unfold !*

Look from thy window and see

My passion and my pain ;  
I lie on the sands below,  
And I faint in thy disdain.

Let the night-winds touch thy brow  
With the heat of my burning sigh,  
And melt thee to hear the vow  
Of a love that shall not die

*Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment  
Book unfold!*

My steps are nightly driven,  
By the fever in my breast,  
To hear from thy lattice breathed  
The word that shall give me rest.  
Open the door of thy heart,  
And open thy chamber door,  
And my kisses shall teach thy lips  
The love that shall fade no more  
*Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment  
Book unfold!*

## THE POET IN THE EAST.

THE Poet came to the Land of the  
East,  
When spring was in the air :  
The Earth was dressed for a wedding  
feast,  
So young she seemed, and fair ;  
And the Poet knew the Land of the  
East, —  
His soul was native there.

All things to him were the visible forms  
Of early and precious dreams, —  
Familiar visions that mocked his quest  
Beside the Western streams,  
Or gleamed in the gold of the clouds,  
unrolled  
In the sunset's dying beams.

He looked above in the cloudless calm,  
And the Sun sat on his throne ;  
The breath of gardens, deep in balm,  
Was all about him blown,

And a brother to him was the princely  
Palm,  
For he cannot live alone.

His feet went forth on the myrtled hills,  
And the flowers their welcome shed ;  
The meads of milk-white asphodel  
They knew the Poet's tread,  
And far and wide, in a scarlet tide,  
The poppy's bonfire spread.

And, half in shade and half in sun,  
The Rose sat in her bower,  
With a passionate thrill in her crimson  
heart —

She had waited for the hour !  
And, like a bride's, the Poet kissed  
The lips of the glorious flower.

Then the Nightingale, who sat above  
In the boughs of the citron-tree,  
Sang: We are no rivals, brother mine,  
Except in minstrelsy ;  
For the rose you kissed with the kiss of  
love,  
She is faithful still to me.

And further sang the Nightingale :  
    *Your* bower not distant lies.  
I heard the sound of a Persian lute  
    From the jasmined window rise,  
And, twin-bright stars, through the lat-  
    tice-bars,  
I saw the Sultana's eyes.

The Poet said : I will here abide,  
    In the Sun's unclouded door ;  
Here are the wells of all delight  
    On the lost Arcadian shore :  
Here is the light on sea and land,  
    And the dream deceives no more.

## PEACH-BLOSSOM.

### I.

Nightly the hoar-frost freezes  
The young grass of the field,  
Nor yet have blander breezes  
The buds of the oak unsealed ;  
Nor yet pours out the pine  
His airy resinous wine,  
But over the southern slope,  
In the heat and hurry of hope,  
The wands of the peach-tree first  
Into rosy beauty burst !  
A breath, and the sweet buds ope !  
A day, and the orchards bare,  
Like maids in haste to be fair,  
Lightly themselves adorn  
With a scarf the Spring at the door  
Has sportively flung before,  
Or a stranded cloud of the morn !

### II.

What spirit of Persia cometh  
And saith to the buds, "Unclose !"

Ere ever the first bee hummeth,  
Or woodland wild flower blows ?  
What prescient soul in the sod  
Garlands each barren rod  
With fringes of bloom that speak  
Of the baby's tender breast,  
And the boy's pure lip unpressed,  
And the pink of the maiden's cheek ?  
The swift, keen Orient so  
Prophesies as of old,  
While the apple's blood is cold,  
Remembering the snow.

## III.

Afar, through the mellow hazes  
Where the dreams of June are stayed,  
The hills, in their vanishing mazes,  
Carry the flush, and fade !  
Southward they fall, and reach  
To the bay and the ocean beach,  
Where the soft, half-Syrian air  
Blows from the Chesapeake's  
Inlets and coves and creeks  
On the fields of Delaware !  
And the rosy lakes of flowers,  
That here alone are ours,

Spread into seas that pour  
 Billow and spray of pink  
 Even to the blue wave's brink,  
 All down the Eastern Shore !

## IV.

Pain, Doubt, and Death are over !  
 Who thinks, to-day, of toil ?  
 The fields are certain of clover,  
 The gardens of wine and oil.  
 What though the sap of the North  
 Drowsily peereth forth  
 In the orchards, and still delays ?  
 The peach and the poet know  
 Under the chill the glow,  
 And the token of golden days !

## V.

What fool, to-day, would rather  
 In wintry memories dwell ?  
 What miser reach to gather  
 The fruit these boughs foretell ?  
 No, no ! — the heart has room  
 For present joy alone,  
 Light shed and sweetness blown,  
 For odor and color and bloom !



As the earth in the shining sky,  
Our lives in their own bliss lie ;  
Whatever is taught or told,  
However men moan and sigh,  
Love never shall grow cold,  
And Life shall never die !

## THE IMP OF SPRING-TIME.

OVER the eaves where the sunbeams fall  
    Titters the swallow ;  
I hear from the mountains the cataract  
    call :  
    Follow, oh, follow !

Buds on the bushes and blooms on the  
    mead  
    Swiftly are swelling ;  
Hark ! the Spring whispereth : " Make  
    ye with speed  
    Ready my dwelling."

Out of the tremulous blue of the air  
    Calling before her,  
Who was it bade me " Awake and pre-  
    pare,  
    Thou mine adorer !"

" Leave me," I said ; " I have known  
    thee of old,  
    Love the annoyer,

Arming, at last, with thine arrows of  
gold,  
Time, the Destroyer."

"Follow," he laughed, "where the bliss  
of the earth  
Wooes thee, compelling;  
Yet in the Spring, and her thousand-fold  
birth,  
I, too, am dwelling."

Out of the buds he was peeping, and  
sang  
Soft with the swallow;  
Yea, and he called where the cataract  
sprang:  
Follow, oh, follow!

Vain to defy, or evade, or, in sooth,  
Bid him to leave me!  
But his deception is dearer than truth:  
Let him deceive me!

## YOUTH.

CHILD with the butterfly,  
Boy with the ball,  
Youth with the maiden —  
Still I am all.

Wisdom of manhood  
Keeps the old joy;  
Conquered illusions  
Leave me a boy.

Falsehood and baseness  
Teach me but this :  
Earth still is beautiful,  
Being is bliss.

Locks to my temples  
Hoary may cling ;  
'T is but as daisies  
On meadows of spring.

## SONG.

I PLUCKED for thee the wilding rose  
And wore it on my breast,  
And there, till daylight's dusky close,  
Its silken cheek was pressed ;  
Its desert breath was sweeter far  
Than palace-rose could be,  
Sweeter than all Earth's blossoms are,  
But that thou gav'st to me.

I kissed its leaves, in fond despite  
Of lips that failed my own,  
And Love recalled that sacred night  
His blushing flower was blown.  
I vowed, no rose should rival mine,  
Though withered now, and pale,  
Till those are plucked, whose white  
buds twine  
Above thy bridal veil.

## PROPOSAL.

THE violet loves a sunny bank,  
The cowslip loves the lea ;  
The scarlet creeper loves the elm,  
But I love — thee.

The sunshine kisses mount and vale,  
The stars, they kiss the sea ;  
The west winds kiss the clover bloom,  
But I kiss — thee !

The oriole weds his mottled mate,  
The lily's bride o' the bee ;  
Heaven's marriage-ring is round the  
earth —  
Shall I wed thee ?

## AUTUMNAL DREAMS.

### I.

WHEN the maple turns to crimson  
And the sassafras to gold;  
When the gentian's in the meadow,  
And the aster on the wold;  
When the noon is lapped in vapor,  
And the night is frosty-cold :

### II.

When the chestnut-burs are opened,  
And the acorns drop like hail,  
And the drowsy air is startled  
With the thumping of the flail, —  
With the drumming of the partridge  
And the whistle of the quail :

### III.

Through the rustling woods I wander,  
Through the jewels of the year,  
From the yellow uplands calling,  
Seeking her that still is dear :

She is near me in the autumn,  
She, the beautiful, is near.

## IV.

Through the smoke of burning summer,  
When the weary winds are still,  
I can see her in the valley,  
I can hear her on the hill, —  
In the splendor of the woodlands,  
In the whisper of the rill.

## V.

For the shores of Earth and Heaven  
Meet, and mingle in the blue :  
She can wander down the glory  
To the places that she knew,  
Where the happy lovers wandered  
In the days when life was true.

## VI.

So I think, when days are sweetest,  
And the world is wholly fair,  
She may sometime steal upon me  
Through the dimness of the air,  
With the cross upon her bosom  
And the amaranth in her hair.



VII.

Once to meet her, ah ! to meet her,  
And to hold her gently fast  
Till I blessed her, till she blessed me, —  
That were happiness, at last :  
That were bliss beyond our meetings  
In the autumns of the Past !

## THE RETURN OF SPRING.

HAVE I passed through Death's uncon-  
scious birth,  
In a dream the midnight bare ?  
I look on another and fairer Earth :  
I breathe a wondrous air !

A spirit of beauty walks the hills,  
A spirit of love the plain ;  
The shadows are bright, and the sun-  
shine fills  
The air with a diamond rain !

Before my vision the glories swim,  
To the dance of a tune unheard :  
Is an angel singing where woods are  
dim,  
Or is it an amorous bird ?

Is it a spike of azure flowers,  
Deep in the meadows seen,  
Or is it the peacock's neck, that towers  
Out of the spangled green ?

*THE RETURN OF SPRING.* 37

Is a white dove glancing across the  
blue,  
Or an opal taking wing?  
For my soul is dazzled through and  
through,  
With the splendor of the Spring.

Is it she that shines, as never before,  
The tremulous hills above, —  
Or the heart within me, awake once  
more  
To the dawning light of love?

## SONG.

FROM the bosom of ocean I seek thee,  
Thou lamp of my spirit afar,  
As the seaman, adrift in the darkness,  
Looks up for the beam of his star ;  
And when on the moon-lighted water  
The spirits of solitude sleep,  
My soul, in the light of thy beauty,  
Lies hushed as the waves of the deep.

As the shafts of the sunrise are broken  
Far over the glittering sea,  
Thou hast dawned on the waves of my  
dreaming,  
And each thought has a sparkle of  
thee.  
And though with the white sail dis-  
tended,  
I speed from the vanishing shore,  
Thou wilt give to the silence of ocean  
The spell of thy beauty the more.

LYRICS

FROM

PRINCE DEUKALION.



## NYMPHS.

LIFT from the rivers  
Your silver sandals,  
From mists of the mountains  
Your floating veils ! —  
From musky vineyard,  
And copse of laurel,  
The ears that listened  
For lovers' tales !  
Let olives ripen  
And die, untended ;  
Leave oak and poplar,  
And homeless pine !  
Take shell and trumpet  
From swell of surges,  
And feet that glisten  
From restful brine !  
As the bee when twilight  
Has closed the bell, —  
As love from the bosom  
When doubts compel,  
We go : farewell !

\* \* \* \* \*

*(At a distance.)*

As the night-air pants ;  
 As the wind-harp chants ;  
 As the moonlight falls  
 Over foliage walls ;  
 As gleams forerun  
 The smile of the sun  
 When clouds are parting,  
 Our beings are.  
 We are held afar  
 By a knowledge burning  
 In the heart of yearning ;  
 For the necromancy  
 Of the fonder fancy  
 Breathes back into air  
 The Presences fair  
 It would fain restore ;  
 We are Souls and Voices,  
 But Forms no more !

\* \* \* \* \*

In the upward pulse of the fountain ;  
 On the sunny flanks of the mountain ;  
 Where the bubble and slide of the rill  
 Is heard when the thickets are still ;



Where the light, with a flickering motion,  
From the last faint fringes of ocean  
Is sprinkled on sand and shell ;  
In the ferns of the bowery dell,  
And the gloom of the pine-wood dark,  
And the dew-cloud that hides the lark,  
The sense of Beauty shall feel us,  
The touch of delight reveal us !

EUTERPE, THALIA, AND TERP-  
SICHORE.

IN the woods and highlands  
We linger near ;  
By the shores and islands,  
When skies are clear.  
Delight of existence,  
In the feet that fly,  
Calls from the distance  
Our glad reply ;  
But the joys are sweeter  
That to all belong,  
When the foot gives the metre,  
The heart the song !  
No more you banish  
Than a cloud the sun :  
We only vanish  
To be re-won !

## EROS.

(TO GÆA.)

NOT yet am I barred in Hades,  
Though a word unknown hath hurled  
The Olympian lords and ladies  
To wail in the nether world !  
Let Proteus shift in ocean  
From shape to shape that eludes :  
I am one, as the heart's devotion,  
Yet many, as lovers' moods !

\* \* \* \* \*

Was I born that I should die ?  
Stars that fringe the outer sky  
Know me : yonder sun were dim,  
Save my torch enkindled him.  
Then, when first the primal pair  
Found me in the twilight air,  
I was older than thy day,  
Yet to them as young as they.  
All decrees of Fate I spurn ;  
Banishment is my return ;

Hate and Force purvey for me,  
 Death is shining victory !

\* \* \* \* \*

With the blind desires and motions  
 The innocent child that guide ;  
 With girlhood's shy avoidance  
 And boyhood's bashful pride ;  
 With the arts that are simplest nature,  
 And the nature that hides in art,  
 When the voice and the cheeks bear  
 witness,  
 And the eye confesses the heart ;  
 With the fond mistrust, and the frenzy,  
 That falters, or sweeps above,  
 When the key to delight in beauty  
 Is held by the hands of love ;  
 With the lore of the world's renewal  
 In seed or in guarded bud ;  
 With the plunge of the sportive dolphin,  
 And the heat of the panther's blood, —  
 The spells of my sway are woven,  
 The flame of my being fed,  
 And I breathe in a bright existence,  
 Though the eldest Gods are dead !  
 For Love, in the ashes of Empire  
 And the dust of Faith, is born ;

And the rose of a kiss shall blossom,  
When blight has withered the corn !

\* \* \* \* \*

Nor the soul of the wandering odor, nor  
the light of the mist, is thine,  
Who art rolled through day and dark-  
ness, at the will of a star divine ;  
Who claim'st the arrows of beauty,  
alone from its quiver sped, —  
Thou readest but half the riddle in the  
dust that else were dead !  
Thy life is blown upon thee, as a seed  
from another land,  
And the soil, and the dew and water,  
are the bounty of thy hand ;  
But the secrets of whence and whither  
are mine for my children's need :  
I go with the flying blossom, as I came  
with the flying seed !

## SPIRIT OF THE WIND.

FROM the parched Numidian waste,  
From the hills of hot Fezzàn,  
I sprang with a boundless haste  
That only the stars outran ;  
Over mountain and Midland Sea  
That strove to tire or tame, —  
Over Etna and Stromboli  
That pierced me with smoke and  
flame ;  
Till I laid, in the first desire  
That bended my pinions low,  
The cheek of the sylph of fire  
On the breast of the gnome of snow !  
For the powers of ruin, that meet  
In the vaults of space, must die  
When the spirit that stays my feet  
Is lord of the tender sky !  
I come, to wither and slay ;  
I pause, to quicken and spare ;  
And the fate of the world I weigh  
In the trembling balance of air !

## SPIRIT OF THE SNOW.

HOMELESS atoms, born in the sky,  
Cling to the ledges bleak and high,  
Fill the crevice and hide the scar,  
And give the sunrise a rosy star ! —  
Gather and grow, till a shield is won  
To blunt the spear of the angry sun ;  
Till from the heart of my chill repose  
Power awakens and purpose grows, —  
Out of my torpor the glacier goes !  
Silent, certain, it crouches and crawls  
Down the gorges in frozen falls,  
And crystal turrets of azure walls,  
Tearing the granite from crest and  
dome,  
Hurling the torrent forth in foam !  
Shepherding here my downy flock,  
There I shatter the ribs of rock ;  
Stayed by a hand and slain by a breath,  
There I am terror, and doom, and  
death !

## SPIRIT OF THE STREAM.

OVER the mosses and grasses  
The white cloud passes,  
Silent and soft as a dream :  
And the Earth, in her shy embraces,  
Conceals the traces  
Of the secret birth of the Stream ;  
Till my threads are braided and woven,  
And speed through the cloven  
Channels, and gather, and sink,  
And wind, and sparkle, and dally,  
With song in the valley,  
And shout from the terrible brink !  
Then the whirl of the wind divides me,  
And the rainbow hides me,  
As I midway scatter in air ;  
And I bathe with endless showers  
The feet of the flowers,  
And the locks of the forest's hair :  
Till proudly, with waters wedded,  
My strength is bedded



*SPIRIT OF THE STREAM.* 51

By meadow, and slope, and lea;  
And the lands at last deliver  
    Their tribute river  
To the universal Sea!

## SHEPHERD.

*(Singing above.)*

WHERE the arch of the rock is bended,  
Warm, and hid from the dew,  
Slumber the sheep I tended,  
All the sweet night through.  
Never a wolf affrights them  
Here, in the pasture's peace,  
But the tender grass delights them,  
And the shadows cool their fleece.  
I blow, as a downy feather,  
The sleep on my eyelids laid,  
And rise in the twilight weather,  
Between the glow and the shade.  
Too blest the hour has made me  
For a speech the tongue may know,  
But my happy flute shall aid me,  
And speak to my love below.

SHEPHERDESS.

*(Singing in the valley.)*

UNCOVER the embers !  
With pine-cone and myrtle  
My breath shall enkindle  
    The sacred Fire !  
Arise through the stillness  
My shepherd's blue signal,  
And bear to his mountain  
    The valley's desire !  
The olive-tree bendeth ;  
The grapes gather purple ;  
The garden in sunshine  
    Is ripe to the core :  
Then smile as thou sleepest,  
His fruit and my blossom ;  
There's peace in the chamber,  
    And song at the door !

## SPIRITS OF DAWN.

HARK ! has the Sun-god's Hour  
Smitten her cymbals, dreaming him  
nigh ?

We are called by a sound, and sped by  
a power,

To break the sleep of the sky !

Æolian echoes blow

From the fourfold realms of the air,  
And a torch, not ours, with a mightier  
glow

Burns where the East is bare.

We hasten, we scatter the cloud,

We quench the beam of the great white  
star ;

But the pæan is over-loud,

And the splendor comes from afar !

It flushes our halls of rest,

As the sun were a rose in hue,

And it paints the Earth as she bares her  
breast  
To the emptied urns of the dew !

[*Sound of Æolian harps ; the face of  
EOS appears.*]

EOS.

Is this mine Earth ?  
The many-headed, the temple-  
crowned,  
Which the great purple sea so whispered  
round,  
When earlier Gods had birth ?  
Mine Earth, I loved so well,  
Rejoiced in, as it welcomed me,  
And fed with unexhausted hydromel,  
While the young race was free !  
I know its curving strands,  
Its dimpling hollows, bosom-budding  
hills ;  
I scent large fragrance of the life that  
fills  
The joined or parted lands.  
Old hopes, and sweetest, burn again ;

Old words are stammering on my  
tongue :

Was it your lips that kissed, Immortal  
Twain,  
Or is Tithonus young ?

# MELODIES OF VERSE

BY

BAYARD TAYLOR



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