

A Posthumous Poem of
Letitia Elizabeth Landon
(L. E. L.)
in
Forget Me Not, 1844

compiled
by
Peter J. Bolton

Love's Signal Flower

In the absence of an available online source, this poem has been transcribed from F. J. Sypher's 'Poems from the Annuals'

Love's Signal Flower

How much there is of the heart's eloquence
In but a simple Flower!—Oh, Flowers were made
For Love's interpreters!—

L. E. L.

She flung her on his breast,
And she wept those bitter tears
When the present is all grief,
And the future is all fears.

And the knight's dark eye was fill'd
With the tears he strove to quell,
Albeit too proud to show
How much he felt farewell.

There were flowers in her hair
Like an April diadem;
There were azure violets,
But she took not one of them.

There too was the red rose,
Queen of the scented hour;
But from out the sunny wreath
She took a small blue flower.

"Be this," she sighed, "through all
The chance that waits my lot
Our love's remembering sign—
Keep this FORGET ME NOT."

He kiss'd the flower he took
From the Maiden's snow-white hand:
One last low-breathed farewell,
And the boat has left the strand.

She watched the vessel glide,
Till she no more could see;
Till the Knight's white plume seem'd mix'd
With the white foam of the sea.

And then the Maiden sought
Her bower, to weep alone.
Alas, that ever Love
Should mourn o'er what is gone!

Oh, who is it can say
That memory is all joy!—
When was not pleasure mixed
With much of grief's alloy!

For pleasures are like flowers—
Destroyed by a moment's rain;
But grief is like the boughs,
That blighted and bare remain.

With green turf round it spread,
In the shade of a lime-wood,
Covering the shrine of a virgin saint,
A little chapel stood.

And never one single day
The Maiden her task forgot,
To deck the shrine with a wreath
Of the blue FORGET ME NOT.

And her lover—where was he?—
The first of the martial throng,
Where the scimitar flashes in light
To the trumpet's glorious song.

His lance was first in the charge,
His steed was first in the line:—
But alas that Fortune's sun
Loves rather to set than shine!

In a dungeon dark and deep
A captive the Knight is laid.
Shame on the faithless slave
Who the gallant band betrayed!

Oh worse than death to feel
Time steal on day by day!—
To feel our youth and strength
Passing like shadows away!

The light of the glorious sun
Through the iron bars came dim;
It was as if it shone
For all the earth save him.

There were but the dark walls,
There was but the small damp court,
Which seemed as if only made
For the newt's and bat's resort.

But one day—was it a dream?—
He saw, mid the sullen mould,
As planted by magic, a flower
Its small blue leaves unfold.

He knew the FORGET ME NOT:
It was as a hope from Above;
It seemed like a messenger
Who came to tell of his love.

That night he heard light feet,
Like silver music's fall,
And he saw a lamp's red light
Upon his dungeon-wall;

And he heard a gentle voice,
Like the south wind steal on his ear;
He looked, and the phoenix Hope
Sprang up from the ashes of Fear.

His own Maiden stood by his side—
What will not Love essay?—
And, touching the lock of his chains,
Whispered "Away!—away!"

The Knight and the Maiden stand
Again by their own fair stream;
And the Knight gazes round as all
Were but a beautiful dream.

Then told the Maid how she wept
O'er many a phantom fear,
That in an absent hour
Like twilight shades appear;

How, garbed as a Minstrel-boy,
His prison she had sought,
And by her patient love
Had his deliverance wrought.

She told how she had flung
The seeds of their signal flower,
In trust that its glad sight
Would cheer his prison hour.

Next morn came a sound of lutes
And song from a fair array,
And flowers were scattered round,
To hail their bridal day.

There was not a summer bloom
In their many wreaths forgot:
In the bride's hair was only one,
Her own FORGET ME NOT.