Samuel Taylor Coleridge, â??Lines on a Friend Who Died of a Frenzy Fever Induced by Calumnious Reportsâ?•

Description

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

â??Lines on a Friend Who Died of a Frenzy Fever Induced by Calumnious Reportsâ?•

EDMUND! thy grave with aking eye I scan,
And inly groan for Heavenâ??s poor outcast, Man!
â??Tis tempest all or gloom: in early youth
If gifted with the Ithuriel lance of Truth
He force to start amid her feignâ??d caress
VICE, siren-hag! in native ugliness,
A Brotherâ??s fate will haply rouse the tear,
And on he goes in heaviness and fear!
But if his fond heart call to PLEASUREâ??S bower
Some pigmy FOLLY in a careless hour,
The faithless guest shall stamp thâ?? inchanted ground
And mingled forms of Misâ??ry rise around:
Heart-fretting FEAR, with pallid look aghast,
That courts the future woe to hide the past;
REMORSE, the poisonâ??d arrow in his side;
And loud lewd MIRTH, to Anguish close allied:
Till FRENZY, fierce-eyâ??d child of moping pain,
Darts her hot lightning flash athwart the brain.

Rest,injurâ??d shade! Shall SLANDER squatting near
Spit her cold venom in a DEAD MANâ??S ear?
â??Twas thine to feel the sympathetic glow
In Meritâ??s joy, and Povertyâ??s meek woe;
Thine all, that cheer the moment as it flies,
The *zoneless* CARES, and smiling COURTESIES.
Nursâ??d in thy heart the firmer Virtues grew,
And in thy heart they witherâ??d! Such chill dew
Wan INDOLENCE on each young blossom shed;
And VANITY her filmy net-work spread,
With eye that rollâ??d around in asking gaze,
And tongue that traffickâ??d in the trade of praise.
Thy follies such! the hard world markâ??d them wellâ??
Were they more wise, the PROUD who never fell?
Rest, injurâ??d shade! the poor manâ??s prayer of praise
On heaven-ward wing thy wounded soul shall raise.

As oft at twilight gloom thy grave I pass,
And sit me down upon its recent grass,
With introverted eye I contemplate
Similitude of soul, perhaps of â?? Fate!
To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assignâ??d
Energic Reason and a shaping mind,
The daring ken of Truth, the Patriotâ??s part,
And Pityâ??s sigh, that breathes the gentle heartâ??
Sloth-jaundicâ??d all! and from my graspless hand
Drop Friendshipâ??s precious pearls, like hour glass sand.
I weep, yet stoop not! the faint anguish flows,
A dreamy pang in Morningâ??s fevâ??rish doze.

Is this pilâ??d Earth our Beingâ??s passless mound?
Tell me, cold grave! is Death with poppies crownâ??d?
Tirâ??d Centinel! mid fitful starts I nod,
And fain would sleep, though pillowâ??d on a clod!

NOTES:

Title *Frenzy* â??Mental derangement; deliriumâ?• (*OED*); *Calumnious* â??Slanderous, defamatoryâ?• (*OED*).

1 *aking* Aching.

2 *inly* Inwardly.

4 *Ithuriel* Angel from John Miltonâ??s *Paradise Lost* (1667); associated with truth.

9 *bower* â??A vague poetic word for an idealized abodeâ?• (*OED*).

13 *pallid* â??Pale, esp. from illness, shock, etc.â?• (*OED*).

18 *athwart* â??Across in various directionsâ?• (*OED*).

27 *Wan* â??Faded, sicklyâ?¦ unhealthily paleâ?• (*OED*); *INDOLENCE* â??Love of easeâ?¦ slothfulnessâ?• (*OED*).

41 *ken* â??Mental perception, recognitionâ?• (*OED*).

49 *Centinel* â??Sentinel; one who or something which keeps guardâ?• (*OED*).

50 *clod* â??A lump of earth or clay adhering togetherâ?• (*OED*).

Source: *Poems on Various Subjects* (London, 1796), pp. 32-35. [Google Books]

Edited by M. Seydel