Elizabeth Singer Rowe, â??A Hymn on Heavenâ?•

Description

ELIZABETH SINGER ROWE

â??A Hymn on Heavenâ?•

What glorious things of thee, O glorious place!
Shall my bold muse in daring numbers speak?
While to immortal strains I tune my lyre,
And warbling imitate angelic airs:
While ecstasy bears up my soul aloft,
And lively faith gives me a distant glimpse
Of glories unrevealâ??d to human eyes.

Ye starry mansions, hail! my native skies!
Here in my happy, pre-existent state,
(A spotless mind) I led the life of gods.
But passing, I salute you, and advance
To yonder brighter realmâ??s allowâ??d access.

Hail, splendid city of thâ?? almighty king!
Celestial Salem, situate above:
Magnificent thy prospect, and august,
Thy walls sublime, thy towâ??rs and palaces
Illustrious far, with orient gems appear.
There, regent angels, crownâ??d with stars, command,
High in the midst, the awful throne of God
Ascends, the utmost empyrean arch,
The heavâ??n of heavens; where in conceiveless light,
Such as infinity alone can prove,
He enjoys thâ?? extremest bounds of happiness,
And was in perfect blessedness the same
Ere any thing existed but himself;
Ere time, or place, or motion, had a name;
Before the spheres began their tuneful round;
Or through the air the sun had spread his beams;
Ere at his feet the flaming seraphs bowâ??d,
And cast their shining crowns before his throne;
Ere smiling angels tunâ??d their golden harps,
Or sung one hallelujah to his praise.
But mighty love, which movâ??d him to create,
Still moves him to communicate his bliss.

O, speak! you happy spirits that surround
His dazzling throne, for you alone can tell;
For you alone those raptures can describe,
And stem thâ?? impetuous floods of joy that rise
Within your breasts, when all unveilâ??d, you view
The wonders of the beatific sight:
When from the bright unclouded face of God
You drink full draughts of bliss and endless love,
And plunge yourselves in lifeâ??s immortal fount;
The spring of joy, which from his darling throne
In endless currents smoothly glides away,
Throâ?? all the verdant fields of paradise;
Throâ?? balmy groves, where on their flowâ??ry banks,
To murmâ??ring waters, and soft whispâ??ring winds,
Fair spirits in melodious concert join,
And sweetly warble their heroic loves.
For love makes half their heavâ??n, and kindles here
New flames, and ardent life in evâ??ry breast;
While active pleasure lightens in their eyes,
And sparkling beauty shines on every face:
Their spotless minds, all pure and exquisite,
The noblest heights of love preparâ??d to act,
In everlasting sympathies unite,
And melt, in flowing joys, eternity away.

To those blest shades, and amaranthine bowâ??rs,
When dazzled with thâ?? insufferable beams
That issue from the open face of God,
For umbrage many a seraphim resorts:
Nor longer here oâ??er their bright faces clasp
Their gorgeous wings, which open wide, display
More radiance than adorns the chearful sun,
When first he from the rosy east looks out:
Gentle as love, their looks serene as light,
Blooming and gay as everlasting springs.

But oh! when in the lofty blissful bowâ??rs,
With heavâ??nly skill, to the harmonious lyre,
The clear, the sweet, the melting voice they join;
The vales of heavâ??n rejoice, and echoing loud,
Redouble evâ??ry charming close again;
While trembling winds upon their fragrant wings
Bear far the soft, melodious sounds away;
The silver streams their winding journeys stay,
Suspend their murmurs, and attend the song;
The laughing fields new flowâ??rs and verdure wear,
And all the trees of life bloom out afresh.
The numâ??rous suns which gild the realms of joy,

Dance in their lightsome spheres, and brighter day
Throâ?? all thâ?? interminable ether darts,
While to the great unutterable name,
All glory they ascribe in lofty strains,
In strains expressless by a mortal tongue.
O happy regions! O transporting place!
With what regret I turn my loathing eyes
To yonder earthly globe, my dusky seat!
But ah! I must return; no more allowâ??d
To breathe the calm, the soft, celestial air,
And view the mystic wonders of the skies.

NOTES:

4 *warbling* â??To modulate the voice in singing; to sing with trills and quaversâ?• (*OED*).

13 *almighty king* â??Designating a god, especially the Christian God or Christâ?• (*OED*).

14 *Salem* A reference to Jerusalem (*Britannica*).

17 *orient* â??Eastern countries; the Eastâ?• (*OED*).

29 *seraphs* â??Angelsâ?• (*OED*).

37 *raptures* â??Transport of mindâ?¦ecstasy esp. ecstatic delight of joyâ?• (*OED*).

43 *fount* â??A springâ?• (*OED*).

59 *amaranthine bowâ??rs* â??An idealized abodeâ?• (*OED)*.

62 *seraphim* â??In Biblical use: the living creatures with six wings, hands and feet and a (presumably) human voice, seen in Isaiahâ??s version as hovering over the throne of Godâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions (*London, 1759), pp. 59-62. [*Google Books*]

Edited by Franny Baronian