Elizabeth Moody, â??Written in the Autumnâ?•

Description

ELIZABETH MOODY

â??Written in the Autumnâ?•

We all do fade as a leaf.â??Isaiah

Ye Groves, ye lawns, ye summerâ??s bowers!
That wooâ??d my steps so late;
Where now your boasted fruits and flowers?
Alas! they bow to fate.

Ah Spring! but now thy beauties grew!
Thy daisy-sprinkled ground;
Thy violets bloomâ??d, thy zephyrs blew,
Thy songsters warbled round.

On every bush, on every thorn,
Progressive life was seen;
Thy infant leaves but newly born,
Disclosâ??d their tender green.

The sun-beams quiverâ??d throâ?? the glade,
Prolific verdure sprung:
The opâ??ning foliage promisâ??d shade,
And Philomela sung.

Youth of the year, fond Natureâ??s pride,
How transient is thy date!
How soon thy buds expanding wide,
Declare maturer state.

Then Summer with her full blown sweets,
Confirms our promisâ??d joys;
And when our promisâ??d joys completes,
The bliss of hope destroys.

For now the mounting sun no more,
Protracts the lengthâ??ning day;
His height attainâ??d, his journey oâ??er,
He backward speeds his way.

Fierce blow the Equinoctial gales,
The raging billows foam,
The wandâ??ring vessel fearful sails,
Despairing of her home.

Congealing blasts succeed to these,
Proclaiming Winterâ??s power;
The leaves desert their parent trees,
And separate in a shower.

Alas! this leaf that witherâ??d lies,â??
This leaf deformâ??d and dead!
These eyes beheld its beauties rise,â??
Beheld those beauties spread.

Admiring saw its ripâ??ning charms,
Unfolding in the vales;
Protected by parental arms,
And wooâ??d by vernal gales.

Ah me, how changâ??d! its colour flown!
Its moisture dried by frost,
Its fibres shrunkâ??its vigour gone!
And all its graces lost.

Frail as this leaf our life appears,
A passing gale our breath;
Like fate involves our fleeting years,
Age, languor, sickness, death.

NOTES:

Epigraph Isaiah 64:6 (*KJV*).

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

7 *zephyrs* â??A gentle, mild wind or breezeâ?• (*OED*).

14 *verdure* â??The fresh green colour characteristic of flourishing vegetationâ?• (*OED*).

16 *Philomela* â??A poetic or literary name for: the nightingale (in allusion to the myth of the maiden Philomelaâ??s transformation into that bird)â?• (*OED*).

29 *Equinoctial gales* A reference to the winds â??prevailing about the time of the autumnal equinoxâ?• (*OED*).

44 *vernal gales* Mild spring winds (*OED*).

52 *languor* â??Mental suffering or distress; pining, longing, sorrow, griefâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poetic Trifles* (London, 1798), pp. 35-37. [Google Books]

Edited by Clare Katko