

---

SAADI.

TREES in groves,  
Kine in droves,  
In ocean sport the finny herds,  
Wedgeline cleave the air the birds,  
To northern lakes fly wind-borne ducks,  
Browse the mountain sheep in flocks,  
Men consort in camp and town,  
But the poet dwells alone.

God, who gave to him the lyre,  
Of all the mortals the desire,  
For all men's behoof,  
Straitly charged him, ' Sit aloof; '  
Annexed a warning, poets say,  
To the bright premium, —  
When twain together play,  
The harp shall be dumb.

Many may come,  
But one shall sing ;  
Two touch the string,  
The harp is dumb.  
Though there come a million,  
Wise Saadi dwells alone.

Yet Saadi loved the race of men, —  
No churl immured in cave or den, —  
In bower and hall  
He wants them all,  
Nor can dispense  
With Persia for his audience,  
They must give ear,  
Grow red with joy, and white with fear ;  
Yet he has no companion,  
Come ten, or come a million,  
Good Saadi dwells alone.

Be thou ware where Saadi dwells,  
Wisdom of the gods is he ;  
Entertain it reverently.  
Gladly round that golden lamp  
Sylvan deities encamp,  
And simple maids and noble youth  
Are welcome to the man of truth.  
Most welcome they, who need him most,  
They feed the spring which they exhaust :  
For greater need  
Draws better deed :  
But, critic, spare thy vanity,  
Nor show thy pompous parts,  
To vex with odious subtlety  
The cheerer of men's hearts.

Sad-eyed Fakirs swiftly say  
Endless dirges to decay,  
Who never in the blaze of light  
Lose the shudder of midnight,  
Who at overflowing noon  
Hear wolves barking at the moon,  
In the bower of dalliance sweet  
Hear the far Avenger's feet,  
And shake before those awful Powers,  
Who in their pride forgive not ours.  
Thus the sad-eyed Fakirs preach ;  
Bard, when thee would Allah teach  
And lift thee to his holy mount,  
He sends thee from his bitter fount  
Wormwood ; saying, Go thy ways.  
Drink not the Malaga of praise,  
But do the deed thy fellows hate,  
And compromise thy peaceful state.

Smite the white breasts which thee fed,  
Stuff sharp thorns beneath the head  
Of them thou shouldst have comforted.  
For out of wo and out of crime  
Draws the heart a lore sublime.'  
And yet it seemeth not to me  
That the high gods love tragedy,  
For Saadi sat in the sun,  
And thanks was his contrition,  
For haircloth and for bloody whips  
Had active hands and smiling lips,  
And yet his runes he rightly read,  
And to his folk his message sped.  
Sunshine in his heart transferred  
Lighted each transparent word.  
And well could honoring Persia learn  
What Saadi wished to say ;  
For Saadi's nightly stars did burn  
Brighter than Dschami's day.

Whispered the muse in Saadi's cot ;  
O gentle Saadi, listen not,  
Tempted by thy praise of wit,  
Or by thirst and appetite,  
For the talents not thine own,  
To sons of contradiction,  
Never, son of eastern morning,  
Follow falsehood, follow scorning,  
Denounce who will, who will deny,  
And pile the hills to scale the sky,  
Let theist, atheist, pantheist,  
Define and wrangle how they list,  
Fierce conserver, fierce destroyer, —  
But thou joy-giver and enjoyer,  
Unknowing war, unknowing crime,  
Gentle Saadi, mind thy rhyme,  
Heed not what the brawlers say,  
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.

Let the great world bustle on  
With war and trade, with camp and town ;  
A thousand men shall dig and eat ;  
At forge and furnace thousands sweat ;  
And thousands sail the purple sea ;  
And give or take the stroke of war ;  
Or crowd the market and bazaar ;  
Oft shall war end and peace return,  
And cities rise where cities burn,  
Ere one man my hill shall climb,  
Who can turn the golden rhyme ;  
Let them manage how they may,  
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.  
Seek the living among the dead,  
Man in man is imprisoned,

Barefooted Dervish is not poor,  
 If fate unlock his bosom's door,  
 So that what his eye hath seen,  
 His tongue can paint as bright, as keen ;  
 And what his tender heart hath felt,  
 With equal fire thy heart shall melt.  
 Now his memory is a den,  
 A sealed tomb from gods and men,  
 Whose rich secrets not transpire ;  
 Speech should be like air and fire ;  
 But to speak when he assays,  
 His voice is bestial and base ;  
 Himself he heareth hiss or hoot,  
 And crimson shame him maketh mute ;  
 But whom the muses smile upon  
 And touch with soft persuasion,  
 His words like a storm-wind can bring  
 Terror and Beauty on their wing,  
 In his every syllable  
 Lurketh nature veritable ;  
 And though he speak in midnight dark,  
 In heaven, no star ; on earth, no spark ;  
 Yet before the listener's eye  
 Swims the world in ecstasy,  
 The forest waves, the morning breaks,  
 The pastures sleep, ripple the lakes,  
 Leaves twinkle, flowers like persons be,  
 And life pulsates in rock or tree.  
 Saadi ! so far thy words shall reach ;  
 Suns rise and set in Saadi's speech.

And thus to Saadi said the muse ;  
 Eat thou the bread which men refuse ;  
 Flee from the goods which from thee flee ;  
 Seek nothing ; Fortune seeketh thee.  
 Nor mount, nor dive ; all good things keep  
 The midway of the eternal deep.  
 Wish not to fill the isles with eyes  
 To fetch thee birds of paradise ;  
 On thine orchard's edge belong  
 All the brags of plume and song ;  
 Wise Ali's sunbright sayings pass  
 For proverbs in the market-place ;  
 Through mountains bored by regal art,  
 Toil whistles as he drives his cart.  
 Nor scour the seas, nor sift mankind,  
 A poet or a friend to find,  
 Behold, he watches at the door,  
 Behold his shadow on the floor.  
 Open innumerable doors  
 The heaven where unveiled Allah pours,  
 The flood of truth, the flood of good,  
 The Seraph's and the Cherub's food,

Those doors are men ; the Pariah hind  
 Admits thee to the perfect Mind.  
 Seek not beyond thy cottage wall  
 Redeemers that can yield thee all.  
 While thou sittest at thy door  
 On the desert's yellow floor,  
 Listening to the grayhaired crones,  
 Foolish gossips, ancient drones,  
 Saadi ! see, they rise in stature  
 'To the height of mighty Nature,  
 And the secret stands revealed,  
 Fraudulent Time in vain concealed,  
 That blessed gods in servile masks  
 Plied for thee thy household tasks.

---