

**YOUTH: A POEM OF
SOUL AND SENSE,
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Youth: A Poem of Soul and Sense, and Other Poems by Michael Monahan

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MICHAEL MONAHAN

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By
Michael Monahan

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Albany
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Contents

THE PRO-WORD *Page ix*

YOUTH:

A POEM OF SOUL AND SENSE 17-99

URBS IRÆ	101
A BELATED SINGER	112
EUTHANASY	118
THE TIME OF LOUIS THE GRAND	124
MARIAN: OR, THE CORSET	127
AFTER "AUX ITALIENS"	133
MARGIE	139
CATHERINE OF RUSSIA	142
JESUS OF MEXICO	147
A STAGE PICTURE	155

TO MY WIFE

DEDICATION	158
WILT THOU FORGET WITH ADDING YEARS	163
THE QUARREL	165
THE AWAKENING	170

CHILD CARE AND HEART CARE	175
HERE IS MY HAVEN	178
THY GUERDON	180
OH, LIFE AND LOVE, HOW SORDID YOU	182
THY FAITH	184
THE NIGHT I LED YOU HOME	186
SON OF MY YOUTH	188
UNBORN	192
HOME I CAME AND THOU WERT WAITING	193
THE LOVE WHICH NE'ER A CROSS HATH KNOWN	194
UNWORTHY	195
WERE I A BARD WITH ROSES CROWNED	196
A PRAYER	198

MISCELLANY POEMS

A WORSHIPPER	201
LIFE	203
RECOMPENSE	204
ON A PORTRAIT OF MARY STUART	206
CREDO CHRISTI	208
THE BISHOP	215
MY DEBT TO THEE, THOU PLEASANT WEED	219
A FRAGMENT	222
THE BIRTHDAY	226



THE PRO-WORD

TO-DAY is mine for tranquil mood:
As one that casts the sum of days,
And, looking back upon the ways,
Doth find the end alone is good,
And finis still the happy phrase.

To-day I chew no bitter food:
The barren count of my past years,
The fickle vows, the futile tears,
The niggard fate, the fortune rude—
All with a changèd grace appears.

So lives the hour when came the first
 Wild dream that, deep in my awed soul,
 There lay, like forming seed in scroll,
By Nature's mystic process nursed,
 A poet thought, unborn yet whole.

O fateful finding, fated hour
 When I did learn this wondrous thing!—
 A prophet Voice a word did bring
That laid on me an evil dower,
 And still hath dues of suffering.

A Voice which said: "A poet thou
 " Art glad to be?— well, very well;
 " But must thou take e'en what I tell,
" More than the sadness of thy brow,
 " Shall signify this oracle.

- “ No myrtled ease can e'er be thine
 “ Who, driven aye by harking need,
 “ Shalt make the Muse herself to bleed
“ And aloes bitter drink for wine,—
 “ Befitting thine own bitter need.
- “ Then shall a sore-divided toil
 “ Perplex thy spirit with its hest;
 “ And thou shalt beg in vain for rest
“ From gibing hours that aye despoil
 “ Thy aching brain, thy barren breast.
- “ And oft the strife for daily bread
 “ Shall mock the secret, shamèd task,
 “ Where thou dost ever pause and ask,
“ If this be as a poet said,
 “ Or wears the Muse an antic mask?

“ So shall the scant, reluctant fruit
 “ Which thou mayst pluck at fearful while—
 “ Still dreading moments that beguile
“ And leave the word unborn and mute—
 “ So shall it win a scornful smile:—

“ A smile of scorn, a pitying word;
 “ Yet who that hates could wish thee more,
 “ When sinks into thy soul's deep core
“ The shame thy fear hath oft averred,
 “ And all thy hope is slain before?

“ And then will come the blighting thought,
 “ How thou hast kept some solace out
 “ Of thy hard lot, that, all devout,
“ Thy task unselfish might be wrought,
 “ Tho' life's dear joys were put to rout.