

**POEMS BY ROBERT
SEYMOUR BRIDGES**

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Poems by Robert Seymour Bridges by Robert Seymour Bridges & Edward Bumpus

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ROBERT SEYMOUR BRIDGES & EDWARD BUMPUS

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SEYMOUR BRIDGES**

P O E M S.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE GROWTH OF LOVE."



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P O E M S.

I.

HYMN TO NATURE.

O WONDERFUL Nature, how I do love thee!
And yet not for thy wonders do I love thee.

This solid earth, whereon we stand and build
Firmly, and speak of motion and of rest,
Held by soft meshes of the assiduous air,
Her azure garment, that she spins and draws
Closely about her, and in gelid fields
Of space walks and is warm ; space unconceived,
Whose high unfabricated vault roofs in
The temple of our reason with a dome 10
Of overwhelming splendour and huge span ;
Fleck'd all about, for royal ornament,
With myriad myriads of burning stars,
Their flaming suns abated by the breath
Of silent ether to incertain sparks,
That the young crescent of a spendthrift moon
Can shend, as sailing in the summer sky
She draws the huddled waters in her train.

The engulfing waters of the pitiless sea,
That, in his weedy valleys charm'd awhile 20
Beneath the torpor of the imperial months,

Sends forth a stir of momentary waves
 To mock the molten sun, and like a pot
 Of ore spurting, fritters his wet expanse
 With shivered flame and dance amphibious.

The massy hills, whose solitary peaks
 Are clad with aching snow, and those deep vaults
 Whence fire of monstrous heat bursts at a wink.

All living creatures that are born and die,
 Whether for courage famed, for strength, or speed,
 For cunning, or for beauty, or gaudy show, 31
 Like the vain peacock with his Argus eyes,
 Juno's proud satellite; or whether strange,
 Outside our scale of reason and of grace,
 With wieldy trunk the cumbrous elephant
 Survive the burial of his fossil age,
 When beasts of like rude skin and mighty bone
 Wallowed in tropic ooze, or broke and browsed
 The tangled trees of rank malarious woods,
 Antediluvian, uninhabitable 40
 To softer races, whose more kind abodes
 To-day the lily and tender rose adorn:
 Things different, things opposite, extremes
 Irreconcilable, and all inwoven
 In an inextricable and undreamt
 Concatenation, from the plant that sucks
 Her virtue out of dirt, even unto man
 The wonder, who himself wonders to be
 A niggard mixture of few elements,
 Whose primal qualities inscrutable 50
 Ordain the sum of changes infinite.

O marvellous are these thy works, thereat
 I wonder, but yet love thee not for this.

(2.)

O cunning Nature, how I do love thee !
 And yet not for thy wisdom do I love thee.

To see how all thy greater laws still point
 To virtue, and an honourable life,—
 This is my solemn pleasure, and to note
 Thy sage contrivance, how it orders all
 To a sure continuance and progressive good. 60

A lesser, tenderer delight I feel
 On any summer morning, when I see
 The angelic dew fly to the gates of heaven
 In cool inodorous incense, that unveils
 The sprinkled herbs pricking their joyous stalks
 To meet the awakening radiance of the sun.

I see the obedient water leave its salt,
 And gathered into shadowing clouds, go sail
 Far inland, over cultivated plains
 And thirsty pasturage ; there to descend 70
 Drenching the land, till it refuse to drink,
 And voices are aroused at night of streams,
 That brawling leap their dams to join the flood,
 Which floats the ripened harvest to the sea.

I see the emulous flowers invite the bee,
 Whose venerable instinct brings to each
 Its fructifying germ ; while he is bent,
 Rich with his grateful robbery, to store
 'Gainst barren times his waxen palaces.

I see the tufted seeds, borne on the wind, 80
 Anchor in sheltered havens there to root ;
 And all I see I see with those two gems
 Which thou hast set for guidance in the head
 Of every mover in earth, air, or sea :

The laws of whose construction, and the means
 Adapted, and the miracle of light
 Is a whole science well to understand.

Then the birds' untaught music when I hear,
 The unwritten languages of many a beast,
 And those harmonious sounds thy scholar man 90
 Has far outdone thee in, and all his art
 Of words,—that art wherein I praise thee now,—
 And think of all those evercircling waves
 Of atomic vibration, that impinge
 And cross and join, part and amalgamate,
 Each bearing still his message and his voice,
 Still recognized, and separable still
 To the admirable ear,—Oh! I admire,
 I bear all in my heart, and I admire,
 But yet, oh yet I love thee not for this. 100

(3.)

O royal Nature! how I do love thee!
 And yet not for thy monarchy I love thee.

The inviolable, omnipresent laws,
 That fix alike in its determined seat
 Each sightless grain of multitudinous sand
 Upon the shore, and awe the glorious sun
 In strait constrained obedience, that he travel
 His fiery way, revolving peaceably
 The centre of his courteous satellites,
 In a direction that is no direction, 110
 To a place that is no place: The sovran laws
 Whose preëxistence mocks eternity,
 Whose jurisdiction lessens space to nought,
 Extending infinitely far beyond

The infinity of thought : The almighty laws,
 That make our pleasures an eternal thing,
 To ply the art our fathers plied before,
 And sing again the songs our fathers sung,
 Nursing our souls in their own histories,
 Till empty fame become a Cynic's bait : 120
 I know them, for they master me ; asleep
 I feel their secret presence, and I wake
 In fear lest I should stumble on my way ;
 But worship, mounting on their marble stairs
 Up to the justice-seat, where thou art set,
 Secure, careless of men, the god of gods.

Lo ! I have studied day and night to learn
 How man, born without knowledge, should obey,
 Esteeming wisdom but obedience,
 And how to meet, with a preparèd face, 130
 And duteous, the grim terrors of the goal,
 When the familiar body that we love
 Is given to soulless and ignoble worms
 For food, and all the rich recondite blood
 For fuel to fire that earth may have her own :
 Lo ! I have worshipped ere I knew, and now
 I know I dare to worship ; but within
 Shudder :—ah yet I love thee not for this.

(4.)

O Nature, Nature how I do love thee !
 Where should I love then if I did not love thee ? 140
 Son of thy womb and cradle, who hast taught
 This beating heart to feed the eyes with love,
 And pour sweet music in the enamour'd ears.
 Who mak'st this faulty house of flesh the home