

**FIRST BOOK OF
LONDON VISIONS;
THE PRAISE OF LIFE**

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First Book of London Visions; The Praise of life by Laurence Binyon

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LAURENCE BINYON

**FIRST BOOK OF
LONDON VISIONS;
THE PRAISE OF LIFE**

FIRST BOOK OF
LONDON
VISIONS

BY
LAURENCE
BINYON



LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET
1896

TO
STEPHEN & MAY

168526

NOTE

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LONDON VISIONS

FIRST BOOK

I

THE SLEEPERS

As a swallow, that sits on the roof,
I gaze on the world aloof ;

In the silence, when men lie sleeping,
I hear the noise of weeping :

The tears, by Day derided,
To tender Night confided.

Ah, now I listen, I cannot delay
In thoughts apart ; I must not stay.

The doors are closed and fast : unseen,
With stealthy feet I glide between.

I see the sleepers asleep in their beds,
Negligent arms, motionless heads ;

Beautiful in the bloom of slumber,
Peaceful armies without number.

Not here I linger : the sigh of those
That sleep not, draws me with answered throes.

A mother, mapping her day of cares,
On her sleeping baby softly stares.

A youth, by shameful sorrow torn,
Thinks on the unendurable morn.

By her husband, a wife unhappy lies,
With bitter heart and open eyes.

An old man hears the voice of the wave,
His dear son's cold, unquiet grave.

Alone in the lonely, listening night
A child lies still in dumb affright :

The burden of all dark things unknown
Weighs on his trembling heart like stone.

A man remembers his dead love's smile,
And his tranquil courage is quelled awhile.

My heart is heavy with love and pain ;
The tears within me oppress my brain.

O what shall I tell you, you that ache
And number the laggard hours awake ?

O stabbed and stricken, what soothing art
Shall I use, to assuage the wounds that smart ?

The consolation that, ere I knew
Love and sorrow, I fancied true,
Is faint and helpless, now I find,
As beauty told in the ears of the blind :
And I cannot tell, if I would, the thought
That strengthens me most, when my heart is
wrought.

O brother, that cannot the days undo,
Could I but the reckoning pay for you !

O mother, sink your head in peace,
And I will your knot of care release.

Dear child, give me your dread to bear :
I hold your hand, I stroke your hair,

It is I, who love you, that watch and keep
Darkness from you, the while you sleep.

I have no counsel ; I know not why
In your breasts the arrows burning lie ;

I cannot heal your hurts, nor take
The sharp iron out of souls that ache.

O yet, as I watch, the lashes close
A little, the eyes their lids dispose ;

The hand that fondly lies in mine
Relaxes ; the wearied heads decline.

And now on wings the sorrows flee
From the happy sleepers, hither to me.

O noiseless sorrows, darkly thronging,
My heart is prepared : my tender longing

You alone can appease, with tears,
With pangs, with passion, with shame, with fears.

Feed on my heart that is open and bare,
Feed your fill, sorrow and care :

Take me, pains of all souls forlorn.
For O too swiftly arrives the morn.