

**ASTERS AND
GOLDEN-ROD:
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Asters and Golden-Rod: And Other Poems by George Lansing Taylor

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Geo. Lansing Taylor.

Asters and Golden-Rod

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By

GEORGE LANSING TAYLOR, D.D., L.H.D.



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Asters and Golden-Rod

Asters and golden-rod, yellow and blue,
Tulips and violets long ago fled;
Summer with roses and lilies is dead;
Whence, in the year's old age, came you,
In pomp of purple and golden hue?

"Out of the Summer's heart we came,
Born of her lifelong ardor and glow
In the sky above and the ground below;
Her drenching showers and her solar flame;
Till, just as she died, she spoke our name.

"Strangers and exiles in disguise,
Through all the summer we've stood alone,
Our worth unguessed, unprized, and unknown,
Mere rough, rank weeds to men's untaught eyes,
For the world to trample, neglect, despise.

"But patient and silent we grew and grew,
Drinking the noontide's liquid gold,
Drinking the colors the raindrops hold,
The tints that sparkle in morning's dew,
And night's deep azure, when stars shine through.

"We drank till our life could hold no more
The secrets gorging our crystal blood,
The splendors swelling each bursting bud,
Drawn from the deep earth's dazzling store,
Or rainbows bending creation o'er.

"And then in a whisper the Summer said:
 'My lowly children, I die to-day.
 Put on your purple and gold array,
And wave in glory above my head,
Confessed and royal, when I am dead.'

"One glowing kiss, and the Summer died;
 But, thrilled at the touch, and the words she spoke,
 From all our being the splendor broke,
And field and forest and rough roadside
Stood robed in more than imperial pride.

"And that is our story, and whence we came:
 All summer you slighted us, trod us down,
 But we knew in the day of our robe and crown
Men then would prize us, and own our claim,
And boast that all summer they'd known our name."

Asters, purple and blue and white,
 Yellow and orange golden-rod,
 Ah, ye are preachers, prophets of God,
Writing your message in rainbow light,
A revelation in all men's sight.

The humblest creature of mortal mold
 May shine, a spirit of godlike worth
 Whose blooming at last shall illumine the earth
With achievement's purple, or virtue's gold,
When short-lived glories are dead and cold.

The lowliest soul that has caught God's chime,
 Though long enduring the world's disdain,
 And pining in lone heart-hunger and pain,
Yet bearing a prophet's word sublime,
Shall speak at last—and be heard through time.

THE POET'S INSPIRATION

Rational,—mad,—
Mournful,—tho' glad,—
Happy,—yet sad,—
Transported,—elated,—
Heaven-gifted,—but fated,—
Joy and woe
Alternate flow,
Sadly sweet,—sublimely strong,
Through the spirit born for song.

Melancholy,—wild,—
Rapture's lonely child,
From all around exiled,—
A lonely, musing elf,—
Known only to himself,—
Doth he roam
Through fancy's gloam;
On his soul the trances lie
Of a spirit, hovering nigh.

A presence undefined,
Yet real to his mind;
Too subtle and refined
For thought to analyze,
But, by his spirit eyes
Seen, when sense
Lies locked in trance;
And oft unbidden doth it stand,
And felt, though viewless, guides his hand.

It stands before his soul,
And points to fame's bright goal,
And to a flaming scroll;

It breathes a potent spell,
And then his heart doth swell
With fiery thrills
Of joy that fills
His whole, enraptured, kindled frame
With deathless energy and flame.

Then let him wake the lyre,
Whose numbers roll in fire,
And bid the song aspire,
Until the human soul
Is tuned to his control,
And hearts obey
His potent sway,
Ecstatic, lofty, rapt, and pure,
While thought shall live, or soul endure.

LOVE'S PROBLEM

To love, with spotless, vestal flame,
Pure as an incandescent star,—
A soul-fire which no words can name,
A soul-rhythm that can know no jar;—

To walk in that transfiguring light
O'er heights by mortal foot untrod,
And feel within the swelling might
Of inspiration like a god;—

And thus to wait, and work, and climb
In lofty scorn of baser things;
And grow in conscious strength sublime,
Lifted by unseen angels' wings;—

To prove all pure, high love can give
To thrill, illumine, and inspire,—
Wrapt in ethereal airs to live
Consumed with quenchless, fragrant fire;—

To ask,—and be refused, with tears!
To doubt the slow, reluctant "Nay";—
To still strive on, and hope through years
That yet the "Nay" may change to "Yea";—

To ask and be denied again,—
Yet with more sorrow than before!—
To drag this ever-lengthening chain
Yet ever love its links the more!

And still the mystery unexplained,—
And still the tangle deeper grown,—
And yet the end no nearer gained
Than in the once bright years, long flown;—

And yet the loved one still unwed,—
Still sailing lonely o'er life's sea,—
No signal at that ship's masthead,—
Or, if a signal, still for thee!—

To tack and cross each other's wake,
To meet in harbors here and there,—
Yet not a light when tempests break,
And no "Ahoy!" when winds are fair!

And yet to know as years go by
That some deep truth still bides untold;—
That, far or near, some mystic tie,
Though ne'er confessed, must ever hold;—