

SONGS OF LIFE AND DEATH

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649386413

Songs of life and death by John Payne

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOHN PAYNE

**SONGS OF
LIFE AND DEATH**

SONGS
OF
LIFE AND DEATH.

J. H. Lawrence

SONGS
of
LIFE AND DEATH

BY
JOHN PAYNE

AUTHOR OF

'INTAGLIOS: SONNETS,' 'THE MASQUE OF SHADOWS, ETC.'

'April that is messenger to May'—CHAUCER

120275
151112

LONDON
HENRY S. KING & Co., 65 CORNHILL
1872

DEDICATION

TO RICHARD WAGNER.

*Master and chief of all for whom the singers
Strain with full bosoms and ecstatic throats,
For whom the strings beneath the flying fingers,
The clear pipes and the viols, yield their notes,—*

*Lord over all for whom the trumpets thunder,
For whom the harps throb like the distant sea,
For whom the shrill sweet flutings cleave in sunder
The surges of the strings that meet and flee,—*

*O strong sweet soul, whose life is as a mountain
Hymned round about with stress of spirit-choirs,
Whose mighty song leaps sunward like a fountain,
Reaching for lightnings from celestial fires,—*

*O burning heart and tender, highest, mildest,
Nightingale-throated, with the eagle's wing,—
This sheaf of songs, culled where the ways are wildest
And the shade deepest, to thy feet I bring !*

*I hail thee as from many hearts that cherish,
Serve, and keep white thy thought within their shrines,
Where the flame fades not, though its lustre perish,
Midmost the lurid and the stormy signs.*

I greet thee as from those great mates departed
Who first taught Song to know the ways of Soul,
Fit harbingers of thee, the eagle-hearted,
Saw in the art the new sun-planets roll.*

*I greet thee with a promise and a cheering—
I, that have loved thee many weary years,
I, that with eyes strained for the dawn's appearing,
Have clung to thee for hope and healing tears ;*

*I, that am nought, whose weakling voice has in it
The shrill sole sadness of one wailing note ;
No nightingale I, but a sad-voiced linnæus,
Piping thin ditties from a bleeding throat ;*

* Gluck, Schumann, Hector Berlioz.

*I—since the masters list no voice to-thee-ward
To stay thy battle in the weary time—
Send forth for thee these weak-winged songs to seaward,
To bear to thee their freight of idle rhyme.*

*Ah, how weak-voiced and little worth, my master!
Yet haply, as a lark-song on the breeze,
That winging through the air, black with disaster,
Hearstens some exile pacing by the seas,*

*So even mine, my weak and unskilled singing
May smile thine ear with no unpleasing notes,
What time the shrill sounds of the fight are ringing
About thee, and the clamour of dull throats.*

*And peradventure (for least love is grateful)
The humble song may, for a little while,
Smooth from thy brow the sadness high and fateful,
Call to thy lips the rare and tender smile.*

*My harmonies are harmonies of sadness,
My light is but as starlight on the wane:
Far nobler bards shall cheer thee with their gladness;
I bring thee but the songpulse of my pain.*

*Be not disheartened, O our Zoroaster,
O mage of our new music-world of fire !
Thou art not all unfriended, O my master !
Let not the great heart fail thee for desire.*

*What matter though the storm-wind round thee rages,
Though men judge weakly with imperfect sight !
O master-singer of the heroic ages,
Each dawn is brighter with the appointed light.*

*Hate's echoes on the inconstant air but languish,
Win not within the world's true heart to be,—
Faint wails for us of far-off souls in anguish,
That chide their own sick selves in all they see.*

*Thine is the Future—hardly theirs the Present,
The flowerless days that put forth leaf and die—
Theirs that lie steeped in idle days and pleasant,
Letting the pageant of the years pass by.*

*For the days hasten when shall all adore thee,
All at thy spring shall drink, and know it sweet ;
All the false temples shall fall down before thee,
Ay—and the false gods crumble at thy feet.*

*Then shall men set thee in their holy places,
Hymn thee with anthems of remembering ;
Faiths shall spring up and blossom in thy traces,
Thick as the violets cluster round the spring.*

*And then, perchance, when in the brighter ages
Men shall awake and know the god they scorned,
And, mad with grief, grave upon marble pages
(That therewithal the Future may be warned)*

*The tale of their remorse and shame undying,
They, coming where thy name has kept these sweet—
These idle songs of mine—shall set with sighing
My name upon the marble at thy feet,*

*For that, when all made mock of and denied thee,
Seeing not the portent and the fiery sword,
I from my dream in the mid-heaven descried thee,
Saw and confessed thee, knew and named thee Lord.*