

**AS IT WAS IN THE  
BEGINNING.  
A POEM**

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As it was in the beginning. A poem by Joaquin Miller

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**JOAQUIN MILLER**

**AS IT WAS IN THE  
BEGINNING.  
A POEM**



# As it Was in The Beginning.

A POEM  
BY  
JOAQUIN MILLER



DEDICATED TO  
THE  
MOTHERS OF MEN.

WEISE

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AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING.

CANTO I.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.  
"And the earth was without form and void; and darkness  
was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved  
upon the face of the waters.

"And God said, let there be light: and there was light."

I

They sat the sundown bank beside,  
Beyond the rock-locked Gate of Gold \*  
So like that Golden Horn of old  
When Sappho sang and Phaon plied  
And silent watched the waning sun.  
Ten thousand miles of mobile sea —  
This sea of all seas blent as one  
Wide, unbound book of mystery,  
Of awe, of sibyl prophecy,  
Ere yet a ghost or misty ken  
Of God's far first beginning when  
Vast darkness lay upon the deep,  
And when God's spirit moved upon  
Such waters cradled in such sleep —  
Such night as never yet knew dawn,  
Such night as wierd atallaph weaves  
But never mortal man conceives.

II

He said — his face was leaned to hers,  
As warmest of all worshippers: —  
"In the beginning? Where and when,  
Before the fashioning of men  
Swung first His high lamp to and fro,  
To light us as we please to go?  
And where the waters, dark deeps when  
God spake and said, 'Let there be light'?"

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AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

They still house where they housed, as then  
Dark curtained with majestic night —  
Dusk Silence in travail of light  
That knew not man or man's, at all —  
Black battle-ship or steel-built wall.

III

" Aye, these, these were the waters when  
God spake and knew His white first-born,  
That far, first, new-born baby morn,  
Such eons ere the noise of men.  
Yon Southern Cross, high-built about  
The deep, set in a town of stars,  
Commemorates, forbids a doubt  
That here first fell God's golden bars —  
Red bars, with soft, white silver blent,  
Broad sown from sapphire firmament.

IV

" Behold what wave-lights leap and run  
Swift up the shale from out the sea!  
Inwove with silver, golden sun  
Light lingers in the tawny mane  
Of wild oats waving lazily  
Far up the climbing poppy<sup>b</sup> plain,  
Far up you steeps of dusk and dawn —  
Black night, white light, inwound as one.  
But when, when fell that far, first dawn  
With ways of gold to walk upon ?

V

" I know not when, but only know  
That darkness lay upon yon deep,  
Lay cradled, as a child asleep,  
And that God's spirit moved upon  
These waters ere the burst of dawn  
When first His high lamps to and fro  
Shone forth to guide which way to go.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

VI

" I only know that Silence keeps  
High court forever still hereon,  
That Silence lords alone these deeps,  
The silence of God's house and keeps  
Inviolate yon water's face,  
As if still His abiding place,  
As ere that far, first burst of dawn  
Ere fretful man set sail upon.

VII

' The deeps,' he mused, " are still as when  
Dusk Silence kept her curtained bed  
Low moaning for the birth of dawn,  
When she should push that night aside,  
As some dread nightmare most abhorred —  
When she might laughing look upon  
God's first-born glory, holy Light,  
As when fond Eve, exulting cried,  
In mother-pain, with mother-pride,  
' Behold the fair first-born of men,  
Behold a man-child of the Lord !  
I gat a man-child of the Lord ! ' "

VIII

" Aye, Silence seems some maid at prayer,  
God's arm about her when she prays  
And where she prays and everywhere,  
Or storm-strewn days or sundown days—  
What ill to Silence can befall  
Since Silence knows no ill at all ?

IX

" Vast Silence seems some twilight sky  
That leans as with her weight of stars  
To rest, to rest, no more to roam,  
But rest and rest eternally.  
She loosens and lets down the bars,  
She brings the kind-eyed cattle home,  
She breathes the fragrant field of hay  
And heaven is not far away.