

**THE DEATH OF
ADAMND, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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The Death of Adamnd, and Other Poems by Laurence Binyon

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LAURENCE BINYON

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BY LAURENCE BINYON**

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TO C. M. P.

*O Love, in whose heart-murmured name
Is charm against life's endless wrong,
Since all the untuned world became
In you a song!*

*I bring not only all I wrought
Into the faltering words of speech,
I dedicate the song I sought
Yet could not reach,*

*Nay, all that passionately fired
My heart with hope for ever new
Of unattained, but deep-desired
Beauty, to you.*

16 August, 1903

THE DEATH OF ADAM

CEDARS, that high upon the untrodden slopes
Of Lebanon stretch out their stubborn arms,
Through all the tempests of seven hundred years
Fast in their ancient place, where they look down
Over the Syrian plains and faint blue sea,
When snow for three days and three nights hath fall'n
Continually, and heaped those terraced boughs
To massy whiteness, still in fortitude
Maintain their aged strength, although they groan ;
In such a wintriness of majesty,
O'ersnowed by his uncounted years, and scarce
Supporting that hard load, yet not o'ercome,
Was Adam : all his knotted thews were shrunk,
Hollow his mighty thighs, toward which his beard,
Pale as the stream of far-seen waterfalls,
Hung motionless ; betwixt the shoulders grand
Bowed was the head, and dim the gaze ; and both
His heavy hands lay on his marble knees.
So sits he all day long and scarcely stirs,
And scarcely notes the bright shapes of his sons
Moving in the broad light without his tent,

That propt on poles about a giant oak
Looks southward to the river and the vale :
Only sometimes slowly he turns his head,
As seeking to recover some lost thought
From the dear presence of the white-haired Eve
Who, less in strength, hath less endured, and still
With slow and careful footsteps tendeth him,
Or seated opposite with silent eyes
Companions him ; their thoughts go hand in hand.
So now she sits reposing in the dusk
Of their wide tent, like a great vision throned
Of the Earth Mother, tranquil and august,
Accorded to some youthful votary
Deep in an Asian grove, under the moon.

Peace also rests on Adam ; not such peace
As comes forlornly to men dulled with cares,
Whom no ennobling memory uplifts ;
Peace of a power far mightier than his own,
Outlasting all it fostered into life,
Pervades him and sustains him : such a peace
As blesses mossed and mouldering architraves
Of pillars standing few among the wreck
Of many long since fallen, pillars old,
Reared by a race long vanished, where the birds
Nest as in trees, and every crevice flowers,
As mothering Earth, having some time indulged
Men's little uses, makes their ruin fair
Ere in her bosom it be folded up.

Thus Adam's mind relinquishing the world,
That grows more dim around him every day,
Withdraws into itself, and in degree
As all that mates him to the moving hours,
Even as his outward joy and vigour fail,
So surely turns his homing spirit back
Unto those silent sources whence delight
And hope and strength and buoyancy of old
Flowed fresh upon his youth, persisting still
To seek those first and fairest memories
In youth and sunshine O how lightly lost,
How difficult in darkness to regain !
He sits in idle stillness, yet at times
From the dark wells of musing some old hour
Floats upward, as the tender lotus lifts
Her swaying stalk up through the limpid depth
Of pools in rivers never known to man,
And buoyed on idle wet luxurious leaves
Peacefully opens white bloom after bloom.
He is rapt far from this last shore of age ;
He sees the face of Eve as she approached
To bring him flowers new-found in Paradise,
Or hiding her young sorrow on his breast ;
And Abel as a child and Cain with him
Playing beneath the shadow of old trees,
All dearer by the desert interposed
Of time and toil and passionate regret,
Troubling his inmost spirit, until his face,
Wrought with remembrance and with longing, wears