

THE DYING MUSICIAN

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The Dying Musician by Mary Elizabeth Powell

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MARY ELIZABETH POWELL

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MUSICIAN**

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Boston: Richard G. Badger

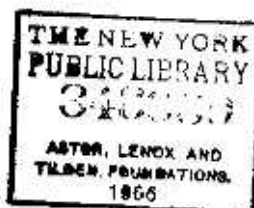
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The Dying Musician

I

EVENING

I

Courage, thou soul of mine! Not long — not long
Will linger time! Life's day is nearly done!
A few more hours, and then — the angel's song!
The victor's palm! The everlasting sun
Of righteousness will rise with healing wings!
In that blest life so soon to be begun
Earth's woes will be as ne'er remembered things!
And thou wilt quaff the sparkling streams that run
From fountains whence love's pure fulfillment
springs!

2

Though darkness falls, the heavens are wondrous
clear
And from my window's height I see afar
The pale moon rising in the east, while near
Her silver horn there sinks one glowing star.
Ah! now it sets! It dies with light unfurled
To rise in glory on another world!
O star of love! — that in my youth didst rise
So heavenly bright — but to be overcast!
Wilt thou not rise again on fairer skies
And shine with all the radiance of the past?

I

3

And Friend, my truest Friend, when it shall be
 That all my feeble strength, and breath are
 spent
 Should any standing near weep over me
 Say, that though early called, I was content.
 And though to thee too harsh may seem the fate
 That calls me thus in life's full prime away
 Shed thou no tears, for from death's opening gate
 I glimpse the radiance of a brighter day.

4

Yea! even when I sink in weakness low
 My spirit thrills with mystic power divine,
 As if from death a healing fount did flow;
 What love, what rapt devotion then is mine!
 And oft in waking dreams I seem to list
 To low, soft songs, more sweet than earth's may
 be,
 Then joy flows round me like a golden mist
 Charmed amid waves of heavenly harmony.

5

And with those notes, — soft as Eolian strains
 Blown by Aurora on the breath of Morn, —
 A perfect peace descends, freed from all pains
 I seem on wings of blissful sound upborne
 To higher spheres, where palely radiant forms
 Divinely fair float heaven and earth between —
 Love's glow of pure desire my spirit warms
 And then I sink, — as now — to rest serene.

II

MORNING

I

I thought to pass last night, but with the light
Nature revives, and as the expiring ray
Of the spent taper grows in death more bright
Thus strength returns as life's flame wastes away.
And thou hast watched all night my friend o'er me—
God bless thee for a love which never tires!
Come near — I've something I would say to thee
To thee alone, — ere life's last gleam expires.

2

One day, — 'twas several weeks — nay, months —
ago
Thou didst inquire concerning my past life;
Thy love for me being great, thou fain wouldst
know
The hist'ry of my early toils and strife.
Since then I've traced the record. — Duly
'Twas finished. Here's the scroll. Slowly I
wrought
In weakness, yet tried, disguising nought
To tell of life and of a love that truly
Was my soul's life, — the essence of my thought.

3

I could not speak of it — I have not breathed
To living ears the tale I've traced for thee: —
Record of months that love with garlands
wreathed —
Love that to death alone conducted me.
What hours were those! Their memory thrills me
still

3

When the whole world seemed only hers and
mine
Such full content, such joy did me then fill
That peccant earth seemed more than heaven
divine.

4

Open this casket, Friend, it will disclose
The hoarded treasures of those happy days;
They are but few, — only a withered rose —
A curl, as golden bright as noon day rays;
A little note, discolored by the soil
Of constant touch and tears from these poor eyes:
Mementos dear! from which though faded all
Sweet odors from a perfumed past arise.

5

This rose, — 'tis brittle, dry, and dead — dost see?
And hueless, yet its hist'ry will reveal
A story of such love and constancy
As hearts of deepest strength alone may feel.
My rose of love! — thou wert a wintry one!
Whose bright bloom faded long and long ago
And perished when grew pale that summer's sun.
(Ah me, the thorns remained!) Yet well I know
Its roots contained a germ that in some clime —
Some fairer world, will to perfection grow
And bud and bloom, a flower of love divine.
As far surpassing such that earth doth show
As heaven itself surpasses all below.

6

But read the tale. Then should thy judgment move
To censure harsh, for having dared to love
(E'en as great Tasso) one above me far
And hopeless of attainment as a star —
My one defense, — even as his — must be

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