

STARLIGHT SONGS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649429981

Starlight Songs by Evelyn Threlfall

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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EVELYN THRELFALL

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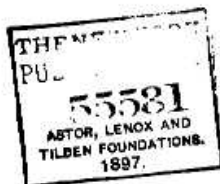
*"Thou clearest Star of all the throng,
Above dim sea and shadowy shore,
Take thou this broken gift of song;
Alas! that I can give no more."*

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER, & CO. L^{TD}

PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1895
S.S.C.



*Shells gathered idly by a Southern sea,
Fragile, broken toys wave-scattered on the sand,
—Such are the dreamful songs I bring to thee,
Not worth thy glance; but thou wilt understand
How Memory and how Hope walked hand in hand
H'ere, by Love's ebbing ocean-tide set free,
The pale sea-grass, the bright shell's burning band,
Gave token of his boundless treasury.*

*I have no notes to reach Love's depth and height,
And the sea keeps its secret to the last,
Holding the mirrored stars of Southern night,
Holding all dreams to come, all raptures past,
Salt with eternal tears—even this is Love,
My song a shell, my life a wave thereof.*

OVERTURE

STARS! as gold in the mines of night,
Stars, as joys on the face of pain,
Look on us, who remember again
Morning and noontide vanished from sight.
Where is the Sun-god's glory and might,
The three-fold arch at the gates of rain,
The rippled cloudlets light and white,
The green of grass, and the gold of grain?
Where is the day at whose heart we have lain?
But the ear of Night makes all prayers vain!

What of the morrows that, glad or weeping,
Tread the old paths to the one old end?—
Rushes, over our graves that bend,
Bow to earth at their wings' wide sweeping,
Sand upon dust is Time upheaping
As drops of rain with a river blend;
And the winged days touch not our place of sleeping,
With lips grown languid to foe and friend,

We blame no more what the gods may send,
The once rent robe they may not rend ;
What shall our loss be, what our gain ?
But the ear of Night makes all prayers vain !

Children glad to the pale night born,
Fair star-children, only you
Out of the deep dusk dank with dew
Shine on us, speak to us, us forlorn
With feet way-weary and garments torn,
No prize but sleep for our soul's due ;
Though noontide gave us burning scorn
And purple grief was the twilight's hue,
You, silver-speared, one hope pursue,
Join hands, and stretch from the old to the new,
The new day, born without sorrow or stain !
But the ear of Night makes all prayers vain !

Are you souls of joys dead long ago,
Joys that weep on the breast of God,
Weep for glad gardens yet untrod
At the first fierce breath of the wind and snow ;
Though life-germs slumber their feet below,
Even where the death frost nips the sod,
They may not welcome them, for they go
Where by dark streams pale poppies nod.

OVERTURE

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For the lips of Love have kissed the rod
And his feet go down into Hell unshod,
Shall no crown in the end for his cross remain?
But the ear of Night makes all prayers vain!

We dreamed Life different, aye, and Death
A dream, a trance, but not a grave;
New worlds we looked for, strong and brave
For Heaven above, or Hell beneath.
But as the rose dies in yon wreath
We die, and Earth receives, who gave.
Rust, warrior's sword, within the sheath!
Lie still, dry brush, dead craftsman's slave!
The hands that wielded, no more crave
Through you the crowns that could not save,
They sow, they go—Fate reaps the grain,
But the ear of Night makes all prayers vain!

Stars, you are above, and beneath, the sea,
Sea that spreads to the far South Pole,
Thither the following billows roll,
Thither the gull flies, and is free,
But oh, sweet stars, 'twixt you and me,
A greater grief outstrips control
And is not measured as this may be.
No waves waft onward the pilgrim soul,

Her guiding chart is an empty scroll,
She shall sink, sink, sink, from her stars, her goal,
To the depths of space, where the worlds refrain,
Oh Night! good-night, if our prayers be vain!

Stars of the South we call you ; yet,
South and North and East and West
Are one to your cold eternal rest,
To your eyes that watch years rise and set
With bitter longing and mad regret,
The lives of men unguided, unblest,
The dust of Earth that the years forget.
See yonder, over the black hill crest,
The light of a cross on Night's mournful breast,
The cross with the crown in Heaven, seen best
By wanderers burnt with the red sun-stain.
Oh Night! good-night, if our prayers be vain!

Lo, yon half shut magnolia flower
That in dark foliage dimly hides,
Robed in white beauty like a bride's,
Is queen of all the moonlit hour ;
Not England's rose, her June's best dower,
In whose warm heart the bee abides,
Wins memory back, as from dark bower
The great white star uncuris, divides,