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# Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

## Tamerlane

Kind solace in a dying hour!  
Such, father, is not (now) my theme—  
I will not madly deem that power  
Of Earth may shrive me of the sin  
Unearthly pride hath revell'd in—  
I have no time to dote or dream:  
You call it hope—that fire of fire!  
It is but agony of desire:  
If I can hope—Oh God! I can—  
Its fount is holier—more divine—  
I would not call thee fool, old man,  
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit  
Bow'd from its wild pride into shame.  
O! yearning heart! I did inherit  
Thy withering portion with the fame,  
The searing glory which hath shone  
Amid the jewels of my throne,  
Halo of Hell! and with a pain  
Not Hell shall make me fear again—  
O! craving heart, for the lost flowers  
And sunshine of my summer hours!  
Th' undying voice of that dead time,  
With its interminable chime,

Rings, in the spirit of a spell,  
Upon thy emptiness—a knell.

I have not always been as now:  
The fever'd diadem on my brow  
I claim'd and won usurpingly—  
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given  
Rome to the Caesar—this to me?  
The heritage of a kingly mind,  
And a proud spirit which hath striven  
Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life:  
The mists of the Taglay have shed  
Nightly their dew upon my head,  
And, I believe, the wingèd strife  
And tumult of the headlong air  
Have nestled in my very hair.

So late from Heaven—that dew—it fell  
(Mid dreams of an unholy night)  
Upon me—with the touch of Hell,  
While the red flashing of the light  
From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er,  
Appeared to my half-closing eye  
The pageantry of monarchy,  
And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar  
Came hurriedly upon me, telling  
Of human battle, where my voice,  
My own voice, silly child!—was swelling  
(O! how my spirit would rejoice,

And leap within me at the cry)  
The battle-cry of Victory!

The rain came down upon my head  
Unshelter'd—and the heavy wind  
Was giantlike—so thou, my mind!—  
It was but man, I thought, who shed  
Laurels upon me: and the rush—  
The torrent of the chilly air  
Gurgled within my ear the crush  
Of empires—with the captive's prayer—  
The hum of suitors—and the tone  
Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,  
Usurp'd a tyranny which men  
Have deem'd, since I have reach'd to power;  
My innate nature—be it so:  
But, father, there liv'd one who, then,  
Then—in my boyhood—when their fire  
Burn'd with a still intenser glow,  
(For passion must, with youth, expire)  
E'en then who knew this iron heart  
In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words—alas!—to tell  
The loveliness of loving well!  
Nor would I now attempt to trace  
The more than beauty of a face  
Whose lineaments, upon my mind,  
Are—shadows on th' unstable wind:

Thus I remember having dwelt  
Some page of early lore upon,  
With loitering eye, till I have felt  
The letters—with their meaning—melt  
To fantasies—with none.

O, she was worthy of all love!  
Love—as in infancy was mine—  
'Twas such as angel minds above  
Might envy; her young heart the shrine  
On which my ev'ry hope and thought  
Were incense—then a goodly gift,  
For they were childish—and upright—  
Pure—as her young example taught:  
Why did I leave it, and, adrift,  
Trust to the fire within, for light?

We grew in age—and love—together,  
Roaming the forest, and the wild;  
My breast her shield in wintry weather—  
And, when the friendly sunshine smil'd,  
And she would mark the opening skies,  
I saw no Heaven—but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is—the heart:  
For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,  
When, from our little cares apart,  
And laughing at her girlish wiles,  
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,  
And pour my spirit out in tears—  
There was no need to speak the rest—

No need to quiet any fears  
Of her—who ask'd no reason why,  
But turn'd on me her quiet eye!

Yet more than worthy of the love  
My spirit struggled with, and strove,  
When, on the mountain peak, alone,  
Ambition lent it a new tone—  
I had no being—but in thee:  
The world, and all it did contain  
In the earth—the air—the sea—  
Its joy—its little lot of pain  
That was new pleasure—the ideal,  
Dim, vanities of dreams by night—  
And dimmer nothings which were real—  
(Shadows—and a more shadowy light!)  
Parted upon their misty wings,  
And, so, confusedly, became  
Thine image, and—a name—a name!  
Two separate—yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious—have you known  
The passion, father? You have not:  
A cottager, I mark'd a throne  
Of half the world as all my own,  
And murmur'd at such lowly lot—  
But, just like any other dream,  
Upon the vapour of the dew  
My own had past, did not the beam  
Of beauty which did while it thro'

The minute—the hour—the day—oppress  
My mind with double loveliness.

We walk'd together on the crown  
Of a high mountain which look'd down  
Afar from its proud natural towers  
Of rock and forest, on the hills—  
The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers  
And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,  
But mystically—in such guise  
That she might deem it naught beside  
The moment's converse; in her eyes  
I read, perhaps too carelessly—  
A mingled feeling with my own—  
The flush on her bright cheek, to me  
Seem'd to become a queenly throne  
Too well that I should let it be  
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then,  
And donn'd a visionary crown—  
Yet it was not that Fantasy  
Had thrown her mantle over me—  
But that, among the rabble—men,  
Lion ambition is chain'd down—  
And crouches to a keeper's hand—  
Not so in deserts where the grand  
The wild—the terrible conspire  
With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand!—  
Is not she queen of Earth? her pride  
Above all cities? in her hand  
Their destinies? in all beside  
Of glory which the world hath known  
Stands she not nobly and alone?  
Falling—her veriest stepping-stone  
Shall form the pedestal of a throne—  
And who her sovereign? Timour—he  
Whom the astonished people saw  
Striding o'er empires haughtily  
A diadem'd outlaw—



O! human love! thou spirit given,  
On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven!  
Which fall'st into the soul like rain  
Upon the Siroc wither'd plain,  
And failing in thy power to bless



But leav'st the heart a wilderness!  
Idea! which bindest life around  
With music of so strange a sound  
And beauty of so wild a birth—  
Farewell! for I have won the Earth!

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could see  
No cliff beyond him in the sky,  
His pinions were bent droopingly—  
And homeward turn'd his soften'd eye.  
'Twas sunset: when the sun will part  
There comes a sullenness of heart  
To him who still would look upon  
The glory of the summer sun.  
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist,  
So often lovely, and will list  
To the sound of the coming darkness (known  
To those whose spirits hearken) as one  
Who, in a dream of night, would fly  
But cannot from a danger nigh.

What tho' the moon—tho' the white moon  
Shed all the splendour of her noon,  
Her smile is chilly—and her beam,  
In that time of dreariness, will seem  
(So like you gather in your breath)  
A portrait taken after death.  
And boyhood is a summer sun  
Whose waning is the dreariest one—  
For all we live to know is known,  
And all we seek to keep hath flown—

Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall  
With the noon-day beauty—which is all.

I reach'd my home—my home no more—  
For all had flown who made it so—  
I pass'd from out its mossy door,  
And, tho' my tread was soft and low,  
A voice came from the threshold stone  
Of one whom I had earlier known—  
O! I defy thee, Hell, to show  
On beds of fire that burn below,  
A humbler heart—a deeper woe.

Father, I firmly do believe—  
I know—for Death, who comes for me  
From regions of the blest afar,  
Where there is nothing to deceive,  
Hath left his iron gate ajar,  
And rays of truth you cannot see  
Are flashing thro' Eternity—  
I do believe that Eblis hath  
A snare in ev'ry human path—  
Else how, when in the holy grove  
I wandered of the idol, Love,  
Who daily scents his snowy wings  
With incense of burnt offerings  
From the most unpolluted things,  
Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven  
Above with trelliced rays from Heaven  
No mote may shun—no tiniest fly  
The light'ning of his eagle eye—

How was it that Ambition crept,  
Unseen, amid the revels there,  
Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt  
In the tangles of Love's very hair?