

ROSEMARY AND PANSIES

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There's rosemary, that's for remembrance
and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.
(Hamlet IV, v.)

Ephemeral as gnat which dances out
Its single hour of time, in giddy rout
With mad companions, on wild wanton wing,
Is man, although to him life seems to bring
Great length of days and years, slow passing on,
Recorded by the sure-time-keeping sun,
Unconscious he that his long "thousand years"
To Higher Vision as "one day" appears.

That day bursts forth in magical light
Which knows no darkness and fears no night.
The sun, like a god, from the sky stoops down
And sets on his head a gilded crown
For him as a conqueror to wear,
And subdue to his will all of good and fair.

Elate, inspired by the heaven's bright glance,
He begins, like the gnat, his blithe sun-dance.
He scatters the dew, he gathers the flowers,
And steps himself in the morning hours.
The moments slip by like pearls from a thread,
He knows not, nor cares, that each drops dead.

He feels the throb in his pulses soon
Of the swift-oncoming, torrid noon;
He drinks its strong vintage, absorbs its perfume,
And revels in pleasures, regardless of doom.

At last he slackens, amazed to find
The sparkling hours all left behind.
His strength is less sure; his senses flag;
Moments that flew now seem to lag;
But he presses on, in quest of new joys.
From life's flowers and sweets he turns to its toys,
And foolishly burdens himself with goods
In hopes of cheating his darkling moods.

His head is reeling a little now;
The sun's shining crown has dropt from his brow;
By eager desires no longer prest,
He wearily searches a place of rest;
And finds it, at length, when the shadows fall,
In the space curtained-off for him by the pall.

Our conscious lives are like a summer brief,
Whose blooms and birds and skies give sweet relief
Of colour, song and scene from day to day,
Till autumn comes, dull, silent, cold and gray;
Astonished, then, we find the songsters fled,
The blooms, save rosemary and pansies, dead.