

THE OLD POET

FRANCES BEATRICE TAYLOR

*I have opened the cage and let the wild bird go
That was not used at best to prison bars:
After the flight, a little rest, and lo,
A star among the stars!*

Under the beech trees, under the young red willows,
The young willows where the first thrushes sing,
I have made my bed, the fern-fronds for my pillows,
And, unremembering,

I shall count no longer the pale watches of morning,
The star-hung fringes of darkness, the silences
Of the last leaf fallen; the thunder's purple warning,
The murmuring glory of the cherry trees.

In the green quiet by the sedges and the shallows,
There will flash once the dragon-fly's blue fire;
There will come the brave traffic of returning swallows,—
But I shall be done with wonder and desire.

Not for the flame of the rainbow shall I waken,
Not for a rainbow wing shall the tears start,—
The thorn tree will not pierce me, sweetly shaken,
Nor a briar bud turn a golden sword in my heart.

There will come then the time of the storm's high anger,
There will come then the silver spears of the rain,
But I shall be alone in a great, new languor,—
And never, never again,

Though the clover flush with rose the meadow grasses
Shall I be there to toil, or pray, or weep,—
What winds may call, what foot familiar passes,
I shall sleep, I shall sleep.

*I have opened the cage and let the wild bird go,
The little cage that was too small for us,—
And none of the worldly-wise will ever know
Who left it thus!*