

In the Woods with Shelley

By Aleister Crowley

Sing, happy nightingale, sing;
Past is the season of weeping;
Birds in the wood are on wing,
Lambs in the meadow are leaping,
Can there be any delight still in the buttercups sleeping?

Dawn, paler daffodil, dawn;
Smile, for the winter is over;
Sunlight makes golden the lawn,
Spring comes and kisses the clover;
All the wild woodlands await poet and songster and lover.

Linger, dew, linger and gem
All the fresh flowers in the garland;
Blossom, leaf, bud and green stem
Flash with your light to some far land,
Where men shall wonder if you be not a newly-born
starland.

Ah! the sweet scents of the woods!
Ah! the sweet sounds of the heaven!
Sights of impetuous floods,
Foam like the daisy at even,
Folding o'er passionate gold petals that sunrise had riven!

See, like my life is the stream
Now its desire is grown quiet;
Life was a passionate dream
Once, when light fancy ran riot,
Now, ere youth fades, flows in peace past woody bank
and green eyot.

Highest, white heather and rock,
Mountain and pine, with young laughter,
Breezes that murmur and mock
Duller delights to come after,
Wild as a swallow that dives whither the sea wind would
waft her.

Lower, an ocean of flowers,
Trees that are warmer and leafier,

Starrier, sunnier hours
Spurning the stain of all grief here,
Bringing a quiet delight to us, beyond our belief, here.

Lastly, the uttermost sea,
Starred with the flakes of spray sunlit,
Blue as its caverns that be
Crystal, resplendent, yet unlit;
So like a mother receives the kiss of the dainty-lip runlet.

Here the green moss is my seat,
Beech is a canopy o'er me,
Calm and content the retreat;
Man, my worst foe, cannot bore me;
Life is a closed book behind—Shelley an open before me.

Shelley's own birds are above
Close to me (why should they fear me?)
May I believe it—that love
Brings his bright spirit so near me
That, should I whisper one word—Shelley's swift spirit
would hear me.

Heaven is not very far;
Soul unto soul may be calling
When a swift meteor star
Through the quick vista is falling.
Loose but your soul—shall its wings find the white way
so appalling?

Heaven, as I understand,
Nearer than some folk would make it;
God—should you stretch out a hand,
Who can be quicker to take it?
Then you have pacted an oath—judge you if He will
forsake it.

I have had hope in the spring—
Trust that the God who has given
Flowers, and the thrushes that sing
Dawnwards all night, and at even
Year after year, will be true now we are speaking of
heaven.

Breezes caress me and creep
Over the world to admire it;

Sweet air shall sigh me to sleep,
Softly my lips shall respire it,
Lying half-closed with a kiss ready for who shall desire it.