

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Byron Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Hall
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
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Studies in Song

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A PARTING SONG

BY THE NORTH SEA

SONG FOR THE CENTENARY

OF

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

Born January 30th, 1775

Died September 17th, 1864

There is delight in singing, though none hear
Beside the singer: and there is delight
In praising, though the praiser sit alone
And see the praised far off him, far above.

Landor.

DEDICATION.

TO MRS. LYNN LINTON.

*Daughter in spirit elect and consecrate
By love and reverence of the Olympian sire
Whom I too loved and worshipped, seeing so great,
And found so gracious toward my long desire
To bid that love in song before his gate
Sound, and my lute be loyal to his lyre,
To none save one it now may dedicate
Song's new burnt-offering on a century's pyre.
And though the gift be light
As ashes in men's sight,
Left by the flame of no ethereal fire,
Yet, for his worthier sake
Than words are worthless, take
This wreath of words ere yet their hour expire:
So, haply, from some heaven above,
He, seeing, may set next yours my sacrifice of love.*

May 24, 1880.

SONG FOR THE CENTENARY OF WALTER SAV- AGE LANDOR.

1.

Five years beyond an hundred years have seen
Their winters, white as faith's and age's hue,
Melt, smiling through brief tears that broke between,
And hope's young conquering colours reared anew,
Since, on the day whose edge for kings made keen
Smote sharper once than ever storm-wind blew,
A head predestined for the girdling green
That laughs at lightning all the seasons through,
Nor frost or change can sunder
Its crown untouched of thunder
Leaf from least leaf of all its leaves that grew
Alone for brows too bold
For storm to sear of old,
Elect to shine in time's eternal view,
Rose on the verge of radiant life
Between the winds and sunbeams mingling love with strife.

2.

The darkling day that gave its bloodred birth
To Milton's white republic undefiled
That might endure so few fleet years on earth
Bore in him likewise as divine a child;
But born not less for crowns of love and mirth,
Of palm and myrtle passionate and mild,
The leaf that girds about with gentler girth
The brow steel-bound in battle, and the wild
Soft spray that flowers above
The flower-soft hair of love;
And the white lips of wayworn winter smiled
And grew serene as spring's
When with stretched clouds like wings

Or wings like drift of snow-clouds massed and piled
The godlike giant, softening, spread
A shadow of stormy shelter round the new-born head.

3.

And o'er it brightening bowed the wild-haired hour,
And touched his tongue with honey and with fire,
And breathed between his lips the note of power
That makes of all the winds of heaven a lyre
Whose strings are stretched from topmost peaks that tower
To softest springs of waters that suspire,
With sounds too dim to shake the lowliest flower
Breathless with hope and dauntless with desire:
And bright before his face
That Hour became a Grace,
As in the light of their Athenian quire
When the Hours before the sun
And Graces were made one,
Called by sweet Love down from the aerial gyre
By one dear name of natural joy,
To bear on her bright breast from heaven a heaven-born boy.

4.

Ere light could kiss the little lids in sunder
Or love could lift them for the sun to smite,
His fiery birth-star as a sign of wonder
Had risen, perplexing the presageful night
With shadow and glory around her sphere and under
And portents prophesying by sound and sight;
And half the sound was song and half was thunder,
And half his life of lightning, half of light:
And in the soft clenched hand
Shone like a burning brand
A shadowy sword for swordless fields of fight,

Wrought only for such lord
As so may wield the sword
That all things ill be put to fear and flight
Even at the flash and sweep and gleam
Of one swift stroke beheld but in a shuddering dream.

5.

Like the sun's rays that blind the night's wild beasts
The sword of song shines as the swordsman sings;
From the west wind's verge even to the arduous east's
The splendour of the shadow that it flings
Makes fire and storm in heaven above the feasts
Of men fulfilled with food of evil things;
Strikes dumb the lying and hungering lips of priests,
Smites dead the slaying and ravening hands of kings;
Turns dark the lamp's hot light,
And turns the darkness bright
As with the shadow of dawn's reverberate wings;
And far before its way
Heaven, yearning toward the day,
Shines with its thunder and round its lightning rings;
And never hand yet earlier played
With that keen sword whose hilt is cloud, and fire its blade.

6.

As dropping flakes of honey-heavy dew
More soft than slumber's, fell the first note's sound
From strings the swift young hand strayed lightlier through
Than leaves through calm air wheeling toward the ground
Stray down the drifting wind when skies are blue
Nor yet the wings of latter winds unbound,
Ere winter loosen all the Æolian crew
With storm unleashed behind them like a hound.
As lightly rose and sank

Beside a green-flowered bank
The clear first notes his burning boyhood found
To sing her sacred praise
Who rode her city's ways
Clothed with bright hair and with high purpose crowned;
A song of soft presageful breath,
Prefiguring all his love and faith in life and death;

7.

Who should love two things only and only praise
More than all else for ever: even the glory
Of goodly beauty in women, whence all days
Take light whereby death's self seems transitory;
And loftier love than loveliest eyes can raise,
Love that wipes off the miry stains and gory
From Time's worn feet, besmirched on bloodred ways,
And lightens with his light the night of story;
Love that lifts up from dust
Life, and makes darkness just,
And purges as with fire of purgatory
The dense disastrous air,
To burn old falsehood bare
And give the wind its ashes heaped and hoary;
Love, that with eyes of ageless youth
Sees on the breast of Freedom borne her nursling Truth.

8.

For at his birth the sisting stars were one
That flamed upon it as one fiery star;
Freedom, whose light makes pale the mounting sun,
And Song, whose fires are quenched when Freedom's are.
Of all that love not liberty let none
Love her that fills our lips with fire from far
To mix with winds and seas in unison

And sound athwart life's tideless harbour-bar
Out where our songs fly free
Across time's bounded sea,
A boundless flight beyond the dim sun's car,
Till all the spheres of night
Chime concord round their flight
Too loud for blasts of warring change to mar,
From stars that sang for Homer's birth
To these that gave our Landor welcome back from earth

9.

Shine, as above his cradle, on his grave,
Stars of our worship, lights of our desire!
For never man that heard the world's wind rave
To you was truer in trust of heart and lyre:
Nor Greece nor England on a brow more brave
Beheld your flame against the wind burn higher:
Nor all the gusts that blanch life's worldly wave
With surf and surge could quench its flawless fire:
No blast of all that blow
Might bid the torch burn low
That lightens on us yet as o'er his pyre,
Indomitable of storm,
That now no flaws deform
Nor thwart winds baffle ere it all aspire,
One light of godlike breath and flame,
To write on heaven with man's most glorious names his
name.

10.

The very dawn was dashed with stormy dew
And freaked with fire as when God's hand would mar
Palaces reared of tyrants, and the blue
Deep heaven was kindled round her thunderous car,

That saw how swift a gathering glory grew
About him risen, ere clouds could blind or bar
A splendour strong to burn and burst them through
And mix in one sheer light things near and far.
First flew before his path
Light shafts of love and wrath,
But winged and edged as elder warriors' are;
Then rose a light that showed
Across the midsea road
From radiant Calpe to revealed Masar
The way of war and love and fate
Between the goals of fear and fortune, hope and hate.

11.

Mine own twice banished fathers' harbour-land,
Their nursing-mother France, the well-beloved,
By the arduous blast of sanguine sunrise fanned,
Flamed on him, and his burning lips were moved
As that live statue's throned on Lybian sand
When morning moves it, ere her light faith roved
From promise, and her tyrant's poisonous hand
Fed hope with Corsic honey till she proved
More deadly than despair
And falsier even than fair,
Though fairer than all elder hopes removed
As landmarks by the crime
Of inundating time;
Light faith by grief too loud too long reproved:
For even as in some darkling dance
Wronged love changed hands with hate, and turned his
heart from France.

12.

But past the snows and summits Pyrenean
Love stronger-winged held more prevailing flight
That o'er Tyrrhene, Iberian, and Ægean
Shores lightened with one storm of sound and light.
From earliest even to hoariest years one pæan
Rang rapture through the fluctuant roar of fight,
From Nestor's tongue in accents Achillean
On death's blind verge dominant over night
For voice as hand and hand
As voice for one fair land
Rose radiant, smote sonorous, past the height
Where darkling pines enrobe
The steel-cold Lake of Gaube,
Deep as dark death and keen as death to smite,
To where on peak or moor or plain
His heart and song and sword were one to strike for Spain.

13.

Resurgent at his lifted voice and hand
Pale in the light of war or treacherous fate
Song bade before him all their shadows stand
For whom his will unbarred their funeral grate.
The father by whose wrong revenged his land
Was given for sword and fire to desolate
Rose fire-encircled as a burning brand,
Great as the woes he wrought and bore were great.
Fair as she smiled and died,
Death's crowned and breathless bride
Smiled as one living even on craft and hate:
And pity, a star unrisen,
Scarce lit Ferrante's prison
Ere night unnatural closed the natural gate
That gave their life and love and light
To those fair eyes despoiled by fratricide of sight.

14.

Tears bright and sweet as fire and incense fell
In perfect notes of music-measured pain
On veiled sweet heads that heard not love's farewell
Sob through the song that bade them rise again;
Rise in the light of living song, to dwell
With memories crowned of memory: so the strain
Made soft as heaven the stream that girdles hell
And sweet the darkness of the breathless plain,
And with Elysian flowers
Recrowned the wreathless hours
That mused and mourned upon their works in vain;
For all their works of death
Song filled with light and breath,
And listening grief relaxed her lightening chain;
For sweet as all the wide sweet south
She found the song like honey from the lion's mouth.

15.

High from his throne in heaven Simonides,
Crowned with mild aureole of memorial tears
That the everlasting sun of all time sees
All golden, molten from the forge of years,
Smiled, as the gift was laid upon his knees
Of songs that hang like pearls in mourners' ears,
Mild as the murmuring of Hymettian bees
And honied as their harvest, that endears
The toil of flowery days;
And smiling perfect praise
Hailed his one brother mateless else of peers:
Whom we that hear not him
For length of date grown dim
Hear, and the heart grows glad of grief that hears;
And harshest heights of sorrowing hours,
Like snows of Alpine April, melt from tears to flowers.

16.

Therefore to him the shadow of death was none,
The darkness was not, nor the temporal tomb:
And multitudinous time for him was one,
Who bade before his equal seat of doom
Rise and stand up for judgment in the sun
The weavers of the world's large-historied loom,
By their own works of light or darkness done
Clothed round with light or girt about with gloom.
In speech of purer gold
Than even they spake of old
He bade the breath of Sidney's lips relume
The fire of thought and love
That made his bright life move
Through fair brief seasons of benignant bloom
To blameless music ever, strong
As death and sweet as death-annihilating song.

17.

Thought gave his wings the width of time to roam,
Love gave his thought strength equal to release
From bonds of old forgetful years, like foam
Vanished, the fame of memories that decrease;
So strongly faith had fledged for flight from home
The soul's large pinions till her strife should cease:
And through the trumpet of a child of Rome
Rang the pure music of the flutes of Greece.
As though some northern hand
Reft from the Latin land
A spoil more costly than the Colchian fleece
To clothe with golden sound
Of old joy newly found
And rapture as of penetrating peace
The naked north-wind's cloudiest clime,
And give its darkness light of the old Sicilian time.

18.

He saw the brand that fired the towers of Troy
Fade, and the darkness at CEnone's prayer
Close upon her that closed upon her boy,
For all the curse of godhead that she bare;
And the Apollonian serpent gleam and toy
With scathless maiden limbs and shuddering hair;
And his love smitten in their dawn of joy
Leave Pan the pine-leaf of her change to wear;
And one in flowery coils
Caught as in fiery toils
Smite Calydon with mourning unaware;
And where her low turf shrine
Showed Modesty divine
The fairest mother's daughter far more fair
Hide on her breast the heavenly shame
That kindled once with love should kindle Troy with flame.

19.

Nor less the light of story than of song
With graver glories girt his godlike head,
Reverted alway from the temporal throng
Of lives that live not toward the living dead.
The shadows and the splendours of their throng
Made bright and dark about his board and bed
The lines of life and vision, sweet or strong
With sound of lutes or trumpets blown, that led
Forth of the ghostly gate
Opening in spite of fate
Shapes of majestic or tumultuous tread,
Divine and direful things,
These foul as priests or kings,
Those fair as heaven or love or freedom, red
With blood and green with palms and white
With raiment woven of deeds divine and words of light.