

A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909)

13 *A Jacobite's Exile*

1746

The weary day rins down and dies,  
The weary night wears through:  
And never an hour is fair wi' flower,  
And never a flower wi' dew.

I would the day were night for me, 5  
I would the night were day:  
For then would I stand in my ain fair land,  
As now in dreams I may.

O lordly flow the Loire and Seine, 10  
And loud the dark Durance:  
But bonnier shine the braes of Tyne  
Than a' the fields of France;  
And the waves of Till that speak sae still  
Gleam goodlier where they glance.

O weel were they that fell fighting 15  
On dark Drumossie's day:  
They keep their hame ayont the faem,  
And we die far away.

O sound they sleep, and saft, and deep, 20  
But night and day wake we;  
And ever between the sea-banks green  
Sounds loud the sundering sea.

And ill we sleep, sae sair we weep,  
But sweet and fast sleep they;  
And the mool that haps them roun' and laps them 25  
Is e'en their country's clay;

But the land we tread that are not dead  
Is strange as night by day.

Strange as night in a strange man's sight,  
Though fair as dawn it be: 30  
For what is here that a stranger's cheer  
Should yet wax blithe to see?

The hills stand steep, the dells lie deep,  
The fields are green and gold:  
The hill-streams sing, and the hill-sides ring, 35  
As ours at home of old.

But hills and flowers are nane of ours,  
And ours are oversea:  
And the kind strange land whereon we stand,  
It wotsna what were we 40  
Or ever we came, wi' scathe and shame,  
To try what end might be.

Scathe, and shame, and a waefu' name,  
And a weary time and strange,  
Have they that seeing a weird for dreeing 45  
Can die, and cannot change.

Shame and scorn may we thole that mourn,  
Though sair be they to dree:  
But ill may we bide the thoughts we hide,  
Mair keen than wind and sea. 50

Ill may we thole the night's watches,  
And ill the weary day;  
And the dreams that keep the gates of sleep,  
A waefu' gift gie they;  
For the sangs they sing us, the sights they bring us, 55  
The morn blows all away.

On Aikenshaw the sun blinks braw,

The burn rins blithe and fain:  
There's nought wi' me I wadna gie  
To look thereon again. 60

On Keilder-side the wind blaws wide;  
There sounds nae hunting horn  
That rings sae sweet as the winds that beat  
Round banks where Tyne is born.

The Wansbeck sings with all her springs, 65  
The bents and braes give ear;  
And the wood that rings wi' the sang she sings  
I may not see nor hear;  
For far and far thae blithe burns are,  
And strange is a' thing near. 70

The light there lightens, the day there brightens,  
The loud wind there lives free:  
Nae light comes nigh me or wind blaws by me  
That I wad hear or see.

But O gin I were there again, 75  
Afar ayont the faem,  
Cauld and dead in the sweet saft bed  
That haps my sires at hame!

We'll see nae mair the sea-banks fair,  
And the sweet grey gleaming sky, 80  
And the lordly strand of Northumberland,  
And the goodly towers thereby:  
And none shall know but the winds that blow  
The graves wherein we lie.

1889

(From *Ballads of the English Border*. Ed. with Introduction,  
Glossary and Notes by William A. MacInnes. London:  
William Heinemann, 1925)