

Poetry

THE DEATH

*fling the clouds across the heaven,
oh sweep them with the breath
of the night-wind and let them wind-lashed riven
in lightning cry the tears of death!*

*fall, rain of tears,
fall on the dusky plain
and on a lonely hill,
cry the tears the bitter tears
on a heart that is sad and still!*

for the brown child is dead!

*for the soft voice of the brown child is gone,
the face of the brown child
has vanished with the vanished sun!*

*sing on, sing your fearful song of triumph,
fearful monster of death,
wave the trophy of his breath
to the four winds! fly
it with the dread
and fearful cry
the brown child is dead!*

*while a desolate mound of earth
is swirling with the leaves and the wind
and the heaving quiet of twilight
is shaken in the thunder's din,
i clutch a phantom cross
i clutch it bleak against the sky
sobbing crying within me
a lone and tearful cry!*

*yet i stand and ask:
why must these terrors be?
why bask
in abandon these mighty powers,
these powers wild and free?*

*i loved him: now he is gone,
he loved life: now it is done,
is love a curse, a phantom blight
in the heart of things?
whither, tell me, powers of heaven,
whither fled its vaulted night?*

*what do i remember?
ah, drive me, shrieking winds and streaks of fire,
drive me on the wings of memory
let me feel the searing embers
of the brown child's agony!*

*sweep them across the earth
to scorch earth's frozen den
awaken with their living warmth
the frozen chilling hearts of men!
so his finger wrought in fiery strokes
streaking through the breadth and length of the land
a masterwork of prophetic light
mightier than sword or fairy's wand!*

*reached there a heart farther than his
embracing all that is far and near it,
farther than all the shores of oceans and seas:
the shoreless realms of the human spirit!
love is all embracing
and rules no one alone
it goes beyond itself
and calls all things its own!*

*the brown child loved this world of god
the brown child loved each little bird and cried for
each falling tree
he cried for each bleeding breast
he cried for all humanity!
let them live, his heart cried out,
let them dauntless trace
their lives in timeless patterns
for i have seen death's face!*

*go you, young man, cried he pointing to the earth,
this be the heritage of your birth!*

*life beckons, live it!
fight time and death for what they are worth!*

*he saw in the youth life's bursting seed
to sprout one day and bloom,
the youth by noble word and nobler deed
shall conquer the darkness and pierce the gloom!*

OF THE BROWN CHILD

*this was his mighty faith
this was his deathless dream
with a mightier love
he led us
taught us
to follow, oh follow the gleam!*

*ah gentle voice,
we still are far,
what cause have we to rise and rejoice
we have not touched as yet a star!
give us but a spark of your fire
and a string of your fallen lyre
and we shall soar, oh soar
to the stars on the wings of your desire!*

*yea, let me rise
and face the desolate night,
i shall chant to the east a vibrant hymn
to tell of the approaching flight
of darkness and brooding phantoms dim!*

*the clouds are flung across the sky
the lightnings in maddened fury flare
i hear the thunder's echoing cry
smite full high the smitten air!
but yet i stand —*

*the hymn now ceaseless beating rises
from the depths of the sodden earth
a hymn of triumph
of love and life and a soul's rebirth!*

*he is dead! he is dead!
sing still this mad refrain,
fearful monster of death,
though hold you now in thrall the brown child's breath
and you shall sing it but in vain!
turn his bones to mud and mire,
and turn to dust his soundless lyre
but touch not, touch not
his spirit's immortal fire!*

*so yet the brown child lives
and all is said*

• An Elegy •

*but why cry yet a lonely heart
the brown child is not dead!
but still fall on, fall, rain of tears
fall on the dusky hill
oh moisten with your cooling drops
the grave of him that is dead and still
so a seed shall bloom
one far-off twilight hour
and 'neath the twilight sky
shall grow a lonely flower!
the fragrant scent shall fill the hills
and fields and all the earth,
and all the seas and lakes and plains
shall sing triumphant love's rebirth!*

*bursting
the petals shall chant a song
and all the skies shall hear it,
and all the far-flung starry throng:
the flower is the brown child's spirit!*

*the storm is past, the night is come
the night-birds circling above the tree-tops fly
and swing and sail in gentle motion
then twitter shrill their evening cry!*

*i stand by the lonely cross
i keep a vigil by the lonely hill,
my passions spent, i watch
serene the grave, i watch it calm and still!*

*i whisper with the night-wind,
stay yet, child of the earth, oh stay,
stay through the dreary watches of the night
till the shadows' flight
shall usher in the day!*

by D M Maglalang