

Profulla Ranjan Das

YOUTH AND AGE

Do you remember, how one night,
When never rose a star on high,
We stepped into the dubious light
Beneath the silence of the sky,
- You wondered, - so did I!

Your life was of sunrise and flower,
But mine was of an autumn leaf
And we imagined every hour
Would take us further from our grief,
Forgetting time, the thief!

And yet the thief was on the wing,
And caught me gray-- but you, pure white!
And now because life's splendours cling
Unto the freshness of your light,
I wonder, was I right ?

Karol Szymanowski

Arvid Mourné

MY YOUNG BELOVED (Trans. David McDuff)

My young beloved, finally we've risen
To the cliffs that look out on the sea of age,
The grey, the sad. Against this lichened edge
The long swell of my yearning's doomed to lessen.

O, don't you see: I'm autumn, treacherous,
Aiming at your little heart a lance that's poisoned,
You, young one, glowing, whose love's unloosened
Your virgin breast to my inflamed caress ?

O, don't you sense it, when your dress is falling
In soft white eddies at your feet,
And you, like Aphrodite, smile to suit
Some paradise's coral shore unrolling,
That I am broken at my being's root ?

Sherwood Anderson

TO A CHILD OF QUALITY

Five years old, 1704, the author then forty

Lords, knights, and squires, the numerous band
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summoned by her high command
To show their passions by their letters.

My pen amongst the rest I took,
Lest those bright eyes, that cannot read,

Should dart their kindling fires, and look
The power they have to be obeyed.

Nor quality, nor reputation,
Forbids me yet my flame to tell;
Dear Five-years-old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

For, while she makes the silkworms' beds
With all the tender things I swear;
Whilst all the house my passion reads,
In papers round her baby's hair;

She may receive and own my flame;
For, thought the strictest prudes should know it,
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then too, alas! when she shall tear
The rhymes some younger rival sends,
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,
And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our different ages move,
'Tis so ordained (would Fate but mend it!),
That I shall be past making love
When she begins to comprehend it.

Thomas Campbell

FLORINE

Could I bring back lost youth again
And be what I have been,
I'd court you in a gallant strain,
My young and fair Florine.

But mine's the chilling age that chides
Devoted rapture's glow,
And Love -- that conquers all besides --
Finds Time a conquering foe.

Farewell! we're severed by our fate
As far as night from noon;
You came into the world too late,
And I depart too soon.