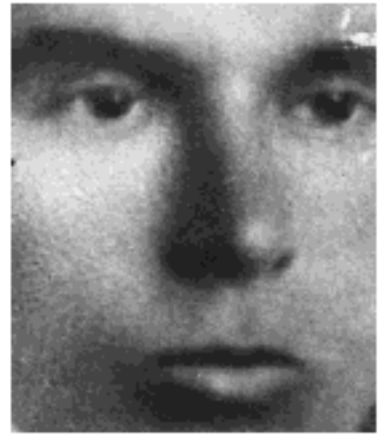


The poetry of Jones Very

To the Fossil Flower *early 1837*

Dark fossil flower! I see thy leaves unrolled,
With all thy lines of beauty freshly marked,
As when the eye of Morn beamed on thee first,
And thou first turned'st to meet its welcome smile.
And sometimes in the coal's bright rainbow hues
I dream I see the colors of thy prime,
And for a moment robe thy form again
In splendor not its own. Flower of the past!
Now, as I look on thee, life's echoing tread
Falls noiseless on my ear; the present dies:
And o'er my soul the thoughts of distant time,
In silent waves, like billows from the sea,
Come rolling on, with ceaseless flow,
Innumerable. Thou mayst have sprung unsown
Into thy noon of life, when earth first heard
Its Maker's sovereign voice; and laughing flowers
Waved o'er the meadows; hung on mountain crags,
And nodded in the breeze on every hill.
Thou mayst have bloomed unseen, save by the stars
That sang together o'er thy rosy birth,
And came at eve to watch thy folded rest.
None may have sought thee on thy fragrant home,
Save light-voiced winds that round thy dwelling played,



Or seemed to sigh, as oft their winged haste
Compelled their feet to roam. Thou mayst have lived
Beneath the light of later days, when man
With feet free-roving as the homeless wind
Scaled the thick-mantled height, coursed plains unshorn,
Breaking the solitude of nature's haunt
With voice that seemed to blend in one sweet strain
The mingled music of the elements.
And when against his infant frame they rose,
Uncurbed, unawed by his yet feeble hand,
And when the muttering storm and shouting wave
And rattling thunder, mated, round him raged
And seemed at times like daemon foes to gird,
Thou mayst have won with gentle look his heart,
And stirred the first warm prayer of gratitude,
And been his first, his simplest altar-gift.
For thee, dark flower! The kindling sun can bring
No more the colors that it gave, nor morn,
With kindly kiss, restore thy breathing sweets:
Yet may the mind's mysterious touch recall
The bloom and fragrance of thy early prime:
For He who to the lowly lily gave
A glory richer than to proudest king,
He painted not those darkly-shining leaves,
With blushes like the dawn, in vain; nor gave
To thee its sweetly-scented breath, to waste
Upon the barren air. E'en though thou stood'st
Alone in Nature's forest-home untrod,

The first-love of the stars and sighing winds
The mineral hold with faithful trust thy form,
To wake in human hearts sweet thoughts of love,
Now the dark past hangs round thy memory.

The Silent

There is a sighing in the wood,
 A murmur in the beating wave;
The heart has never understood
 To tell in words the thoughts they gave.

Yet oft it feels an answering tone,
 When wandering on the lonely shore;
And could the lips its voice make known,
 'Twould sound as does the ocean's roar.

And oft beneath the wind-swept pine,
 Some chord is struck the strain to swell;
Nor sounds nor language can define,
 'Tis not for words or sounds to tell.

'Tis all unheard; that Silent Voice,
 Whose goings forth unknown to all,
Bids bending reed and bird rejoice,
 And fills with music Nature's hall.

And in the speechless human heart
 It speaks, where'er man's feet have trod;
Beyond the lips' deceitful art,
 To tell of Him, the Unseen God.

The Prayer

Wilt Thou not visit me?
The plant beside me feels Thy gentle dew;
 And every blade of grass I see,
From Thy deep earth its quickening moisture drew.

Wilt Thou not visit me?

Thy morning calls on me with cheering tone;
And every hill and tree
Lends but one voice, the voice of Thee alone.

Come, for I need Thy love,
More than the flower the dew, or grass the rain;
Come, gently as Thy holy dove;
And let me in thy sight rejoice to live again.

I will not hide from them,
When Thy storms come, though fierce may be their wrath;
But bow with leafy stem,
And strengthened follow on Thy chosen path.

Yes, Thou wilt visit me,
Nor plant nor tree Thine eye delights so well,
As when from sin set free
My spirit loves with Thine in peace to dwell.

The New Birth

'Tis a new life; thoughts move not as they did
With slow uncertain steps across my mind;
In thronging haste fast pressing on they bid
The portals open to the viewless wind
That comes not save when in the dust is laid
The crown of pride that gilds each mortal brow,
And from before man's vision melting fade
The heavens and earth; their walls are falling now.
Fast crowding on, each thought asks utterance strong;
Storm-lifted waves swift rushing to the shore,
On from the sea they send their shouts along,
Back through the cave-worn rocks their thunders roar;
And I a child of God by Christ made free
Start from death's slumbers to Eternity.

The Meek

I would be meek as He who bore His cross,
And died on earth that I in him might live,
And, while in sin I knew not of my loss,
Suffered with gentle love His hope to give;
May I within the manger too be laid,
And mid the thieves His childlike meekness show;
And though by him who kisses me betrayed,
May I no will but His, my Master's know;
Thus sheltered by the lonely vale of tears,
My feet shall tread secure the path He trod;
Mid lying tongues that pierce my side like spears,
I too shall find within the peace of God;
And though rejected shall possess the earth,
And dead in Christ be witness of His birth.

The Garden

I saw the spot where our first parents dwelt;
And yet it wore to me no face of change,
For while amid its fields and groves I felt
As if I had not sinned, nor thought it strange;
My eye seemed but a part of every sight,
My ear heard music in each sound that rose,
Each sense forever found a new delight,
Such as the spirit's vision only knows;
Each act some new and ever-varying joy
Did by my Father's love for me prepare;
To dress the spot my ever fresh employ,
And in the glorious whole with Him to share;
No more without the flaming gate to stray,
No more for sin's dark stain the debt of death to pay.