

HYMN TO APOLLO.

*Written in the Temple of Apollo.*

GOD of the golden face and fiery forehead!  
Lord of the Lion's house of strength, exalted  
In the Ram's horns! O ruler of the vaulted  
    Heavenly hollow!  
Send out thy rays majestic, and the torrid  
Light of thy song! thy countenance most splendid  
Bend to the suppliant on his face extended!  
    Hear me, Apollo!

Let thy fierce fingers sweep the lyre forgotten!  
Recall the ancient glory of thy chanted  
Music that thrilled the hearts of men, and haunted  
    Life to adore thee!  
Cleanse thou our market-places misbegotten!  
Fire in my heart and music to my paean  
Lend, that my song bow, past the empyrean,  
    Phoebus, before thee!

All the old worship in this land is broken;  
Yet on my altar burns the ancient censer,  
Frankincense, saffron, galbanum, intenser!  
    Ornaments glisten.  
Robes of thy colour bind me for thy token.  
My voice is fuller in thine adoration.  
Thine image holds its god-appointed station.  
    Lycian, listen!

My prayers more eloquent than olden chants  
Long since grown dumb on the soft forgetful airs—  
My lips are loud to herald thee: my prayers

Keener to follow.  
I do aspire, as thy long sunbeam slants  
Upon my crown; I do aspire to thee  
As no man yet—I am in ecstasy!  
Hear me, Apollo!

My chant wakes elemental flakes of light  
Flashing along the sandal-footed floor.  
All listening spirits answer and adore  
Thee, the amazing!  
I follow to the eagle-baffling sight,  
Limitless oceans of abounding space;  
Purposed to bind myself, but know thy face,  
Phoebus, in gazing.

O hear me! hear me! hear me! for my hands,  
Dews deathly bathe them; sinks the stricken song;  
Eyes that were feeble have become the strong,  
See thee and glisten.  
Blindness is mine; my spirit understands,  
Weighs out the offering, accepts the pain,  
Hearing the paeon of the unprofane!  
Lycian, listen!

God of the fiery face, the eyes inviolate!  
Lord of soundless thunders, lightnings lightless!  
Hear me now, for joy that I see thee sightless,  
Fervent to follow.  
Grant one boon; destroy me, let me die elate,  
Blasted with light intolerant of a mortal,  
That the undying in me pass thy portal!  
Hear me, Apollo.

Hear me, or if about thy courts be girded  
Paler some purple softening the sunlight  
Merciful, mighty, O divide the one light  
Into a million  
Shattered gems, that I mingle in my worded  
Measures some woven filament of passion

Caught, Phoebus, from thy star-girt crown, to fashion  
Poet's pavilion.

Let me build for thee an abiding palace  
Rainbow-hued to affirm thy light divided,  
Yet where starry words, by thy soul guided,  
Sing as they glisten,  
Dew-drops diamonded from the abundant chalice!  
Swoons the prayer to silence; pale the altar  
Glowes at thy presence as the last words falter—  
Lycian, listen!