

ONLY

By Victor B. Neuburg

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Only a mother with wistful eyes
 Watching enraptured her baby's face.
Only a glance of divine surprise,
 Only a lowly child of the race.
Ah! The Gods have no joy so rare
 As that of the mother! What power to lift
Has that scrap of flesh minus teeth and hair,—
 Only the token of Love's ripe gift!

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Only a prayer for a little bread,
 Only a mother in anguish wild,
Only a poor little drooping head,—
 Only a tiny, dying child!
Only a question hard and stern,
 "Where's your ring? Not got one? Go!"
Only the fierce despairing burn
 That only cast-out women know.

Only a narrow priest of the Lord,
 Only an outraged glance of hate,
Only a bitter, damning word,—
 Only a warning that comes too late.
Only a glance at the sky above,
 Only a cry from a mother torn;—
"Why, O God, was I made to love?
 Why, O God, was my baby born?"

Only a leap in the water dark,
 Only a gurgle, only a rise;
Only the trees the spot to mark,
 Only the witnessing star-strewn skies.
Only the river's patient song,
 Only a throbbing resting-place.
Only, only a nation's wrong,
 Only, only a world's disgrace!