

The dark Epicureanism in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Post by "Kalosyni" of May 7, 2022 at 6:31 PM

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam [excerpt]

[Edward Fitzgerald](#)

1

Wake! For the Sun, who scattered into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n and strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

2

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
"When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshiper outside?"

3

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted--"Open, then, the Door!
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more."

12

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread--and Thou

Beside me singing in the Wilderness

Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

13

Some for the Glories of This World; and some

Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;

Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,

Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

14

Look to the blowing Rose about us--"Lo,

Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,

At once the silken tassel of my Purse

Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

15

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,

And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,

Alike to no such aureate Earth are turned

As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

19

I sometimes think that never blows so red

The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;

That every Hyacinth the Garden wears

Dropped in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

20

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green

Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean--

Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows

From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

21

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears

Today of past Regrets and future Fears:

Tomorrow!--Why, Tomorrow I may be

Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

22

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best

That from his Vintage rolling Time hath pressed,

Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,

And one by one crept silently to rest.

23

And we, that now make merry in the Room

They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,

Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth

Descend--ourselves to make a Couch--for whom?

24

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,

Before we too into the Dust descend;

Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,

Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and--sans End!

71

The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ,

Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,

Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

72

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling cooped we live and die,
Lift not your hands to It for help--for It
As impotently moves as you or I.

[The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam \[excerpt\] by Edward Fitzgerald - Poems | poets.org](#)