

Poetry.

THE SLEEP.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this—
"He giveth His belovèd sleep?"

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown to light the brows?—
He giveth His belovèd sleep.

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake :
He giveth His belovèd sleep.

"Sleep soft, beloved," we sometimes say,
Who have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep ;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber, when
He giveth His belovèd sleep.

O earth, so full of dreary noises !
O men, with wailing in your voices !
O delvèd gold, the wailers' heap !
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !
God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth His belovèd sleep.

His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it faileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap ;
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
He giveth His belovèd sleep.

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