

NAZARETH

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
The world is like a dying dream,
Where shadows cross a fading gleam:
Dead centuries rise to die again,
This present's but the past's Amen,
The very dust is dust of men,
That blows the streets of Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
You cannot hear the children play;
Age peers from out the new born clay;
Dead years are prisoned in their eyes,
Dead hopes are tortured in their sighs,
Their steps are slow and sadly wise
Those children born at Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
There is a little child today,
Too young to laugh, too young to play;
His eyes are like a sleeping lake,
Which from the hidden sun must take
A flash before the waves awake
And day is bright at Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
A mother watches o'er her child;
Her lily face is pure and mild,
She sings, but tears are in her voice,
She weeps, but soon repents her choice,
For baby's eyes bid her rejoice
And sorrow fly from Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
There is one little prattler more
Upon that new discovered shore,
Where care may come, but never grief
Shall wring the heart beyond relief;
Woe's me that Time, relentless thief,
Must steal this gleam from Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
The happy years are short and fast;
How mad they run into the past.
The land they leave is fair, so fair,
That many a happy mother there
Forbids their flight with anxious prayer;
Time hears no prayers at Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
A little boy grows straight and tall;
His lips are shaped to April's call;
The hearts of stranger passers-by
Leap up to hear his radiant cry;
Their feet fall light, they know not why;
The spring is come to Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
There is a rush of happy wings;
O children, list, a glad bird sings;
He brings you hope, he brings you joy;
His music must all fear destroy
And harsh rebuke; each happy boy
Is born to love at Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
Across the fields of fallow brown
Spring finds her way to clerk and clown;
With tender green she fires the trees;
Warm grows beneath her kiss the breeze,
And when she smiles, the Winter flees
To deserts far from Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
The hills are dyed in greenest hues;
The skies have never held such blues,
And these have crept far down the hills,
And spread in pools and dazzling rills
To paint the iris tide that spills
Through all the glades of Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
White shines the little town at dawn,
As if a windflower had withdrawn
Its eyelids clasped against the night,
And felt the very sea of light
Drown all night's fears with truest sight;
So fair is morn at Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
Then was the gift supreme of Love,
That earth beneath and heaven above
Should be no more by sin beguiled
To mutual hate, though oft defiled,
Still man might come, a trusting child,
To drink Love's Well at Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
There are two roads, the one to Rome,
The other leads the people home
To David's City; by the first
Men go and they return not; curst
By lust of power unquenched, they thirst,
And long in dreams for Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
The others wait the quickening leaven,
The ripening hour, the call of heaven;
For some it brings a little fire,
Whose flames leap up, but soon expire;
For one a deathless glory, higher
Than clouds that float o'er Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
He may not stay for Mary's fears,
Her clinging arms, her slow, hot, tears;
She loves him best, because the doom
Of power foretold o'erloads with gloom
His fair, bright face, his spring-like bloom,
Heaven's gift to her and Nazareth.

At Nazareth, at Nazareth,
Ah, who can tell the waiting throes,
The last embrace, before he goes?
Ah, what to Joseph or to them,
His brothers, meant Jerusalem?
She saw behind the diadem
The cross, when he left Nazareth.

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Donald Graham.

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