WHAT WOULD YOU DO, ALANNA?

Dedicated to "Sliv na Mon."

The following touching poem by Mr. O'Hare, was written for The Catholic Columbian in response to several requests from mothers to record of their babes. The verses were suggested by the poem given below from the pen of Rev. James B. Dollard.

What would you do, alanna, if the
tossed and tangled hair
Was gone from your lonely pillow,
gone from your sweet care,
You are a mother, acushla, and what
would you do tonight,
If your boy was lying lonely out in
the cold moonlight?
Out in the cold moonlight?

What would you do alanna, if the
earth was pressing down
On the little heads you used to kiss,
dimpled and warm and brown?
You are a mother, acushla, and what
would you do tonight,
If your boy was lying lonely out in
the cold moonlight—
Out in the cold moonlight?

What would you do, alanna, if every
cold, cold stone
That crushed against your baby's
heart was crushing against your
own,
Would you echo the banshee's wailing
moan of sorrow and woe tonight,
If the love of your heart was frozen
out in the cold moonlight—
Out in the cold moonlight?

What would you do, alanna? Oh,
whisper a word or two,
You are a mother, acushla, and tell
me what you would do!
Speak to my desolate soul, heart a
tender word tonight
For my baby's voice is hushed and still
out in the cold moonlight—
Out in the cold moonlight.

What would you do, alanna? Oh, no,
don't bid me pray—
My every thought was a whispered
prayer, sweet as the angels say
Oh, what would you do, alanna, if you
were alone tonight,
And the child of your heart was sleeping
out in the cold moonlight—
Out in the cold moonlight?

This is the poem referred to

AT DEAD O' THE NIGHT, ALANNA.

At dead o the night, alanna, I wake
and see you there,
Your little hand on the pillow, with
tossed and tangled hair,
I am your mother, acushla, and you
are my heart's own boy,
And wealth of the world I'd barter to
shield you from annoy

At dead o the night, alanna, the heart
o' the world is still,
But sobbing of fairy music comes down
the haunted hill
The march o' the fairy armies troubles
the peace o' the air;
Blest angels shelter my darling for
power of a mother's prayer.

At dead o the night, alanna, the sleepless Banshee moans,
Wailing for sin and sorrow, by Erin's
Cairns crumbling stones,
At dead o' the night, alanna, I ask of
our God above
To shield you from sin and sorrow,
and cherish you in His love.

At dead o' the night, alanna, I wonder
o'er and o'er,
Shall you part from your fair Ireland,
to die on a stranger shore?
You'll break my heart in the leaving,
like many a mother I know—
Just God, look down upon Erin and
lift her at last from her woe!

At dead o' the night, alanna, I see
you in future years,
Grand in your strength, and noble,
fading the wide world fears;
Though down in the mossy churchyard
my bones be under the sod,
My spirit shall watch you, darling,
till you come to your rest in God

In the Apple Orchard.

Fedora, in her long, white apron and big sun hat, color box and palette in hand, sauntered out into the orchard and sat down under the shade of an apple tree. A light breeze stirred the boughs on which the sunlight gleamed in great gold patches and countless songbirds darted from limb to limb, making the air vocal with their music.

One plump, red breasted fellow perched himself directly in front of Fedora, and with head on one side regarded her intently.

The girl returned his gaze first with amusement, then with interest, and finally with sudden inspiration. She selected a crayon from her box and dexterously jotted down a few outlines. Then she consulted the bright bits of color she had placed on her palette, and with a sweep here and there of her long paint brush transferred the nucleus of her small feathered observer to a sketch card. She held it up to the light and looked at it critically for a moment, then laid it on the long grass beside her and leaned back against the trunk of the tree, her hands crossed loosely behind her head, her eyes resting in dreamy contemplation on the gleaming fields beyond. Above her the faint rustling of the wind in the leaves drowned the silence. Presently a shadow cut across the glimmering sunlight. Fedora glanced up and a faint color tinged her cheek. It was the professor.

"If you are too busy," he began, looking down at her a little dubiously.

"Oh, no," she broke in quickly, smiling up at him as she spoke. "I am never busy." Fedora prided herself upon that accomplishment. "Do sit down," she went on, with a bright look, pointing to the grassy plot opposite her. The professor hesitated for a moment, then suddenly complied with the request.

"A nice day," he remarked, carelessly, as he sat down.

"Charming," returned Fedora, surveying him with a smile. It had suddenly dawned upon her that the professor was a singularly good-looking man to be so old—almost 40. And in spite of his two-score years she found herself looking with approving almost admiration at his keen, clear eyes, above which the thick, curled brown hair waved back from an intellectual forehead (all professors have intellectual foreheads).

"I don't like to interrupt you," he said, with a doubtful glance at the unfinished sketch and Fedora's small paint-stained fingers, "but there is something I wanted to say," he went on, tugging at his watch chain.

"Really"—she gave a little cough and turned her eyes expectantly upon him.

"It is—it is important," faltered the professor, awkwardly, meeting her gaze.

Fedora broke into a little soft laugh and two dimples came into her face.

"What's the matter?" he said, looking at her in astonishment, a suspicion dawning in his mind that he was being treated with unnecessary levity.

"You looked so—seriously," she replied, with such a charming little grimace and a look so profoundly innocent that the professor immediately dismissed this suspicion as unworthy.

"If you don't mind, though," he pursued, a little uneasily, his eyes on her face, "I would rather you would not—that you would be a little serious."

"Yes, certainly," assented Fedora, with alacrity, putting a straight face, but with a glimmer of a smile showing about her mouth, then cleared his throat and went on with a slight hesitation.

"I have a proposition." He stopped short and looked at her in a helpless sort of way.

"Oh, I see," she exclaimed, with a merry laugh, "and you want the—hypothesis."

"Exactly so," returned the professor, his face brightening. "He thought that his task would not be a difficult one with such an appreciative young woman."

"And now to the point," he continued, giving her a serious look. "You are in a delicate position, and has no relative, interposed Fedora, flippantly.

"I suppose not," returned the professor, with slight sternness. "But it is not a problem in geometry this time," he concluded, the glint of a smile hovering about his lips, his voice calm and meaning.

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl with wide eyes, as she folded both hands in her lap and fixed upon him a look of grave attention.

He shifted his position a little, pulled at a tuft of grass, then looked across at her with sudden resolution and spoke. "Suppose—that—a—man"——

The professor stopped short and cleared his throat again in a disconcerted sort of way.

Fedora met his gaze with a mischievous smile and chewed the end of her long paint brush.

"Well?" she said, dropping her chin into one small hand.

"That a man is"——

"Yes."

"Well—in love, you know," he blurted out in desperation, flushing to the brim of his scholarly hat.

Fedora's face was suffused with sudden color and she gave an inarticulate little murmur, quite beyond interpretation.

There was an interval, during which neither spoke for several minutes. The professor was the first to break the pause:

"Madly, terribly, foolishly—in love," he said, emphasizing the last adverb, as though it included the sum total of human imbecility. Fedora shot at him a glance of bewilderment.

"To think," she said, making a mental observation, "that he could be so violent."

There was another pause. She dug one dainty hand into the soft turf and looked at him shyly out of the corner of her eye. The professor spoke again.

"What do you think of it?" he asked abruptly, his gaze resting upon her face with suppressed eagerness.

"I—don't know." She said it slowly and blushed as she spoke. A mingled expression of doubt and perplexity became visible on the professor's face as he waited for her to go on.

But Fedora remained silent, her eyes resting dreamily upon a little white cloud, drifting across the horizon.

The situation was growing awkward. The professor felt that his grasp was slipping away from him and we it on, a little anxiously.

"You know about such things—girls generally do. Tell me—what shall I do?"

He toyed nervously with a dead twig as he spoke and searched her face narrowly for encouragement.

Fedora reflected for a moment, then nodded with decision.

"It depends," she said drely, fixing her eyes upon his with a serious look.

"Yes?" The professor turned to her with a quick smile.

Fedora pondered again, then dropped her eyes half timidly and twisted the corner of her handkerchief.

"On—the other one, you know—the girl," she went on with a soft blush.

The professor gazed at her in silence, his kind eyes full of perplexity.

"Does she—care for you?" asked Fedora in a low voice, looking away.

"That's precisely the point," said he, pushing back his hat. "I want to find out."

"Is she pretty?"

"Beautiful!" replied the professor, with sudden enthusiasm. "She has the most magnificent brown eyes in the world, and her hair—how do you say in novels?—like spun gold, that's it," he concluded, impulsively, his eyes aglow.

Fedora's cerulean orbs were suddenly misty, and her dusky brown head averted.

There was silence for a few moments. After a little she leaned forward to pick a flower, her heart throbbing and the color faded from her face.

The professor drew a long breath and sighed. "She doesn't give me any encouragement," he ventured, regarding her with a questioning, half-wistful look.

"Perhaps," said Fedora, faintly, as if to herself, "she cares for some one else."

The professor stared at her in consternation.

"I never—thought—of that," he said slowly, dismay stealing into his tones, as his eyes sought hers with an intense look, as though searching her inmost soul.

The prescribed fortnight has passed, can not come memorable. Finally he spoke.

"I hope you have not made a mistake," he continued, in a tone that indicates much to one versed in the ways of women. "I want to be sure of it. I want to know that you love her and want an answer."

She dropped her eyes suddenly, as she raised to his look and essay to evade.

There was an awkward silence. Fedora was looking away like one in a dream, her hands lying cold and passive in her lap.

The sunshine circled about her red brown head, in a shimmering rainbow.

The professor looked across at her, his eyes full of unexpected admiration, his hands knotted close together.

After awhile he leaned suddenly toward her and with a quick movement seized both her hands in his own.

"Fedora, I love you. Will you marry me?"

The girl gave him a swift, startled glance and the color flamed to her cheeks, while the tears and smiles struggled for mastery.

"But—all my hair is not gold," she exclaimed, with a peal of little laugh, look at shyly at him. "And my eyes are—blue."

"And mine," said he, taking her in his arms—"are red!"—"Blue" Cleveland News.

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