

In curling mist, and frosty air,
And weeping skies, it lieth there—
Now buried in the snow, now bare
To every wind that blows;
And night's long darkness, like despair,
Hangs o'er it while it grows.

It grows in spite of cloud and blast,
And sullen rain descending fast,
And snow-wreathes thickly o'er it cast,
And louring thundrous skies;
For the fierce tempests, roaring past,
Hurt it not as it lies.

Anon, a kindlier season shines
Of warmth and light—the spring's soft signs:
Then many a beauteous blossom twines
On the thawing breast of earth;
And the buried grain's dark emerald lines
Spring up, a fairy birth.

Then sunny months, in swift career,
Draw out the lusty ripening ear,
Till the golden harvest time draws near,
And the reaper whets his scythe,
And, on a day, the rich sheaves rear
Their shocks on the landscape blithe.

Mysterious are God's holy ways!
Sown in the dark and frosty days,
Reaped in the sunshine's mellow blaze,
Are the worthiest deeds of men:
Tried by defeats and long delays,
As winter tries the living grain;

In the frosts of scorn, in the storms of hate,
Through days when hope deferred till late
Makes all show dark and desolate,
Oft sleep the good deeds thou hast done.
Patiently labour, patiently wait;
Thy work shall see the sun;

That which was sown in the wintry air
Shall blossom and ripen when skies are fair:
Though thine should be many an anxious care
Ere the harvest be gathered in,
Be stout to toil, be ready to bear;
The heart that is true shall win.

Anonymous.