

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS.  
FROM THE GREEK OF BION OF SMYRNA.

*Of the slaying of Adonis the Spring by the Black Boar of Winter. Nature the Mother laments him, bewailing the fate of her Beloved.*

*The immemorial Tragedy of Love, and of the Doom of the year—Death ever pursuing Life—is here shown.*

## THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS.



For dead Adonis now be my bewailing :  
Oh, beautiful Adonis ! he is dead !  
The Loves lament Adonis now ; all lone is  
The Cyprian ; she rises in her railing  
All somberly ; she sleeps in goodlihead  
Of purple now no more : for dead Adonis  
She strikes her breasts : nay, Venus : be it known  
To the wide world thou wailest lost Adon.

I wail Adonis, and the Loves accord  
To wail with me ; in the mountains he is lain  
Lowly ; a tusk, a snowy tusk, hath gored  
His snowy thigh : in his last dying pain  
Faintly he sobs, to Cytherea's woe,  
As black blood trickles down the flesh of snow.  
Dull grow the eyes beneath his lids ; the rose  
Faieth his lip, and with the rose doth flit  
The kiss that Venus clingingly bestows,  
Sweet to her, though he dies ; he hath not wit  
Aught of her kiss, but dies unknowing it.

I wail Adonis : all the Loves despair.  
Ah, cruel, cruel is the hurt that is  
In Adon's thigh! Alas! greater than his  
The wound the Cytherea's breast doth bear.  
Around him are his faithful hounds at moan,  
With Oread nymphs bewailing; and the zone  
Of Aphrodite's locks is loosed : she roves,  
Unsandalled, sad, unkempt, the oaken groves.  
And brambles pluck her as she goes, to cull  
Her sacred blood, who, shrilling-wailing by,  
Is hurtled through the valleys dreary-dull.  
On her Assyrian Lord shrill-piercingly  
She calls, wailing her stripling-love anew :  
Around his belly black blood gushes high—  
Adonis' paps grow crimson from his thigh ;  
His snow-pure breasts take on their purple hue.

Woe! woe! to Cytherea. In her wailing  
Mingle the Loves ; her beauteous boy has passed  
From her ; with him her radiant shape must go.  
Soft was her glory until Adonis' failing!  
With Adon's dying might no longer last  
The Cyprian's joyous splendour : woe! ah, woe!  
Now all the oakenshaws and mountains mourn  
Adonis : woe! ah, woe! and rivers gush  
For pain of Aphrodite, and the hill-born  
Springs weep Adon, sorrowful blossoms blush,  
As through the cities and the woody verges  
Goes Cytherea chanting mourning-dirges.

Woe! woe! to Cytherea. Fair Adon  
Is dead: and Echo 'Fair Adon is dead'  
Replies. Who had stayed griefless that had known  
Venus' most lamentable love? She knows  
The irrevocable wound, the blood that flows  
Red on his paling thigh. With arms outspread.  
She whispers: Adon, stay! Stay, Adon mine,  
O hapless! that one last time I may hold thee!  
That one last time my circling arms may fold thee  
That so my lips may intermix with thine.  
Stir, my Adonis, feebly as thou mayst,  
Grant me, for this last time, to be embraced  
Of thee: nay, kiss me even while there dwells  
Breath in thee still, till from thy soul there wells  
Thy spirit into my lips, into my heart,  
And I have sucked thine essence to mine own,  
Thy sweet love-core, to be treasured even as part  
Of thee, since thou must fly me, mine Adon.  
Far dost thou fly, even to Acheron,  
My Adonis, and its hard and bitter King;  
I, hapless Goddess, live, nor may I flee  
Whither thou flee'st! Take then, Persephone,  
My lover, since to thee each beauteous thing  
Must fare! Alas! What is my strength to thine?  
I stay all comfortless; stark grief is mine  
Exhaustlessly. I fear thee. And I moan  
—Woe to me! He is dead!—for mine Adon.  
Ah! Dost thou die, my thrice-desirable?  
Then, as a dream, desire hath fled away;

Venus is widowed ; in my house today  
The Loves are idle, there is no more spell  
In the zone of Aphrodite ! What could spur  
Thy rashness to the chase ? Why didst thou dare  
To strive with beasts, who wast so heavenly-fair ?  
So Venus wailed, and the Loves wailed with her.

Woe ! Woe ! to Venus : fair Adon is dead ;  
Her tears vie with the stream that flow from him flows :  
The earth grows flowered ; from her tears doth spread  
The anemone, and from his blood the rose.

I wail Adon ; the fair Adon is slain !  
O Cyprian ! No more bewail thy swain  
In the oakenshaws. There is a fair couch spread ;  
Yea ! For Adonis is a leafy bed  
Awaiting. In this bed of thine is lain  
Adonis ; fair as ever, being dead ;  
As though he slept, Adonis' goodlihead  
Still lingers. Lay him in the tender raiment  
Wherein erewhile he slept ; wherein he sped  
In holy slumbers through the night's betrayalment  
Embedded goldenly with thee : pine yet  
After the sorrowful Adonis. Be  
The crowns, the blossoms, cast on him ! they fret  
To fading, yea ! all fade to death since he  
Died. Scatter nard and myrtle leaves upon him !  
Cast myrrh on him ! may all soft odours die

With Adon's scent! the purple vestures don him  
—The delicate Adonis! Wailingly  
The weeping Loves surround him, for his sake  
Shorn of their locks: one with his feet doth break  
His arrows; and beneath his feet one flings  
His bow to trample; one tears up his quiver  
All fully-feathered: one's hand would deliver  
Adonis' foot of its sandal; another brings  
Water in golden ewers; one doth mind him  
To bath Adonis' thighs, and one behind him  
Brings air unto Adonis with his wings.

For Cytherea wail the Loves: all torches  
Are quenched by Hymenæus at their porches;  
Tattered the nuptial-wreath. Hymen is sung.  
Is sung no more. O Hymen! Woe! ah, woe!  
The wail arises: and the Graces tongue  
The lamentable 'Woe! ah, woe! Adon!'  
Cinyras' son they wail; more grief they know  
Even than Hymenæus; and they tell  
Each unto each, in a more shrilly tone  
Than Dione's Daughter's: 'Beautiful Adon  
Is dead!' 'Adon! Adon!' the Muses' spell  
Rises: in vain they call; he may not know  
Return; with Proserpine he still must dwell.  
O Cytherea! Cease today thy woe:  
Leave thy lamentings, for new griefs shall swell  
In a new year; anew thy tears shall flow.