

JULIUSZ SŁOWACKI

My Testament

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TLUM. JAREK ZAWADZKI

I lived with you, I grieved, and many a tear I shed.
In truth, I never did a noble soul defy.
Now it is time for me to go and join the dead.
Seems like it's joy I leave on earth — so sad am I.

To my inheritance on earth I leave no heir,
Nor to this lute of mine nor even to my name;
My name has but dashed through, much like a lightening glare,
For aye it shall remain an empty sound and tame.

But you that knew me well, in your reports convey
That all my younger years were for my country spent:
While battle raged, at mast I stood, be as it may,
And with the ship I drowned when vanquished down she went.

But he — that may reflect upon the detriment
Of my poor fatherland — will say, if well-intended,
That my mind's mantle was no drab for beggars meant,
But with the splendor of my ancient fathers splendid.

Oh that my friends at night together gathered be,
And this sad heart of mine in leaves of aloe burn!
And give it then to her who's given it to me.
Thus mothers are repaid: with ashes in the urn.

Oh that my friends around a goblet sit once more,
And drink unto my funeral and their poor lot.
Be I a ghost, I will appear and join them or —
If God may spare me pain and torture — I shall not.

But I beseech you — there is hope while there is breath.
Do lead the nation with a wisdom's torch held high,
And one by one, if needed be, go straight to death,
As God-hurled stones that densely over ramparts fly.

And as for me, I leave behind a group of friends,
Who for my haughty heart much love did have and room.
I did God's hardest service, now the duty ends,
And I agree to have an unlamented tomb.

Who else would like to try, without the world's applause,
Unto the world displaying but indifference,
To be a helmsman in a boat of ghosts — as I was —
And then as lightly as a ghost to vanish hence?

But after me remains, howe'er, the fateful force
That, of no use in life, adorned my forehead tall;
But it will press you when I die, without remorse,
So that, bread-eaters, you become sheer angels all.

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