

## LINES

## WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON

Published with *Hellas*, 1821.

WHAT ! alive and so bold, O Earth ?  
Art thou not over-bold ?  
What ! leapest thou forth as of old  
In the light of thy morning mirth,  
The last of the flock of the starry fold ?  
Ha ! leapest thou forth as of old ?  
Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,  
And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead ?

How ! is not thy quick heart cold ?  
What spark is alive on thy hearth ?  
How ! is not his death-knell knolled ?  
And livest thou still, Mother Earth ?  
Thou wert warming thy fingers old  
O'er the embers covered and cold  
Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled ;  
What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead ?

'Who has known me of old,' replied Earth,  
'Or who has my story told ?  
It is thou who art over-bold.'  
And the lightning of scorn laughed forth  
As she sung, 'To my bosom I fold  
All my sons when their knell is knolled,  
And so with living motion all are fed,  
And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.'

'Still alive and still bold,' shouted Earth,  
'I grow bolder, and still more bold.  
The dead fill me ten thousand-fold  
Fuller of speed, and splendor, and mirth.  
I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,  
Like a frozen chaos uprolled,  
Till by the spirit of the mighty dead  
My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.

'Ay, alive and still bold,' muttered Earth,  
'Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled,  
In terror, and blood, and gold,  
A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.  
Leave the millions who follow to mould  
The metal before it be cold;  
And weave into his shame, which like the dead  
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled.'

## SONNET

## POLITICAL GREATNESS

Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,  
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms  
or arts,  
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame ;  
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,  
History is but the shadow of their shame,  
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts

As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,  
Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery  
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit

By force or custom ? Man who man would be  
Must rule the empire of himself; in it  
Must be supreme, establishing his throne  
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy  
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

## A BRIDAL SONG

The poem was composed for insertion in a projected play of Williams, *The Promise, or a Year, a Month, and a Day*. Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.

## I

THE golden gates of sleep unbar  
Where strength and beauty, met together,  
Kindle their image like a star  
In a sea of glassy weather !  
Night, with all thy stars look down;  
Darkness, weep thy holiest dew;  
Never smiled the inconstant moon  
On a pair so true.  
Let eyes not see their own delight ;—  
Haste, swift hour, and thy flight  
Oft renew.

## II

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her !  
Holy stars, permit no wrong !  
And return to wake the sleeper,  
Dawn, — ere it be long.  
O joy ! O fear ! what will be done  
In the absence of the sun!  
Come along !