

Asleep In The Valley



A r t h u r R i m b a u d

Jean Nicolas Arthur Rimband (1854-1891) was a French poem from the nineteenth century. He started writing poetry even before he reached his teens. He stopped writing poetry at the age of nineteen. His major works include *To Music*, *Evening prayer*. The present poem, originally titled *Le Dormeur le Val*, was included in his collection of poetry called, *Poesis* (1872).

This poem is written in the model of the Italian sonnet that has fourteen lines divided as octave and sestet. The poet explores the inherent futility of war. This theme is expressed in the contrasting images of a bountiful nature as background and the tragic death of a young soldier in the midst of nature's splendour.

A small green valley where a slow stream flows
And leaves long strands of silver on the bright
Grass; from the mountain top stream the Sun's
Rays; they fill the hollow full of light.

A soldier, very young, lies open-mouthed,
A pillow made of fern beneath his head,
Asleep; stretched in the heavy undergrowth,
Pale in his warm, green, sun-soaked bed .
His feet among the flowers, he sleeps. His smile
Is like an infant's — gentle, without guile.
Ah, Nature, keep him warm; he may catch cold.
The humming insects don't disturb his rest;
He sleeps in sunlight, one hand on his breast;
At peace. In his side there are two red holes.

strands : here, long strips

hollow : refers to the valley

undergrowth : bushes

humming : making a droning noise