

## ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

1844-1881



### Ode

We are the music makers,  
And we are the dreamers of dreams,  
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,  
And sitting by desolate streams; —  
5 World-losers and world-forsakers,  
On whom the pale moon gleams:  
Yet we are the movers and shakers  
Of the world for ever, it seems.

10 With wonderful deathless ditties  
We build up the world's great cities,  
And out of a fabulous story  
We fashion an empire's glory:  
One man with a dream, at pleasure,  
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;  
15 And three with a new song's measure  
Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying  
In the buried past of the earth,  
Built Nineveh with our sighing,  
20 And Babel itself in our mirth;  
And o'erthrew them with prophesying  
To the old of the new world's worth;  
For each age is a dream that is dying,  
Or one that is coming to birth.

25 A breath of our inspiration  
Is the life of each generation;  
A wondrous thing of our dreaming  
Unearthly, impossible seeming —  
The soldier, the king, and the peasant  
30 Are working together in one,

Till our dream shall become their present,  
And their work in the world be done.

They had no vision amazing  
Of the goodly house they are raising;

35 They had no divine foreshowing  
Of the land to which they are going:  
But on one man's soul it hath broken,  
A light that doth not depart;  
And his look, or a word he hath spoken,  
40 Wrought flame in another man's heart.

And therefore to-day is thrilling  
With a past day's late fulfilling;

And the multitudes are enlisted  
In the faith that their fathers resisted,  
45 And, scorning the dream of to-morrow,  
Are bringing to pass, as they may,  
In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,  
The dream that was scorned yesterday.

But we, with our dreaming and singing,

50 Ceaseless and sorrowless we!  
The glory about us clinging  
Of the glorious futures we see,  
Our souls with high music ringing:  
O men! it must ever be  
55 That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,  
A little apart from ye.

For we are afar with the dawning  
And the suns that are not yet high,  
And out of the infinite morning

60 Intrepid you hear us cry —  
How, spite of your human scorning,  
Once more God's future draws nigh,  
And already goes forth the warning  
That ye of the past must die.

65 Great hail! we cry to the comers  
From the dazzling unknown shore;

Bring us hither your sun and your summers,  
And renew our world as of yore;  
You shall teach us your song's new numbers,  
70 And things that we dreamed not before:  
Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,  
And a singer who sings no more.

1873/1874

