

Fernando Pessoa

17 — PRAYER

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Our lady of Useless Tears,
Thine is my heart's best shrine.
I am sick with the gorging years,
I am drunk with the bitter wine
Of having but cares and fears,
Of knowing but how to pine.

It is useless to pray to thee,
But my heart is full of pain.
Thy glance would be charity,
Even if the look were disdain.
Give me that I may be
A child like thine again.

My sense of me is all tears.
I pity my heart too much.
O a cradle for my fears
And the hem of thy garment to clutch!
O wert thou alive and near us,
And thy hand a hand that could touch!

I do not know how to pray.
My heart is a torn pall.
See how my hair grows gray.
O teach my lips to call
On thy name night and day
As if that name were all.

My fathers' faith doth rise

To my lips this sick hour.
I pray to thee with mine eyes
 Rosaries of anguish. O dower
My soul.with a least sweet lies
 Of thy suffering son's power!

I have forgotten the taste
 Of faith, and ache for prayer.
My heart is a garden laid waste.
 O thy hand on my hair
Like a mother's hand let rest
 And let me die with it there!

1913

«The Mad Fiddler». in **Poesia Inglesa**. Fernando Pessoa. (Organização e tradução de Luísa Freire. Prefácio de Teresa Rita Lopes.) Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1995: 352.

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