

Alexander Search

THE BELLS

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Ring, bells, ring — ring out clear!
Perhaps by the vague sentiment that you raise —
I know not why — you remind me of my infancy.
Ring, bells, ring! Your soul is a tear.
What does it matter? My childhood's glee —
You cannot call it back to me.

Ring, bells, ring out your song!
You remind me of some happiness
(Perhaps one that I never felt),
Of what has been, of what lasts not long,
Of what was not but seems now a bliss.
Something of sorrow, something of despair
Is in me by your melody.
Sing, sing of the past which was fair —
You cannot call it back to me.

Though you sing but your set melody,
Yet ring out wildly, wildly, bells!
Ring out the song that tears out the heart,
Speaking of what I know not, sing
To and fro till the soul's deep smart
Calms itself by too much, too deep in the heart.

In the wordless speech of your own
Ring out, wild bells, ring out!
Ye have something of souls left alone;
Ye give me a sorrow, a deep ache of doubt,
Ununderstood sentiment sad. . .

Do you sing of my childhood that thus you should moan?
Then I was unconscious; now I am mad.

Ring out bells! Your sadness that stings
Has a sob as an inner sound.
I have in me colossal things.
Ring on! in your music I am drowned.
All in the world has a limit and bound.
Ring on, desperate and free!
Can ye not of skies and of wings
Speak loud to my misery?
Speak an ye will; except sorrow and pain
Ye bring not anything to me.

Ring out, wild bells, clearly, deep!
Whatever the pain ye sing of may be —
What does it matter? Life, death are one sleep
Full of dreams of agony.
All is unreal and we blind.
Ring out your song! I desire to weep
For all that my life might be.
All that you call or recall to my mind
You cannot bring nor bring back to me.

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