

Alexander Search

SONG OF THE LEPER

SONG OF THE LEPER

He was a nauseous leper
Who in the ruins was;
There ever and anon
The hollow wind did pass,
And wild and feeble and yellow all
Was the grass.

And the leper sang this song:

«The leper is excluded from his race,
The leper is driven out,
The leper is thrust out
From hall and street and way;
He must not show his face
Where human beings may.
For him there are whips and stones;
He cannot even stay
Where mongrels fight for bones
And are allowed to play.

«No beast as the poor leper is
Worms and snakes have greater bliss.
But the leper is accurst
And he knows that well accurst
Is he because a nauseous leper,
Of evil things the worst.

«The toad, the newt, the viper
Are tolerate and borne,

But the vile and nauseous leper
Makes vomit in deep scorn;
Repugnance is for him
Inevitably born

«Sometimes he hears the laughter
Of human feast to come,
And music followed, after
By sounds of peace and of home.
 Upon the wind they stray,
 The wind bears them away,
And the nauseous leper, he remains,
 Through night, through day,
Alone with his sores, with his pains.

And bands of strollers pass,
Taking the road afar,
For in the ruins they know well
The leper's sores there are.
And if perchance they see
The leper from their way,
He sees their finger point
And he knows that they say:

«He is the nauseous leper
Who in the ruins doth sit;
He is viler than the plague,
More loathsome far than it;
If near to him we dared do come
Upon him we would spit.»

«Poor leper who is a man,
Poor leper who is alive,
Under his being's ban,
Whose torture's chain unearned
No pity comes to rive.

«A Hand of Might created
The newt, the toad, the viper,
But gave them not its worst;
Kept them from loneliness,
Gave them their kindred's bliss.
 But that hand made the leper
And it made the leper leper:
And that Hand Almighty is
 Of all things the most curst.

25-10-1907

Poesia Inglesa. Fernando Pessoa. (Organização e tradução de Luísa Freire. Prefácio de Teresa Rita Lopes.) Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1995: 122.

Destinado ao volume «Agony».