

Fernando Pessoa

## **SALUTE TO THE SUN'S ENTRY INTO ARIES**

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Now at the doorway of the coming year,  
Ye nymphs do gather and the garlands twine  
That heroes' sons will bear  
Fifty years hence in their remembering hands  
And of their fathers speak with shining eyes  
And of the war that stained the lands.

Weave ye the garlands, for the fame will pass,  
And their grandchildren of grandchildren will  
No more remember, neither care  
Who their ancestor was  
Who did that old crown, now scarce a crown, bear  
For all must pass, that Time may have his fill.

Weave ye the garlands therefore, for this hour  
Will not survive beyond the memory  
Of those yet near to it who have the power  
The hour somewhat like what it was to see.  
Weave ye the garlands, weave  
That their memory may live  
Awhile, and if that mean that fame is nought,  
Weave still the garlands with a gentle thought,  
For weaving them, know ye  
What to Time's elder shades you yet may give.  
The days are heavy with the blood of men,  
The year reels like a shattered wall  
When the wind comes out of the caves of night.  
Our minds are equal with the shaking...  
We know not on what power to call

Or which side of the Truth lies right.

Alas! alas! all sides are right in war,  
And that impartial vision born of peace,  
And that the Gods alone can have,  
Lives only in our wish that dim wars mar,  
Breathes only in the halls of our release  
From all the human things for which we crave.

But these are thoughts, and life is grief and fear.  
Weave ye the garlands, lest the coming year  
Forget, like ye, the fallen to remember  
And the victors to greet.  
Weave ye the garlands made  
Of some strange flower that lasts unto December  
And lay them at Fate's unseen feet.

Ay, for not for the heroes nor the slain  
Weave ye the garlands woven with your pain.  
Not for the fallen do your cheeks awhile  
Flush then grow pale and your proud pain smile.  
Not for a man nor for a nation do  
Your garlands outreach Time  
Perhaps and in eternal regions chime  
With the sense of their fame who were e'er true.

For Fate alone all garlands woven are.  
Unto Fate's feet the rivers of our tears  
Perennial run, nor is there aught more far  
Alas! than mere Fate that outwits the sun,  
And that in circles round its empty name  
Carries the vain course of our sterile fame  
And great men as great nations equal lead  
Vainly around the frame  
Of nothing, like a wind along a mead.

Yet, whether for some man or for no man,

Whether for personal hopes or Fate no one,  
Your garlands weave, lest the year come und span  
With days fame-empty the task e'er begun.  
Weave garlands, green glad garlands, garlands sad,  
Garlands of all sorts, if they glory mean,  
Carry your woven garlands to their grave. . .  
The rest is something that cannot be had —  
The void as of a ship sunk nor more seen  
Beneath the wave.

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