

Fernando Pessoa

15 — THE NIGHT-LIGHT

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Nurse, I known now
 That love is vain.
 When I was small
 You used to sing
And soothe my brow
 Till calm lost pain.
 That song recall
 And to me bring.

I wish to feel
 Again that child
 That you made sleep
 Singing so low,
So low that real
 Things were beguiled
 To make me weep
 At seeing them go.

Nurse, by my bed
 Sing me again
 That song. I love
 Hoping for't now.
My heart has bled
 Till joy seems pain.
 Sing softly above
 My caressed brow.

O regions lost
 In dreams and sleep!

O fairy tales
 You did not tell,
But that were tossed
 Out of the deep
 Of your song's waves
 And surge and spell!

Sing as if you
 Were listening.
 Sing as if I
 Had no more world
Than all night through
 Hearing you sing,
 While my breath sly
 On my breast curled.

Why did I live
 Beyond those hours
 When you sung songs
 Perhaps of queens
My dream believes,
 Perhaps of flowers,
 Whose lost scent throngs
 Through my sense-screens?

Why did I lose
 What I had not
 But was your voice,
 My heart and night?

Why did I choose
 Life, love and thought,
 With a wrong choice
 And a false right?

Lullaby, nurse,
 Again for me.
 Sing 'till I find

My heart less lone,
And life, life's hearse,
Leaving dreams free,
Shrink undefined
Into the Unknown.

You are no more
My nurse that sings,
My childhood een
Made me again.

No: you are the hour
Of sleep, that brings
That scene no-scene,
That pain no-pain;

Hallowed and dim,
Motherly night,
Wherein my soul
Is haunted past
The hollow rim
Of my delight
And the low dole
Of pain and haste;

Merged in the dark,
Sunk past the bed
Into a peace
Of being nought,
Shadowy bark
Abandoned,
Abstract release
From self and thought.

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«The Mad Fiddler». in **Poesia Inglesa**. Fernando Pessoa. (Organização e tradução de Luísa Freire. Prefácio de Teresa Rita Lopes.) Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1995: 342.

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