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Mother's Day Poem

Lucinda Cornell

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Mother's Day

(By H. John Beckwith.)

I dreamed—and in my dream I saw a spring-clad world
Around a barren hill, bereft of vegetation;
And of a sudden on the crest there sprang unfurled
A blood-red, and a pink, and snowy-white carnation.
Then all grew dark—as at the coming of a storm—
And lo, the change!—no sign of living flowers.
Where grew the pink—a naked, quivering form
Upon a cross was dying through eternal hours.
The red was blood-drops, dripping slowly one by one
As petals fall; the white a mother kneeling
In anguish at the cross that held her son,
An agony unceasing, everlasting, time unhealing.
And in the shadow of the cross I saw her face:
A world of woe, as of a martyred soul when dying,
For he—whose naked, blood-scourged body held her gaze
Had once as baby in her arms been lying.
Deep in her eyes—as in a mirror—was his life
From manger cradle to his darkest hour.
With nameless mother grief her eyes were rife,
With love that gave her bleeding heart the power
To live his death—a soul-excruciating pain—
To claim him as her son while men were craving
His blood upon the cross between the twain
Of thieves, midst curses, blasphemy, and raving.
She heard him called impostor, self-styled king,
Forgiving one thief, taunted by another;
But though world-doomed, unfalt'ring she would cling
To him through all—for was she not his mother?

Then once again the darkness fell; and when the light
Anew shone forth upon God's world creation,
Upon the barren, spring-surrounded, sun-shunned height
There only grew a spotless white carnation.

Your way may lead across that barren hill,
Where shadows of the cross are ever falling,
Where mourning tears of all the world are still
Through time and space to God for mercy calling.
That sun-forsaken hill, where hammer strokes
Upon the nails of woe are ever pounding,
Where lives are crushed beneath the cross-clad yokes,
And mocking, tantalizing taunts are sounding.
But though the world may scourge and crucify,
Upon your Calvary there grows a white carnation;
It sprouts on earth and blooms beyond the sky,
The fairest flower in the Lord's creation.
Around her mother neck your arms you threw,
And at her breast as baby you were nestling;
She goes into the shadows of Gethsemane with you,
And prays while you with agony are wrestling.
She lives your life; her love no death can slay,
She shares with you each joy and all your sorrows;
And, though far from that hill may lie your way,
Remember Mother's Day is all the morrows.

—H. John Beckwith.