

The Lark Ascending by George Meredith

<p> HE rises and begins to round, He drops the silver chain of sound Of many links without a break, In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake, All intervolv'd and spreading wide, </p>	5	<p> And know the pleasure sprinkled bright By simple singing of delight, Shrill, irreflective, unrestrain'd, Rapt, ringing, on the jet sustain'd Without a break, without a fall, </p>	35
<p> Like water-dimples down a tide Where ripple ripple overcurls And eddy into eddy whirls; A press of hurried notes that run So fleet they scarce are more than one, Yet changingly the trills repeat And linger ringing while they fleet, Sweet to the quick o' the ear, and dear To her beyond the handmaid ear, Who sits beside our inner springs, Too often dry for this he brings, Which seems the very jet of earth At sight of sun, her musci's mirth, As up he wings the spiral stair, A song of light, and pierces air With fountain ardor, fountain play, To reach the shining tops of day, And drink in everything discern'd An ecstasy to music turn'd, Impell'd by what his happy bill Disperses; drinking, showering still, Unthinking save that he may give His voice the outlet, there to live Renew'd in endless notes of glee, So thirsty of his voice is he, For all to hear and all to know That he is joy, awake, aglow, The tumult of the heart to hear Through pureness filter'd crystal-clear, </p>	10	<p> Sweet-silvery, sheer lyrical, Perennial, quavering up the chord Like myriad dews of sunny sward That trembling into fulness shine, And sparkle dropping argentine; Such wooing as the ear receives From zephyr caught in choric leaves Of aspens when their chattering net Is flush'd to white with shivers wet; And such the water-spirit's chime On mountain heights in morning's prime, Too freshly sweet to seem excess, Too animate to need a stress; But wider over many heads The starry voice ascending spreads, Awakening, as it waxes thin, The best in us to him akin; And every face to watch him rais'd, Puts on the light of children prais'd, So rich our human pleasure ripens When sweetness on sincereness pipes, Though nought be promis'd from the seas, But only a soft-ruffling breeze Sweep glittering on a still content, Serenity in ravishment. </p>	40
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<p>For singing till his heaven fills, 'T is love of earth that he instils, And ever winging up and up, Our valley is his golden cup, And he the wine which overflows To lift us with him as he goes: The woods and brooks, the sheep and kine He is, the hills, the human line, The meadows green, the fallows brown, The dreams of labor in the town; He sings the sap, the quicken'd veins; The wedding song of sun and rains He is, the dance of children, thanks Of sowers, shout of primrose-banks, And eye of violets while they breathe; All these the circling song will wreathe, And you shall hear the herb and tree, The better heart of men shall see, Shall feel celestially, as long As you crave nothing save the song. Was never voice of ours could say Our inmost in the sweetest way, Like yonder voice aloft, and link All hearers in the song they drink: Our wisdom speaks from failing blood, Our passion is too full in flood, We want the key of his wild note Of truthful in a tuneful throat, The song seraphically free Of taint of personality, So pure that it salutes the suns The voice of one for millions, In whom the millions rejoice For giving their one spirit voice. Yet men have we, whom we revere,</p>	<p>65</p> <p>70</p> <p>75</p> <p>80</p> <p>85</p> <p>90</p> <p>95</p>	<p>Now names, and men still housing here, Whose lives, by many a battle-dint Defaced, and grinding wheels on flint, Yield substance, though they sing not, sweet For song our highest heaven to greet: Whom heavenly singing gives us new, Enspheres them brilliant in our blue, From firmest base to farthest leap, Because their love of Earth is deep, And they are warriors in accord With life to serve and pass reward, So touching purest and so heard In the brain's reflex of yon bird; Wherefore their soul in me, or mine, Through self-forgetfulness divine, In them, that song aloft maintains, To fill the sky and thrill the plains With showerings drawn from human stores, As he to silence nearer soars, Extends the world at wings and dome, More spacious making more our home, Till lost on his aërial rings In light, and then the fancy sings.</p>	<p>100</p> <p>105</p> <p>110</p> <p>115</p> <p>120</p>
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