

THE REPLY TO TIME by Mary Darby Robinson

O TIME, forgive the mournful song
That on thy pinions stole along,
When the rude hand of pain severe
Chas'd down my cheek the burning tear;
When sorrow chill'd each warm desire
That kindles FANCY'S lambent fire;
When HOPE, by fost'ring FRIENDSHIP rear'd,
A phantom of the brain appear'd;
Forgive the song, devoid of art,
That stole spontaneous from my heart;
For when that heart shall throb no more,
And all its keen regrets be o'er;
Should kind remembrance shed one tear
To sacred FRIENDSHIP o'er my bier;
When the dark precincts of the tomb,
Shall hide me in its deepest gloom;
O! should'st thou on thy wafting wing
The sigh of gentle sorrow bring;
Or fondly deign to bear the name
Of one, alas! unknown to fame;
Then, shall my weak untutor'd rhyme,
Exulting boast the gifts of TIME.

But while I feel youth's vivid fire
Fann'd by the breath of care expire;
While no blest ray of HOPE divine,
O'er my chill'd bosom deigns to shine:
While doom'd to mark the vapid day
In tasteless languor waste away:
Still, still, my sad and plaintive rhyme
Must blame the ruthless pow'r of TIME.

Each infant flow'r of rainbow hue,
That bathes its head in morning dew,
At twilight droops; the mountain PINE,
Whose high and waving brows incline

O'er the white cataract's foamy way,
Shall at THY withering touch decay!
The craggy cliffs that proudly rise
In awful splendour 'midst the skies,
Shall to the vale in fragments roll,
Obedient to thy fell controul!
The loftiest fabric rear'd to fame;
The sculptur'd BUST, the POET'S name;
The softest tint of TITIAN die;
The boast of magic MINSTRELSY;
The vows to holy FRIENDSHIP dear;
The sainted smile of LOVE sincere,
The flame that warms th' empassion'd heart;
All that fine feeling can impart;
The wonders of exterior grace;
The spells that bind the fairest face;
Fade in oblivion's torpid hour
The victims of thy TYRANT POW'R!