

THE HUNDRED BEST ENGLISH POEMS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649756070

The Hundred Best English Poems by Adam L. Gowans

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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ADAM L. GOWANS

**THE HUNDRED BEST
ENGLISH POEMS**



Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

THE HUNDRED BEST
ENGLISH POEMS

SELECTED BY

ADAM L. GOWANS, M.A.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

LET me frankly admit, to begin with, that the attractiveness and probable selling qualities of the title of this little book, "The Hundred Best English Poems," proved, when it had been once thought of, too powerful arguments for it to be abandoned. I am fully conscious of the presumption such a title implies in an unknown selector, but at the same time I submit that only a plebiscite of duly qualified lovers of poetry could make a selection that could claim to deserve this title beyond all question, and such a plebiscite is of course impossible. I can claim no more than that my attempt to realize this title is an honest one, and I can assert, without fear of contradiction, that every one of the poems I have included is a "gem of purest ray serene"; that none can be too often read or too often repeated to one's self; that every one of them should be known by heart by every lover of good literature, so

that each may become, as it were, a part of his inner being.

I have not inserted any poems by living authors.

I have taken the greatest care with the texts of the poems. The editions followed have been mentioned in every case. I have scrupulously retained the punctuation of these original editions, and only modernized the spelling of the old copies; while I have not ventured to omit any part of any poem. I have not supplied titles of my own, but have adopted those I found already employed in the editions used as models, or, in some of the cases in which I found none, have merely added a descriptive one, such as "Song from 'Don Juan.'"

In conclusion, my very warmest thanks are due to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., for permission to include Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar"; to Mr. D. Nutt for permission to insert W. E. Henley's "To R. T. H. B." and "Margaritæ Sorori"; to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. for a like privilege in regard to Browning's "Epilogue," and to Mr. Lloyd Osbourne and Messrs. Chatto & Windus for permission to reproduce Stevenson's "Requiem." Without these poems the volume would have had a much smaller

claim to its title than it does possess, slight as that may be. My thanks are also due to the following gentlemen who have kindly allowed me to reproduce copyright texts of non-copyright poems from editions published by them: Messrs. Bickers & Son (Ben Jonson), Messrs. Chapman & Hall, Ltd. (Landor), Messrs. Chatto & Windus (Herrick), Mr. Buxton Forman (Keats and Shelley), Mr. Henry Frowde (Wordsworth), Mr. Alex. Gardner and the Rev. George Henderson, B.D. (Lady Nairne), Messrs. T. C. & E. C. Jack (Burns), Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd. (Clough and Tennyson), Mr. John Murray (Byron), Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. (Browning), Messrs. Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd. (Coleridge and Hood).

A. L. G.

