

The Sentinel Rose

Bright little flower of loveliest bloom
O'er this small grave thy vigil keeping,
Sweet be thy lustre and perfume
For here an innocent lies sleeping!

Well dost thou keep thy mournful trust,
Twining thy annual flowery wreath,
To deck with love the silent dust
Of that dear one who rests beneath.

A mother's love first placed thee here;
The guardian of her darling's sleep;
And pledged thee with a mother's tear
Thy holy vigil here to keep.

This hallowed soil embraced thy roots,
Faithful thou wert though soon neglected
And thriftily put forth thy shoots
Uncultivated, unprotected.

What though November's icy gale
Oft rudely shook thy slender form!
What though stern winter's withering hail
Oft laid thee low beneath the storm!

As oft as genial spring returned,
Returned to thee, thy life again
From the cold ice-tomb, where in-urned
Thou long hadst't stark and leafless lain.

Once more thou bloomest, peerless flower
Clad in thy robe of emerald leaves
Drinking the dewy crystal shower
That falls upon our summer eves.

Cheered by the sun's inviting ray,
E'en on this cold sepulchral ground
Thou smilest fresh and bright and gay
As flowers in scenes of culture found.

Sweet emblem of the beauteous maid,
That sleeps beneath thy fragrant bower,
For she by nature was arrayed
In fairest charms, like thee sweet flower

Thou camest from the icy tomb
Wherein thy growth had long been crushed,
In lovelier life again to bloom
When skies were bright and storms were hushed.

So when Time's wintry blasts are o'er,
And Christ, with his elect shall reign,
Upon the promised, blissful shore
Beyond a world of sin and pain;

Then the dear ashes mouldering here
From Death's stern grasp again shall rise,
To live through an unchanging year,
Amid the joys of Paradise.

But here the semblance fails, for thou
Frail thing of earth art doomed to fade,
Again beneath the storms to bow
And strew thy petals o'er the dead.

Yet still, in many a future year
Unscathed by time, oh mayest thou bloom,
Lo, glad the heart that placed thee here,
The guardian of her infant's tomb!