

Two Poems
by
Gabriele Rossetti

Napoleon at Saint Helena

Gaze upon what a prince I am, Ocean,
Feared in war like the thunder's crashing roar,
Who, taking and giving the throne, drove score
After score of kings to oblivion.
I had myself a throne, no donation
Or by-the-grace-of-God sort kings long for.
To an apotheosis of my corps,
To my sword, Earth's dread, I owe what was done.
Fate led me here, not Spaniard or frantic
Prussian, not quaking kings, not Russian frost,
Not Vatican fulminations, mantic
But puny. Here still great. Who else can boast
That he has for his jail the Atlantic,
For his screws all of Europe's ruling host?

Naples

You are still beautiful with stars in your hair—
Stars that scintillate, each a living sapphire,
And sweet also is the breath that you suspire,
Herald, in Tyrian purple, of the day.
With the gentle smile of longing satisfied,
You announce to us from your approaching bound
That, from the kind garden of Italian ground,
Bondage, plucked, has been forever flung away.

The stern scion of Carlo and Enrico,
The man* who bears to them so much resemblance,
Proved the quality of his inheritance
Today, craving sonship not helotism.
With great good will, he set his pious hand down
On the Book of Agreements sincerely signed,
And then this pact, sworn to with unified mind,
He placed on the Altar of Patriotism.

A forest of lances shook with one accord
At the invitation of the trumpet's blare,
And in the shadow of the sacred flag there
Could be heard not a single discordant vow;
And brother clasped brother firmly by the hand—
Dauno, Sannita, Irpino, Lucano:
Not extinguished, but only appeased, the glow
Of the old virtue, peaceful for now.