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**A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands**

**Dodsley, Robert**

**London, 1758**

Ode to Death. Translated from the French of the King of Prussia. By Dr.  
Hawksworth.

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But why to them, Hygeia, why  
 Dost thou thy cordial drop deny  
 Who but for others live ;  
 Oh, goddess, hear my pray'r, and grant  
 That these that health may never want,  
 Which they to others give.



ODE to DEATH. Translated from the  
 FRENCH of the King of PRUSSIA.

By Dr. HAWKSWORTH.

**Y**ET a few *years*, or *days* perhaps,  
 Or *moments* pass with silent lapse,  
 And time to me shall be no more ;  
 No more the sun these eyes shall view,  
 Earth o'er these limbs her dust shall strew,  
 And life's fantastic dream be o'er.

Alas ! I touch the dreadful brink,  
 From nature's verge impell'd I sink,  
 And endless darkness wraps me round !  
 Yes, Death is ever at my hand,  
 Fast by my bed he takes his stand,  
 And constant at my board is found.

Earth,

Earth, air, and fire, and water, join  
 Against this fleeting life of mine,  
 And where for succour can I fly?  
 If art with flatt'ring wiles pretend  
 To shield me like a guardian friend,  
 By Art, ere Nature bids, I die.

I see this tyrant of the mind,  
 This idol Flesh to dust consign'd,  
 Once call'd from dust by pow'r divine;  
 Its features change, 'tis pale, 'tis cold——  
 Hence dreadful spectre! to behold  
 Thy aspect, is to make it mine.

And can I then with guilty pride,  
 Which fear nor shame can quell or hide,  
 This flesh still pamper and adorn!  
 Thus viewing what I soon *shall be*,  
 Can what I *am* demand the knee,  
 Or look on aught around with scorn?

But then this spark that warms, that guides,  
 That lives, that thinks, what fate betides?  
 Can this be dust, a kneaded clod!  
 This yield to death! the soul, the mind,  
 That measures heav'n, and mounts the wind,  
 That knows at once itself and God?

Great



Great Cause of all, above, below,  
 Who knows thee must for ever know,  
 Immortal and divine !  
 Thy image on my soul impress,  
 Of endless being is the test,  
 And bids Eternity be mine !

Transporting thought !—but am I sure  
 That endless life will joy secure ?  
 Joy's only to the just decreed !  
 The guilty wretch expiring, goes  
 Where vengeance endless life bestows,  
 That endless misery may succeed.

Great God, how awful is the scene !  
 A breath, a transient breath between ;  
 And can I jest, and laugh, and play !  
 To earth, alas ! too firmly bound,  
 Trees deeply rooted in the ground,  
 Are shiver'd when they're torn away.

Vain joys, which envy'd greatness gains,  
 How do ye bind with silken chains,  
 Which ask *Herculean* strength to break !  
 How with new terrors have ye arm'd  
 The pow'r whose slightest glance alarm'd,  
 How many deaths of one ye make !

Yet,

Yet, dumb with wonder, I behold  
 Man's thoughtless race in error bold,  
 Forget or scorn the *laws* of death;  
 With *these* no projects coincide,  
 Nor vows, nor toils, nor hopes, *they* guide,  
 Each thinks he draws immortal breath.

Each blind to fate's approaching hour,  
 Intrigues, or fights, for wealth, or pow'r,  
 And slumb'ring dangers dare provoke:  
 And he who tott'ring scarce sustains  
 A century's age, plans future gains,  
 And feels an unexpected stroke.

Go on, unbridled desp'rate band,  
 Scorn rocks, gulphs, winds, search sea and land,  
 And spoil new worlds wherever found.  
 Seize, haste to seize the glitt'ring prize,  
 And sighs, and tears, and pray'rs despise,  
 Nor spare the temple's holy ground.

They go, succeed, but look again,  
 The desp'rate hand you seek in vain,  
 Now trod in dust the peasant's scorn.  
 But who that saw their treasures swell,  
 That heard th' insatiate vow rebel,  
 Would e'er have thought them mortal born?

See





See the world's victor mount his car,  
 Blood marks his progress wide and far,  
     Sure he shall reign while ages fly ;  
 No, vanish'd like a morning cloud,  
 The hero was but just allow'd  
     To fight, to conquer, and to die.

And is it true, I ask with dread,  
 That nations heap'd on nations bled  
     Beneath his chariot's fervid wheel,  
 With trophies to adorn the spot,  
 Where his pale corse was left to rot,  
     And doom'd the hungry reptile's meal ?

Yes, Fortune weary'd with her play,  
 Her toy, this hero, casts away,  
     And scarce the form of man is seen :  
 Awe chills my breast, my eyes o'erflow,  
 Around my brows no roses glow,  
     The cypress mine, funereal green !

Yet in this hour of grief and fears,  
 When awful Truth unveil'd appears,  
     Some pow'r unknown usurps my breast ;  
 Back to the world my thoughts are led,  
 My feet in Folly's labyrinth tread,  
     And fancy dreams that life is blest.