George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824)
Excerpts from *Hebrew Melodies*

“She Walks in Beauty”

She walks in Beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that’s best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow’d to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair’d the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o’er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

“If That High World”

If that high world, which lies beyond
Our own, surviving Love endears;
If there the cherish’d heart be fond,
The eye the same, except in tears—
How welcome those untrodden spheres!
How sweet this very hour to die!
To soar from earth and find all fears
Lost in thy light—Eternity!
It must be so: ‘t is not for self
That we so tremble on the brink;
And striving to o’erleap the gulf,
Yet cling to Being’s severing link.
Oh! in that future let us think
To hold each heart the heart that shares,
With them the immortal waters drink,
And soul in soul grow deathless theirs!

“All Is Vanity, Saith the Preacher”

Fame, Wisdom, Love, and Power were mine,
And Health and Youth possess’d me;
My goblets blush’d from every vine,
And lovely forms caress’d me;
I sunn’d my heart in Beauty's eyes,
And felt my soul grow tender;
All Earth can give, or mortal prize,
Was mine of regal splendour.

I strive to number o’er what days
Remembrance can discover,
Which all that Life or Earth displays
Would lure me to live over.
There rose no day, there roll’d no hour
Of pleasure unembittered;
And not a trapping deck’d my Power
That gall’d not while it glitter’d.

The serpent of the field, by art
And spells, is won from harming;
But that which coils around the heart,
Oh! who hath power of charming?
It will not list to Wisdom’s lore,
Nor Music’s voice can lure it;
But there it stings for evermore
The soul that must endure it.