

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON (1832-1914)

POET AND prose writer, associated with the Pre-Raphaelite group. He befriended and cared for Swinburne for many years.

The Sonnet's Voice

(A Metrical Lesson by the Seashore)

Yon silvery billows breaking on the beach
Fall back in foam beneath the star-shine clear,
The while my rhymes are murmuring in your ear
A restless lore like that the billows teach;
For on these sonnet-waves my soul would reach
From its own depths, and rest within you, dear,
As, through the billowy voices yearning here,
Great nature strives to find a human speech.
A sonnet is a wave of melody:
From heaving waters of the impassion'd soul
A billow of tidal music one and whole
Flows in the "octave;" then returning free,
Its ebbing surges in the "sestet" roll
Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS (1840–1893)

ENGLISH POET, critic and translator. Translated the sonnets of Michelangelo and Campanella and wrote original sonnets of high quality.

The Sonnet (III)

The Sonnet is a world, where feelings caught
In webs of phantasy, combine and fuse
Their kindred elements 'neath mystic dews
Shed from the ether round man's dwelling wrought;
Distilling heart's content, star-fragrance fraught
With influences from the breathing fires
Of heaven in everlasting endless gyres
Enfolding and encircling orbs of thought.
Our Sonnet's world hath two fix'd hemispheres:
This, where the sun with fierce strength masculine
Pours his keen rays and bids the noonday shine;
That, where the moon and the stars, concordant powers,
Shed milder rays, and daylight disappears
In low melodious music of still hours.

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON (1845–1907)

ENGLISH POET, author of two books of sonnets, *Imaginary Sonnets* (1888) and *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours* (1894).

What the Sonnet Is

Fourteen small broidered berries on the hem
Of Circe's mantle, each of magic gold;
Fourteen of lone Calypso's tears that rolled
Into the sea, for pearls to come of them;
Fourteen clear signs of omen in the gem
With which Medea human fate foretold;
Fourteen small drops, which Faustus, growing old,
Craved of the Fiend, to water Life's dry stem.
It is the pure white diamond Dante brought
To Beatrice; the sapphire Laura wore
When Petrarch cut it sparkling out of thought;
The ruby Shakespeare hewed from his heart's core;
The dark, deep emerald that Rossetti wrought
For his own soul, to wear for evermore.