

A Year In Heaven

ONE year among the angels, beloved, thou hast been;
One year has heaven's white portal shut back the sound of sin:
And yet no voice, no whisper, comes floating down from thee,
To tell us what glad wonder a year of heaven may be.

Our hearts before it listen, the beautiful closed gate:
The silence yearns around us; we listen and we wait.
It is thy heavenly birthday, on earth thy lilies bloom;
In thine immortal garland canst find for these no room?
Thou lovedst all things lovely when walking with us here;
Now, from the heights of heaven, seems earth no longer dear?
We cannot paint thee moving in white-robed state afar,
Nor dream our flower of comfort a cool and distant star.

Heaven is but life made richer: therein can be no loss:
To meet our love and longing thou hast no gulf to cross;
No adamant between us uprears its rocky screen;
A veil before us only; -- thou in the light serene.

That veil 'twixt earth and heaven a breath might waft aside;
We breathe one air, beloved, we follow one dear Guide:
Passed in to open vision, out of our mists and rain,
Thou seest how sorrow blossoms; how peace is won from pain.

And half we feel thee leaning from thy deep calm of bliss,
To say of earth, "Beloved, how beautiful it is
The lilies in this splendor, -- the green leaves in this dew;
O, earth is also heaven, with God's light clothed anew!"

So, when the sky seems bluer, and when the blossoms wear
Some tender, mystic shading we never knew was there,
We'll say "We see things earthly by light of sainted eyes;
She bends where we are gazing, to-day, from Paradise."

Because we know thee near us, and nearer still to Him
Who fills thy cup of being with glory to the brim,
We will not stain with grieving our fair, though fainter light,
But cling to thee in spirit as if thou wert in sight.

And as in waves of beauty the swift years come and go,
Upon celestial currents our deeper life shall flow,
Hearing, from that sweet country where blighting never came,
Love chime the hours immortal, in earth and heaven the same.

Lucy Larcom (1824-1893)