

***...too bitter sweet***     *Christina Rossetti*

**1. Song**

She sat and sang alway  
    By the green margin of a stream,  
Watching the fishes leap and play  
    Beneath the glad sunbeam.

I sat and wept alway  
    Beneath the moon's most shadowy beam,  
Watching the blossoms of the May  
    Weep leaves into the stream.

I wept for memory;  
    She sang for hope that is so fair:  
My tears were swallowed by the sea;  
    Her songs died on the air.

*26 November 1848*

**2. An End**

Love, strong as Death, is dead.  
Come, let us make his bed  
Among the dying flowers:  
A green turf at his head;  
And a stone at his feet,  
Whereon we may sit  
In the quiet evening hours.

He was born in the spring,  
And died before the harvesting:  
On the last warm summer day  
He left us; he would not stay  
For autumn twilight cold and grey.  
Sit we by his grave, and sing  
He is gone away.

To few chords and sad and low  
Sing we so:  
Be our eyes fixed on the grass  
Shadow-veiled as the years pass,  
While we think of all that was  
In the long ago.

*5 March 1849*

### 3. Bitter for Sweet

Summer is gone with all its roses.  
Its sun and perfumes and sweet flowers,  
Its warm air and refreshing showers:  
And even Autumn closes.

Yea, Autumn's chilly self is going,  
And Winter comes which is yet colder;  
Each day the hoar-frost waxes bolder,  
And the last buds cease blowing.

*1 December 1848*

### 4. Echo

Come to me in the silence of the night;  
    Come in the speaking silence of a dream;  
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright  
    As sunlight on a stream;  
    Come back in tears,  
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,  
    Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,  
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet;  
    Where thirsting longing eyes  
    Watch the slow door  
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live  
    My very life again though cold in death:  
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give  
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:  
    Speak low, lean low,  
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

*18 December 1854*

### 5. Lady Montrevor

I do not look for love that is a dream –  
    I only seek for courage to be still;  
    To bear my grief with an unbending will,  
And when I am a-weary not to seem.  
Let the round world roll on; let the sun beam;  
    Let the wind blow, and let the rivers fill  
    The everlasting sea, and on the hill  
The palms almost touch heaven, as children deem.

And, though young spring and summer pass away,  
And autumn and cold winter come again,  
And though my soul, being tired of its pain,  
Pass from the ancient earth, and though my clay  
Return to dust, my tongue shall not complain;-  
No man shall mock me after this my day.

*18 February 1848*

## **6. Song**

When I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me;  
Plant thou no roses at my head,  
Nor shady cypress tree:  
Be the green grass above me  
With showers and dewdrops wet:  
And if thou wilt, remember,  
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,  
I shall not feel the rain:  
I shall not hear the nightingale  
Sing on as if in pain:  
And dreaming through the twilight  
That doth not rise nor set,  
Haply I may remember,  
And haply may forget.

*12 December 1848*