

The Winter Hyacinth

Lydia Sigourney

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Thou'rt beautiful, my flower,—my winter flower!—
These many weeks I've watch'd thy graceful mesh
Of silvery roots, making their busy way
Down through the watery element, intent
To reach the bottom of thy crystal vase,
That deck'd thy mantel.

Then, came bursting forth
From thy brown bulb, a coronal of leaves,
A stalk,—a spike of buds,—and last, thy head,—
Heavy with floral bells, and rich with sweets,
My glorious hyacinth. Day after day,
Thy radiant charms attracted every eye,
And many a phrase of admiration woke,
As from a lover's tongue.

But now, alas!—
Decay doth tough thy brow, my beautiful,
And while we hop'd for thee a longer date,
The time hath come to die. In thy brief span
Didst thou remember His untiring hand,
From whom is all our beauty,—all our joy?
And was the perfume of thy secret soul
So freely breath'd around,—a tender sigh
Of praise to Him? If aught remains undone,
Which might thy gentle nature well befit,
Haste thee, my precious one. Thy time is short.
The spoiler cometh.

Drooping on its stem
Methought it meekly lifted its pale leaves
For the last silent prayer,—while unto me,
A gush of fragrance, was its parting gift.
—At morn I came.—No more its bosom glow'd;
A heavy sleep hung on its leaden eye
With dews, like funeral tears.

The Winter Hyacinth

O friend,—whose gift
Was this bright flower, and unto whom my thoughts
Oft grateful turn'd, as o'er its opening charms
I hung with deep delight,—say, dost thou blend
Love to our God,—with all thy kindly deeds
Of love to man?—and like the radiant plants,—
And plants that share thy nurture,—heavenward soar
In heart—felt praise?—Then, with unclouded brow,
For sleep's blest angel wait, in tranquil trust,
And lowliness, like thine own folded flower.