

ROSES AND RUE

Oscar Wilde

Could we dig up this long-buried
treasure,
Were it worth the pleasure,
We never could learn love's song,
We are parted too long.

Could the passionate past that is
fled
Call back its dead,
Could we live it all over again,
Were it worth the pain!

I remember we used to meet
By an ivied seat,
And you warbled each pretty word
With the air of a bird;

And your voice had a quaver in it,
Just like a linnet,
And shook, as the blackbird's
throat
With its last big note;

And your eyes, they were green
and grey
Like an April day,
But lit into amethyst
When I stooped and kissed;

And your mouth, it would never
smile
For a long, long while,
Then it rippled all over with
laughter
Five minutes after.

You were always afraid of a shower,
Just like a flower:
I remember you started and ran
When the rain began.

I remember I never could catch
you,
For no one could match you,
You had wonderful, luminous,
fleet,
Little wings to your feet.

I remember your hair—did I tie it?
For it always ran riot—
Like a tangled sunbeam of gold:
These things are old.

I remember so well the room,
And the lilac bloom
That beat at the dripping pane
In the warm June rain;

And the colour of your gown,
It was amber-brown,
And two yellow satin bows
From your shoulders rose.

And the handkerchief of French
lace
Which you held to your face—
Had a small tear left a stain?
Or was it the rain?

On your hand as it waved adieu
There were veins of blue;
In your voice as it said good-bye
Was a petulant cry,

'You have only wasted your life.'
(Ah, that was the knife!)
When I rushed through the garden
gate
It was all too late.

Could we live it over again,
Were it worth the pain,
Could the passionate past that is
fled
Call back its dead!

Well, if my heart must break,
Dear love, for your sake,
It will break in music, I know,
Poets' hearts break so.

But strange that I was not told
That the brain can hold
In a tiny ivory cell
God's heaven and hell.