

Jan Kochanowski – *Treny* (Laments)

Lament IV

Defying, cruellest Death, a father's tender eyes,
You made me watch my dearest child's demise:
Watching Death's grip our fledging flower shake,
These poor parental hearts must surely break.
Never could she have died, never without great woe
Afore her father's time depart this world and go
Attended by his bitterest grief, whate'er the year
Death chose to sever this bud by harshest shear.
But I shall ne'er recover from my deepest grief,
Nothing will e'er bring comfort, nor accord relief.
She by longer years of sojourn, had God permitted
With much sweetness my eyes could have acquitted,
Allowing me to live out my age with simple leisure;
Finally I'd stand summoned at Persephone's pleasure
Without the taste of this the dreadest sorrow
Whose like in all the mortal world I will not know.
I wonder not Niobe, as she watched her own
Dear brood's corpses, should by grief be turned to stone.

Lament VIII

How barren and empty hast thou left thy home,
Sweet my Orszula, departing forth alone!
A multitude dwells here, but 'faith, 'tis as none:
With one small soul so much now is gone.
Thou wert a voice to all, to all a sweet song
With which each domestic nook thou wouldst throng;
Thy dear mother's fretting never wouldst thou bear,
Nor let thy sire languish in too pensive a care.
With each one thou sawest thou wouldst gaily play,
And offer thy child's smile to brighten the day.
Now hangs gloomy silence, the house walls stand bare,
No delight's to be found, no joy anywhere;
Naught save grief and sorrow echoes from all sides,
In vain the heart seeks its comfort wherein to hide.

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