

Poetry Series

**Portia Burton**  
**- poems -**

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# Portia Burton(24/4/1991)

Student of the University of Cambridge, U.K.

Interested in poetry, Western Classical Music, and painting. Humanist, secular, non-confirmist.

# Heir

I am of the earth,  
Heir to its fertility,

I am of the water,  
Heir to its fluidity,

I am of the air,  
Heir to its vitality,

I am of the sky,  
Heir to its eternity,

I am of the light,  
Heir to its divinity.

Portia Burton

# 'I Am In Your Words'

While I am reading my new poem,  
Several days after its completion,  
It strangely doesn't seem to be mine,  
But a reflection of someone else.

Alarmed, I search it more deeply  
And get more restless when I see  
A pair of eyes different from my own  
Staring intently at me, and then, ..

..As if I hear my mother's voice,  
Calling me out from those lines,  
'O, why do you search for me elsewhere,  
I am in your words, can't you hear? '

Portia Burton

# I Too Have Wings....

After the rainy and gloomy night  
The new day has dawned fresh and bright,  
Oh, how that bird is staring at me!  
Does he want me to join in its flight?  
I say unto him with a warm smile,  
'Wait, my dear bird, wait for a while,  
I too have wings, though invisible they be,  
And I have my own unique flying style.  
'Yes, poetry gives such wonderful wings,  
To me and some other like-minded beings,  
She also gives us a divine eyesight  
To see in different light the ordinary things.

'Then I can fly even in the incessant showers,  
And I can see fairies frolicking in bowers,  
And I sometimes join hands with a gentle breeze  
To spread all around the fragrance of flowers.  
'Yet, poetry also makes me hear a wounded bird's cries,  
Or a homeless destitute's resigned mute sighs,  
And she also brings along with some rosy dreams,  
Tears of tortured helpless persons to my eyes.

'So, my dear bird, I invite you to come along  
With me to make the world happy with a sweet song.'

Portia Burton

# Leaves

Leaves-torn,  
Molested by the wind  
Disowned by the parent trees,  
Numbed by such violence  
And injustice,  
Helpless orphans,  
Have fallen down  
To seek shelter in the soil,  
Instead get trampled  
Before turning to dust.

Portia Burton

## Like A Candle.....

Oh, that fateful night! ....  
When you wanted to see me  
In 'totality' in the candlelight,  
Before going far away  
By that cursed flight! ...

I feel embalmed even now  
By that light like an Egyptian queen,  
And I am afraid to touch myself,  
Lest I erase that glow from my skin.

Oh, how I am left here to burn  
Like a candle till your return!

Portia Burton

## Love Comes...

Love comes in mysterious way...  
That's what I believe in my heart...  
I am sure, one day I won't be alone...  
Because you will come and hold my hands...

Now half of my heart is not with me,  
It is with you and in your shadow,  
You are my present, my every moment,  
And only you are my tomorrow!

Portia Burton

# Mom, You Are...

Mom, you are the place where there's no fear,  
Where my doubts end and mind becomes clear.

Yours is the breast which contains  
That musical heartbeat only for me,  
Yours are the hands that gently untie  
The knots of worries to set me free.

You are that wordless infinite sky  
Filled with tenderness and piety,  
Which stoops over me benevolently  
Like a protective canopy.

Your hazel eyes are so sweet  
As if drenched with honey  
That can be found in the cups  
Of cowslips flowers only.

Mom, I see you in everything,  
Including my own being,  
Then how can you even think to depart  
Without tearing my heart apart?

Portia Burton

# O Wandering Cloud! !

Why have you entered, o wandering cloud,  
In the secluded chamber of my heart?  
Here you'll find only wounded poems  
Which have been kept studiously apart.

Yet, their tears will satisfy your thirst,  
And make you become more profound,  
The storm contained in their words  
Will lend gravity to your sound.

However, you won't find, my friend,  
The melancholy note of some unnamed pain,  
Which these poems contain in their sighs,  
And in them suppressed it'll remain.

But, when you will rain, someone would listen  
Perhaps in your drizzle, those mute sighs,  
And in response a poem will start flowing  
Through the tears of that listener's eyes.

Portia Burton

# On The Top Of The Hill

After a daylong arduous trek,  
We had erected a makeshift tent,  
Others went to sleep but I was awake,  
Although tired and equally spent.

Quietly I went out in the open  
To stand under the canopy of sky,  
And then my eyes began to moisten  
As the sight around filled them with joy.

There I stood on the top of the hill,  
A river was flowing in the valley below,  
Except for it everything was still,  
Basking in an ethereal bluish glow.

All the forms looked vague and dim,  
Like a wet water-color painting,  
It seemed like a surreal dream,  
Breathtakingly beautiful and enchanting!

I looked around with a thankful heart  
At the Nature's silent celebration,  
And felt grateful for being a part  
Of this wonderful divine creation!

Portia Burton

## On This Valentine's Day

Dear mom, on this Valentine's Day,  
Perhaps you would have liked to take  
Your friends and me to a 'rose garden'  
Instead of purchasing roses for us;

And perhaps instead of sending greeting cards  
To distant friends and loved relatives  
You would have liked to go to the hospital  
And silently hug all those patients  
Lying there in your cancer ward...

Yes, I could see all these thoughts  
Fluttering upon your wet lashes,  
And at the same time I could feel  
Through your trembling fingers  
The regret for your inability to do so...

O mom, dearest, please don't be sad,  
You yourself are the best V-Day gift  
Me or this world ever had.

Portia Burton

## On Waking Up...

Sometimes while going to sleep  
I feel I am my own tomb,  
The ceiling above its marble lid,  
Or am I returning to mother's womb?

The walls become white roses,  
And stoop down gently to cover me,  
While from the bed-sheet below I feel  
Grass-blades rising to penetrate me.

Slowly the lid melts and in its place  
Vast blue sky is all around,  
Stars start rising from my body,  
And my being becomes a stardust cloud.

On waking up when I look in the mirror,  
Its blankness fills me with terror.

Portia Burton

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Portia Burton

# Our Love's Dreamlike Dawn

Lost in each other, we sat in silence  
In the soothing shade of the great oak tree,  
While in the west the sun seemed to be reluctant  
To go down saying 'good bye' to you and me.

All the while I was looking only at your face,  
How your loving eyes sparkled with joy,  
How your silent lips opened out in smile,  
And how it became difficult for us to play coy.

Then you very gently took my hand,  
And pressing it to your lips, you softly said:  
'You know well, yet I say, I love you, '  
Oh, to hear those words how much I had prayed!

Though the setting sun had now finally gone,  
I was experiencing our love's dreamlike dawn!

Portia Burton

# Take Me

I regret nothing for loving you..  
And if you ask me to leave you..  
I will go and stand at a distance  
But I won't ever leave you..

I'll be watching you from afar..  
Ready to catch you if you fall..  
To be the ears when you moan..  
And To be the shoulder for you to cry on..

I'll always keep you in sight,  
To be your candle when you need a light..  
To be your sky when you need some space  
Just don't ask me to love somebody else..

Portia Burton

# The Birds

Startled by the noise, I rush to the window  
To see many birds perched all around  
On the nearby trees and the mute buildings,

Beautiful in their plumage in warm sunshine,  
Flaunting wonderful colours of various hues:  
Splashed with yellow or red or gold or orange,  
Or black or grey or white or soft blues;  
Their round eyes bulged with brightness and wonder,  
All of them are twittering loudly, as if in anger,  
As if wanting to slash through the gentle morning breeze,  
They are crying stridently, with sheer vehemence,  
Not bothering about shattering the peace,  
Or to be in discord with each other,  
Yet they are crying as if in unison,  
And all of them are gazing in one direction.

I follow their gaze and see on the pavement,  
Two urchins kicking about a dead bird,  
Laughing aloud merrily to see its feathers scatter.

Then suddenly like a bolt from high above,  
A large bird, perhaps a kite, swiftly swoops down,  
Scaring away the urchins, it picks up the dead bird,  
And soars away high in the sky to be seen no more.

Portia Burton

# The Country Maiden

As I wander through the bushes,  
The grassy meadows, the clustered trees,  
Or passing by the riverside rushes,  
Or pushing through the tangled thickets;  
I hear songs all around!

Songs from the heather and the springs,  
From flowers, even from tender saplings,  
Some come wafting on the wind,  
And some are sung by merry drizzles;  
And all these songs get further enriched  
By various birds' musical tweets.

Suddenly I feel like a country maiden,  
Grown among the cattle and pasture,  
Roaming on the hillocks forever golden,  
Gathering honey from the verdure,  
Hand in hand with my cowherd boy,  
Sharing smiles and innocent joy.

Portia Burton

# The Creamy Moonlight

I was so happy  
That I couldn't sleep,  
And on that came to greet me  
The full moon at my window! ...

Her smile spilled all over my room,  
I gathered that creamy moonlight  
Hungriily in my cupped hands,  
Danced and danced with joy  
Till my legs got tired.....

But then I was perturbed,  
What should be done  
Of the gathered moonlight...  
After a pause I drank it all,  
And lo, I started glowing bright!

Portia Burton

# The Flowers Said...

While I was leaving the garden,  
The flowers asked me with care,  
'Tell us, friend, Do you want to carry  
Something with you from here? '

'Oh, ' I said, 'My lungs are full  
Already with your fragrance,  
And your gentle touch still pulsates  
Through my whole substance!

But, oh, those magical moments,  
Which I spent in your company,  
How can I ever carry them back,  
With all their invisible honey? '

The flowers said, 'We will keep them  
Safely hidden, covered with dew,  
To give as the seeds of dreams  
To another crazy poet like you.'

Portia Burton

# The Light Of My Love

I Never chose whom I would love,  
Never planned whom I wanted to share;  
Following what my heart said to me  
I've come to you even if you don't care.

Never thought to love you, oh, so much,  
Nor to be obsessed so much with you,  
Never thought that Listening to my heart  
would make me so much weak for you.

Oh, Come now, my love, and take my hands,  
Cherish me with your loving heart,  
Don't ask me anything, just understand  
Why I can't remain from you apart.

If one day you come but I am not there,  
Please look askance at the sky above,  
There you will see in that azure blue  
The stars shining with the light of my love.

Portia Burton

# The Lighthouse

Sometimes in the night  
When I feel divided  
By my own personal pull  
Towards my inner core,  
And the tug of the world  
To keep me anchored in the life  
Pulsating outside me...  
Then your holy icon,  
Illuminated by a single candle  
By the side of my bed  
transforms itself into a lighthouse,  
poised on the rim of the turbulent ocean  
Of my own self-doubt.

Portia Burton

# The Queen

Don't worry, mom, about me,  
I am your princess, and one day  
A queen I would surely be!

I will challenge adversity's wrath,  
I will continue to embrace life,  
And walk fearlessly on my chosen path.

Now it doesn't matter  
What I have been through,  
Now it doesn't matter  
What the people think of  
My different view.

I won't anymore be mediocre,  
Mundane, submissive or pushover,  
holding my own, I will shine  
With my own individual lustre.

I am your daughter, so will be tender,  
Yet won't be called 'the weaker gender'.  
I will honestly do my share  
With love for all and genuine care.

Portia Burton

# The Sonata Of A Stream

The delicate evening flowers  
Have opened out their hearts  
To exchange their fragrance  
With musical notes of the birds.

The sonata of the stream  
Is tinkling against the rocks,  
Which are still remembering  
The whispers of the reeds.

Be careful, my heart, lest your beats  
Startle this entranced silence;  
Let the doves of your breaths perch quietly  
Upon the branches of darkness.

Then let those branches embrace you  
To distill your unease,  
And turn it into sap  
For these patient trees.

Portia Burton

# The Wind Is Blowing.....

The wind is blowing...

-To help a trapped leaf

To get free and fly

From the clutches of brambles;

-To make the placid lake shiver,

And break into some musical ripples-

Like some girly giggles;

-To instil into the wings

Of new-born birds

The knowledge and rhythm of flying,

-To sweep off the dust

From the luscious leaves,

And make them shining once again;

-To carry the fragrance of the flowers

As the message of the spring,

And also

-To play with my hair

And fill with joy

My whole being.

The wind is blowing.....

Portia Burton

# This Dreamlike Moment!

Oh, this dreamlike moment!  
The sweetness of your kiss,  
I didn't know until now  
That love would be like this!

Your ardent touch upon my skin,  
The longing filled in your eyes  
Sends a shiver down my spine,  
How can I suppress my sighs?

I trace your face with trembling hand,  
Wondering what this move would bring,  
Like an ardent vine clings to a tree  
To you now I need to cling.

Hearts aflutter, hearts aglow,  
Eternal love is ours to know.

Portia Burton

## This Poem

How this poem weighs heavy on me!  
I want to shrug it off or scratch it out  
Like a scab covering a throbbing wound,  
Or put it away in a dark corner  
Of my heart and make it permanently silent.  
But it is insistent, though it lacks  
All those erst-while 'poetic' histrionics-  
Those similes, images, rhythmic gait,  
That adherence to meter, that 'classy' mindset.

Now only a hushed silence can be felt  
Through the blanks between its lines,  
And imprints of puzzled pauses can be seen  
Near some words sprouting on their own!  
See, how this poem stares at me,  
Vacantly with a subdued silence,  
And frightening me with a mute question  
Whose glare blinds me like a shining mirror.

Now it has started forcing its way  
Through my pen-Oh, come what may!

Portia Burton

## To A Departed Loving Poet...

When in the evening I feel alone,  
I sing to myself your song,  
And feel your presence in my heart,  
As if you are singing along.

Then I feel like a lotus flower  
That closes itself with a sigh,  
Or like a lonely teardrop  
That trembles on the brink of the eye.

I know not whose sorrow is contained  
In your song, yet I sing,  
And see you in my mind's eye,  
Consoling some unknown sad being.

Now only a tomb is your address,  
Yet people search for you for some solace.

Portia Burton

# Together

You're my one and only love  
And this I want you to know.  
you mean more to me than anything,  
I don't want ever to let you go.

Loving you gives me happiness,  
Its the breath I need each day,  
And if sometimes I don't show it,  
Yet you know I love you every way.

If sometimes I get jealous,  
It is because I really care,  
The love I feel for you  
Is unique and ever so rare.

If I could have just one wish  
Do you know what is would be?  
You and me should be together,  
Always, Yes, for eternity!

Portia Burton

## Wanted: A Miraculous Chemical

Enough of this regular torture  
Of chemo-therapy for my mother!  
Will some scientist ever find  
A miraculous chemical,  
Which when injected into her  
Will rejuvenate all her systems,  
Iron out those untimely wrinkles,  
Make her skin cheese-smooth,  
Her yellowed teeth sparkling white,  
Her lungs strong again  
To breath without gasping,  
Grow lustrous auburn hair again  
On her now bald head,  
And most importantly,  
From that scarred and shriveled skin  
Make her right breast become again  
Full, firm and luscious,  
So that I may rest my head on it  
To feel her divine warmth again,  
And weep thankful tears of joy!

Portia Burton

# When Will You Come?

When will you come, oh, tell me please!  
I am getting submerged in the night's abyss!  
The moon and the stars have averted their eyes,  
Oh, I am forsaken even by the fire-flies!  
My voice has dried up in my parched throat,  
In its curdled hollow some listless words float.  
My heart's become like a glacier with cracks  
Or like a burnt candle turned into a lump of wax.  
Oh, come and take me to your heart,  
Before this darkness devours my every part!  
From this dark night spread in me  
Only our union can set me free.

Portia Burton

## While Taking Leave.....

While taking leave of its shade,  
I gaze thankfully at my favorite tree,  
Embrace its rough and hard trunk  
As I would embrace someone dear to me.

Then I pick up its fallen leaf,  
Touch it gently as I would a running brook,  
And carry it with me most carefully,  
To be kept lovingly in my notebook.

Because I've full faith in that tree,  
And in its benevolence, so that some day,  
Even its fallen leaf, before turning to dust,  
Will write an invisible ode to the glory of May.

In my notebook, which I'll just trace to be shown  
To the world as a new poem of my own!

Portia Burton

# You And Only You!

O my love, only this much I'd like to say,  
In your embrace forever I'd like to stay.  
I pray and with me you pray too,  
'Let love bind us together, me and you.'

Take me now tenderly to your chest,  
This is my only shelter, my love's nest;  
Your gentle caress and your love-beating heart,  
Comfort and contentment, to me do impart.

A glimpse of you, or just the sound of your voice,  
Or even a simple 'Hi', makes me rejoice,  
And by a simple hug you make my day,  
You only hold me in this special way.

When I am with you, it reduces all my stress,  
I am then happiest, and worry much less;  
Your warm embrace dispels all my fears,  
A smile quickly replaces my anxious tears.

Let's enjoy this moment, right here and now,  
Don't let any other thoughts furrow your brow;  
You know I don't need gifts- expensive or new,  
All I need is your love, you and only you!

Portia Burton

# Your Dream Awaits

The dusk has fallen  
And it is getting dark,  
But the siblings are still gossiping,  
I just nod in assent  
To whatever they say,  
And mumble meekly,  
'yeah, umm, okay..'  
Praying all the while  
For them to go,  
And leave me alone!

In between  
I fervently steal  
A glance At my bed,  
where on my pillow  
Your dream awaits..  
Perchance...

Portia Burton