

Soliloquy for Ophelia **by Alexander Dove Lempke**

I've madly sung where I could speak no sense,
and put in sing-song rhymes my raving's cause:
the violet's chaste and honest color torn
petal by petal from the shiv'ring stem,
and left to drift alone down Lethe's stream,
where rosemary takes root. Once turned to fruit,
can yet the apple be a flower again?
I think it cannot; I have cause of grief:
a lover destroyed in mind, in turn destroying
a father's flesh, and stowing it so well
that it is lost to burial and blessing—
a fate no man deserves, even though he be
a pompous camel staring at a needle.
Oh Love! The needles prick and prick again—
roses transformed to daisies, thence to gorse,
spreading like plague by some unnatural force.
This river here, the undistinguished tears
of princes, peasants, poets, and of mothers
alike commingled in this stream of grief,
flows sweeter far than Le the, or the floods
that swept th'Augean stables of their squalor.
Disjointed time runs not as smooth as this,
and in this water I might mix my tears
and body likewise; better now to sink
than stand and rot in place, bemoaning meekly
the damnéd madness of my would-be groom,
a violet moldering where it once did bloom:
now to the water.