

**1862**

**BEATRICE**

***Lewis Carroll***

Carroll, Lewis (pen name of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) (1832-1898) - English novelist, poet, photographer, and mathematician, best known for his fantastical childrens' classics. He was a mathematical lecturer at Oxford. Beatrice (1862) - One of Lewis Carroll's poems. Opening lines: In her eyes is the living light / Of a wanderer to earth

**BEATRICE**

IN her eyes is the living light Of a wanderer to earth From a far celestial height: Summers five are all the span Summers five since Time began To veil in mists of human night A shining angel-birth.

Does an angel look from her eyes? Will she suddenly spring away, And soar to her home in the skies? Beatrice! Blessing and blessed to be! Beatrice! Still, as I gaze on thee, Visions of two sweet maids arise, Whose life was of yesterday: Of a Beatrice pale and stern, With the lips of a dumb despair, With the innocent eyes that yearn

Yearn for the young sweet hours of life, Far from sorrow and far from strife, For the happy summers, that never return, When the world seemed good and fair: Of a Beatrice glorious, bright Of a sainted, ethereal maid, Whose blue eyes are deep fountains of light, Cheering the poet that broodeth apart, Filling with gladness his desolate heart, Like the moon when she shines thro' a cloudless night On a world of silence and shade.

And the visions waver and faint, And the visions vanish away That my fancy delighted to paint She is here at my side, a living child, With the glowing cheek and the tresses wild, Nor death-pale martyr, nor radiant saint, Yet stainless and bright as they.

***For I think, if a grim wild beast***

Were to come from his charnel-cave, From his jungle-home in the East Stealthily creeping with bated breath, Stealthily creeping with eyes of death He would all forget his dream of the feast, And crouch at her feet a slave.

She would twine her hand in his mane: She would prattle in  
 silvery tone, Like the tinkle of summer-rain  
 Questioning him with  
 her laughing eyes, Questioning him with a glad surprise, Till she  
 caught from those fierce eyes again The love that lit her own.

And be sure, if a savage heart, In a mask of human guise, Were to  
 come on her here apart Bound for a dark and a deadly deed,  
 Hurrying past with pitiless speed He would suddenly falter and  
 guiltily start At the glance of her pure blue eyes.

Nay, be sure, if an angel fair, A bright seraph undefiled, Were to  
 stoop from the trackless air, Fain would she linger in glad  
 amaze Lovingly linger to ponder and gaze, With a sister's love and  
 a sister's care, On the happy, innocent child.

Dec. 4, 1862.

**THE END**