

David Macbeth Moir, "The Dream"

Moir (1798 – 1851) was a Scottish physician, literary editor, and prolific poet. This poem was published in the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* in January 1825.

Methought I died, and to the silent grave
My friends did bear me. Still and motionless
I lay, yet not without the power to have
Full knowledge of my utter helplessness,
In that my dreadful grim hour of distress; 5
My thought remain'd, and feeling, actively
As they were wont,^o nor was sensation less 6 *accustomed*
Active; but my pulse was not, and mine eye
Seem'd death-like fix'd, and glaz'd, to those standing by.

They wrapt me in my white funereal shroud, 10
And clos'd my useless eyes, then gently drew
The death-robos o'er them, like a fleecy cloud;
My mother kiss'd me, and my sisters too,
Then my thoughts like the wind-swept ocean grew,
And horror was my own: a fire flash'd red, 15
And gleam'd, as through my scorched brain it flew,
And wildly o'er mine eyes its lightning sped,
When my dream changed, and darkness came instead.

I heard them talk, and heard my mother's wail,
I heard the sobbings of my father's breast, 20
And struggled — but in vain; and nail by nail
Was driven; then my tortur'd head was prest,
As with a crushing weight, which straightway pass'd,
And then I felt them carry me away
From all my kindred, weeping and distress. 25
Oh how I inward shudder'd at decay,
And pray'd in anguish for the blessed light of day!

I heard the measured march, and sullen tread,
And, now and then, a murmur pass along,
Hollow and deep, as best befits the dead 30
To be spoke of, although men say no wrong:
They went the graves and sepulchres among,
And all, in still and solemn silence, stood
To let the coffin down; and earth they flung
Upon me, and I heard them beat the sod— 35
I rav'd, and in my madness did blaspheme my God!

But that too pass'd away, and I could think,
And feel, and know my dismal, helpless state;
My body knew corruption; I did shrink
To feel the icy worm — my only mate, 40
For thousands crawl'd upon me, all elate

At their new prey, and o'er my rotting face
They blindly crept and revell'd, after that
They did their noisome, vile, dark passage trace,
To make my burning brain their loathsome resting-place. 45

Then, eager to renew their feast, would press
My skull and eyeless sockets, passing through,
And intertwining, till they grew a mass
Within my mouth, when my soul froze anew,
And shudder'd, — 'twas in vain: alas! I knew 50
I was a victim to corruption's power.
My horrid dream was o'er — but the cold dew
Was on my forehead, like the glistering show'r
That falls from church-yard cypress at the midnight hour.