

Transfiguration

Louisa May Alcott

Table of Contents

<u>Transfiguration</u>	1
<u>Louisa May Alcott</u>	2

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Mysterious death! who in a single hour
Life's gold can so refine
And by thy art divine
Change mortal weakness to immortal power!

Bending beneath the weight of eighty years
Spent with the noble strife
of a victorious life
We watched her fading heavenward, through our tears.

But ere the sense of loss our hearts had wrung
A miracle was wrought;
And swift as happy thought
She lived again — brave, beautiful, and young.

Age, pain, and sorrow dropped the veils they wore
And showed the tender eyes
Of angels in disguise,
Whose discipline so patiently she bore.

The past years brought their harvest rich and fair;
While memory and love,
Together, fondly wove
A golden garland for the silver hair.

How could we mourn like those who are bereft,
When every pang of grief
found balm for its relief
In counting up the treasures she had left?—

Faith that withstood the shocks of toil and time;
Hope that defied despair;
Patience that conquered care;
And loyalty, whose courage was sublime;

The great deep heart that was a home for all—
Just, eloquent, and strong
In protest against wrong;
Wide charity, that knew no sin, no fall;

The spartan spirit that made life so grand,
Mating poor daily needs

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With high, heroic deeds,
That wrested happiness from Fate's hard hand.

We thought to weep, but sing for joy instead,
Full of the grateful peace
That follows her release;
For nothing but the weary dust lies dead.

Oh, noble woman! never more a queen
Than in the laying down
Of sceptre and of crown
To win a greater kingdom, yet unseen;

Teaching us how to seek the highest goal,
To earn the true success —
To live, to love, to bless —
And make death proud to take a royal soul.