

## ERNEST DOWSON

### “To One in Bedlam” (1892)

With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars,  
Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;  
Those scentless wisps of straw, that miserably line  
His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares.

Pedant and pitiful. O, how his rapt gaze wars  
With their stupidity! Know they what dreams divine  
Lift his long, laughing reveries like enchanted wine,  
And make his melancholy germane to the stars?

O lamentable brother! if those pity thee,  
Am I not fain of all thy lone eyes promise me;  
Half a fool's kingdom, far from men who sow and reap,  
All their days, vanity? Better than mortal flowers,  
Thy moon-kissed roses seem: better than love or sleep,  
The star-crowned solitude of thine oblivious hours!