

Song

By Joanna Baillie

What voice is this, thou evening gale!
That mingles with thy rising wail;
And, as it passes, sadly seems
The faint return of youthful dreams?

Though now its strain is wild and drear,
Blithe was it once as sky-lark's cheer —
Sweet as the night-bird's sweetest song, —
Dear as the lisp of infant's tongue.

It was the voice, at whose sweet flow
The heart did beat, and cheek did glow,
And lip did smile, and eye did weep,
And motioned love the measure keep.

Oft be thy sound, soft gale of even,
Thus to my wistful fancy given;
And, as I list the swelling strain,
The dead shall seem to live again!



The daughter of a Church of Scotland minister, Romantic poet and playwright Joanna Baillie grew up in rural Scotland and spent much of her adult life in Hampstead, just outside London. Baillie's lyric poems often take the form of meditations on nature and youth.