

# The Affliction of Richard

By Robert Bridges

Love not too much. But how,  
When thou hast made me such,  
And dost thy gifts bestow,  
How can I love too much?  
Though I must fear to lose,  
And drown my joy in care,  
With all its thorns I choose  
The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,  
Didst kill my childish trust,  
That breach with toil did I  
Repair, because I must:  
And spite of frightening schemes,  
With which the fiends of Hell  
Blaspheme thee in my dreams,  
So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,  
What marvel in me wrought  
Shall quite exculpate thee,  
I have no shadow of thought.  
What am I that complain?  
The love, from which began  
My question sad and vain,  
Justifies thee to man.



Robert Bridges was born in Kent, England. He graduated from Oxford, where he became friends with Gerard Manley Hopkins, before studying at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London to become a doctor. His work in medicine was the inspiration for the poem "On a Dead Child" (1879-1880). In 1881 he was able to quit medicine and dedicate himself to poetry. He is best known for his lyric poem "The Testament of Beauty" (1929). As well as his own poetry, Bridges wrote literary criticism and edited other poets' work. Bridges served as Poet Laureate of England from 1913 to 1930.

