An Exhortation

Percy Bysshe Shelley

1820

Camelions feed on light and air: Poets' food is love and fame: If in this wide world of care Poets could but find the same With as little toil as they, Would they ever change their hue As the light camelions do, Suiting it to every ray Twenty times a-day? Poets are on this cold earth, As camelions might be, Hidden from their early birth In a cave beneath the sea; Where light is camelions change: Where love is not, poets do: Fame is love disguised: if few Find either never think it strange That poets range. Yet dare not stain with wealth or power A poet's free and heavenly mind: If bright camelions should devour Any food but beams and wind, They would grow as earthly soon As their brother lizards are. Children of a sunnier star, Spirits from beyond the moon, O, refuse the boon!

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