

## Text

A GALLANT knight and his betroth'd bride,  
Were walking one day by a river side,  
They talk'd of love, and they talk'd of war,  
And how very foolish lovers are.

At length the bride to the knight did say,  
There have been many young ladies led astray  
By believing in all their lovers said,  
And you are false to me I am afraid.

No, Ellen, I was never false to thee,  
I never gave thee cause to doubt me;  
I have always lov'd thee and do still,  
And no other woman your place shall fill.

Dear Edwin, it may be true, but I am in doubt,  
But there's some beautiful flowers here about,  
Growing on the other side of the river,  
But how to get one, I cannot discover.

Dear Ellen, they seem beautiful indeed,  
But of them, dear, take no heed;  
Because they are on the other side,  
Besides, the river is deep and wide.

Dear Edwin, as I doubt your love to be untrue,  
I ask one favour now from you:  
Go! fetch me a flower from across the river,  
Which will prove you love me more than ever.

Dear Ellen! I will try and fetch you a flower  
If it lies within my power  
To prove that I am true to you,  
And what more can your Edwin do?

So he leap'd into the river wide,  
And swam across to the other side,  
To fetch a flower for his young bride,  
Who watched him eagerly on the other side.

So he pluck'd a flower right merrily  
Which seemed to fill his heart with glee,  
That it would please his lovely bride;  
But, alas! he never got to the other side.

For when he tried to swim across,  
All power of his body he did lose,  
But before he sank in the river wide,  
He flung the flowers to his lovely bride.

And he cried, Oh, Heaven! hard is my lot,  
My dearest Ellen! Forget me not:  
For I was ever true to you,  
My dearest Ellen! I bid thee adieu!

Then she wrung her hands in wild despair,  
Until her cries did rend the air;  
And she cried, Edwin, dear, hard is our lot,  
But I'll name this flower Forget-me-not.

And I'll remember thee while I live,  
And to no other man my hand I'll give,  
And I will place my affection on this little flower,  
And it will solace me in a lonely hour.

***Forget-me-not***  
**William McGonagall (1830-1902)**

*Forget-Me-Not* is written for the counter tenor Andrew Watts, who gives the first performance with Iain Burnside on the piano at the St. Mary's Church, Islington, London on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2003, as part of the Almeida Opera 2003 Season.