

Ave Maria, blessed Maid!

Ave Maria! blessèd maid!
Lily of Eden's fragrant shade!
Who can express the love
that nurtured thee, so pure and sweet,
making thy heart a shelter meet
for Jesus' holy dove!

Ave Maria! Mother blest,
to whom, caressing and caressed,
clings the eternal child;
favored beyond archangels' dream,
when first on thee with tenderest gleam
thy new-born Savior smiled.

Thou wept'st meek maiden, mother mild,
thou wept'st upon thy sinless child,
thy very heart was riven:
and yet, what mourning matron here
would deem thy sorrows bought too dear
by all on this side heaven!

A son that never did amiss,
that never shamed his mother's kiss,
nor crossed her fondest prayer:
e'en from the tree he deigned to bow
for her his agonizèd brow,
her, his sole earthly care.

Ave Maria! Thou whose name
all but adoring love may claim,
yet may we reach thy shrine;
for he, thy Son and Savior, vows
to crown all lowly lofty brows
with love and joy like thine.

(1792-1866)