

# VYRONAS

*Bύρωνας* – A Ballad in Four Songs

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“There are four questions of value in life. What is sacred? Of what is the spirit made? What is worth living for, and what is worth dying for? The answer to each is same. Only love.”  
- Lord Byron

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POET FOR PLACES

*Kira Nelson*

CANTO  
I  
AN OUTCRY  
OF  
HEAVENLY PASSION

'I have been all my life trying to make someone love me and never got the sort I preferred before.'

– Lord Byron

## 1.

HEAR more the giant of his age past!  
An outcry of heavenly passion  
Four songs will ring again of Vyron, as  
My new bard should take up his fashion  
Syren silenced in dour jaws of Hellas  
I beheld his face undawned, rucked, ashen  
The will of night ne'er claimed its final friend  
So now departs our voyage without end

## 2.

I thought, mayhaps, to begin with his girls  
For light of their lust did not lack lustre  
Save the heiress Mary whose lips did curl  
At Byron's dream, yet Jack t'fiend passed muster!  
Lizzie paints yearning hues, doe eyes awhirl  
A sorry truth eschewed, he could not love her  
Vain eye she sketched still drawn to another  
Who shared our lord's Jack, but not his mother!

## 3.

Scandal! Capital! Love's united blood  
Two stranger glove-tickled hearts shall confide  
Shoulder home quarrels through an envious flood  
He'd hasten her flight, lass, the dream denied  
Augusta's feet plant deep in English mud  
Nary a domicile dims Byron's mind  
'Way with babes, prudish illusory squalor  
Soon, east! Adventure, glorious honour!

## 4.

Now Caro to court, spilt ink's desire  
Named him mad and bad, whose burden to bear?  
Jilted, so jolted off prized social spyre  
Her dagger n' wine scene staged to sharded air  
Thereaft lay Lamb slaughtered, Byron's ire  
Left lips bloodied to muddy the affair  
Banish her mention to flyleaf's margin  
Duels quelled in hate, an inverse bargain

## 5.

Remember thee, he's taut in Phryne's Web!  
Cease pining cries, pray, your wolf hath blocked ears!  
Dual dallies, torn silk, lust to low ebb  
They two parted, hear Byron's silent tears  
Droll tragedy his heart's every step  
Hero sought a modest bride to salve fears  
Enter Belle at Lord's command, maid of cloth  
To spawn his dark descent to liquid wrath

## 6.

She set forth to breach consumption's cell  
Her deceitful siege lay bare Duck's nest  
Such that hers birthed setting shorn from hell  
His Ada's ale games plucked child from breast  
Holy mission lost to funeral Belles  
Wife of scorn fled with babe and hitched dress  
Punctured heart cast adrift at greatest need  
A marriage of scarred souls, at long last, freed

## 7.

Lest Claire the pest persist with fiendish guile  
To foist self on him, parasite on pens  
Such vile distraction to indulge awhile  
Putting about Oddhead, away again!  
She'd later scorch paper in his style  
His final passion, the maid of Ravenne  
Cross seas, his Teresa, child of exile  
In union she'd break her king of men

## 8.

Aye, Byron the wanderer's grandest tour!  
To toast defeat at summit of Clairmont  
Padanian retreat, timely sojourn  
With Terese, Genoese romauntic jaunts  
But she'd spare Father, to weep safe ashore  
And poison our poor lord's earthly wants  
Twin virtue and vices, let his stains not vex  
'Fore more, we mourn paramours of coarse sex

## 9.

Thyrza! Dear John! Thy violent, pure love  
Girlish ink conceals Byron's choirboy  
Thrilling kiss, guiltless, smite heaven above  
Paris fled east spite his Helen o' Troy  
John slain by gaol and Bacchus, fallen dove  
Drowned indecent to silence his joy  
Consign to memoir as brother's ashe  
Byron, lost hero, with no more hope to dash

# CANTO II

# VICE AND VIRTUE

‘The great object of life is sensation- to feel that we exist, even though in pain.’  
- Lord Byron

## 10.

An egregious error, that nowhere found  
In my cry of passion was Boatswain, t'hound!  
How remiss to not belt glorious songs  
Of that boon companion, enshrined in bronze  
A sculpture grander than Byron's own  
Sepulchre, veritable dynamo  
With Boatswain at side, to usher him forth  
In Anubis guise to the skies due north

## 11.

What purer devotion 'twixt man and dog?  
None nobler than he, claimed by rabid fog  
Expired in Byron's arms, final cradle  
His comrade's tears bitterly fatal  
Etched cheek by jowl, forever sewn in stone  
Wild's mournful howl sights Byron's bone  
Heinous crime to hold our beasts in fetters  
Said he, ye are dogs, but they your betters

## 12.

Yet his pup at school, what absurd notion!  
Childe in challenge schemed madcap commotion  
He'd cry defiant, his tame bear in tow  
Should this suffice if Boatswain cannot go?  
Mountain colt lordling strained Cambridge bridle  
Broken by all save his spars and bible  
His lonely soldier stalked schoolyard's edge  
Young poet, openwinged, leapt off his ledge

## 13.

Be sure, Byron's circle was soon drawn  
Jupiter of his cosm, King scribe 'mong pawns  
Penned renegade pieces in his idle hours  
Bard renowned, drunk on claret deeply soured  
Critic's curse roused a murderous viper  
Fanged Scotch baron, Byronic sniper  
Risen from ruin to play sardonic games  
First tour set sail, bedecked in storied fame

## 14.

While our stripling swims yonder alien seas  
Now to discuss his wondrous menag'rie  
To which dear Percy felt a brilliant shock  
Ran cross no home but Henry's Woodstock!  
Met Byron, King John at Rum-ville dungeon  
Boasting goats and geese, none for consumption  
We'd touch his wolves and crocodile spawn  
But I'll mind your watch and press swiftly on

## 15.

By its very nature, passion is dual  
Both sides of upturned coin come up cruel  
Of those Byron channelled singular hate  
His sweetest venom served Southey's bait  
Boys spewing bluster in a longue-paume match  
For each laureate jibe, a backhand to catch  
Men of letters break no spears to drawstring  
Take conceit, we may yet meet, in the ring!

## 16.

Fond brawls at Bond Street with Gentleman Jack  
The slight cannon foundling always clawed back  
Enamoured by glamour'd shiners, bruised ribs  
Bloodsport heroes, battle-hardy Tom Cribb  
Wailing high and swift, here lay bard's red  
Where Byron's critics ne'er dared tread  
Old task to conquer a primal domain  
Bold march to melee, take dragons their paiks!

## 17.

The stage! That haunt of daring pugilists!  
Harried mat scrappers shoulder kindred risks  
Ye gods to sing in vitriolic hail  
Mirra plunged deep, bred Byron's wail  
Unconcerned fiend knelt, to Siddons and Kean  
But his agonies remain'd half-seen  
Reform the stage! cried verse's favoured son  
Now, hoist anchor, find our voyage begun...

CANTO  
III  
  
A  
VOYAGE  
WITHOUT  
END

‘A man must travel, and turmoil, or there is no existence.’

- Lord Byron

## 18.

Onward! To Ostende then, bound for glory!  
Rakes cloaked in grand coach groaning with frills  
Polidori's merry inventory  
With George and Shelleys 'top Genevese hills  
Napoleonic progress lurched at Rhine  
To breathe for a time, amidst baleful eyes  
League of Incest, The Southey Cad would whine  
(But to no detraction as he desires!)

## 19.

Duelling inkspills neath stormy weather  
Mary's brute rose, twas doctor's gloom  
Thus splintered party frayed its tethers  
Turn't John and Percy over to doom  
Claire, Byron ignored, haunted in murder  
He gained new babe to swaddle discontent  
Pray'd Allegra outstrip her birther  
Just for bairn's demise, at cobbled convent

## 20.

Our lord, stricken, forbade talk of her name  
His wits sought new trials to break upon  
Perhaps hale return to that grand tour game  
Is ordered, Childe's decree, he forged on  
To Venezia! Shimmering, splendid isle  
Whose green lands conquered imagination  
Byron thought he might yet remain a while  
Soothed in sober, fractured hibernation