

The background image is a still life photograph. It features an open book with French text, likely about wine, resting on a dark wooden surface. A dark glass is partially visible in the foreground, and some dried, light-colored flowers are scattered to the left of the book. The overall lighting is warm and focused on the book and glass.

# ***LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY***

## ***THE MARTYRS' IDYL, AND SHORTER POEMS***

The background of the cover is a photograph of an open book with text on its pages, resting on a dark wooden surface. In the foreground, there is a small, dark, shallow bowl or dish, and some dried, light-colored flowers or herbs are scattered to the left of the bowl. The overall lighting is warm and slightly dim, creating a literary and intimate atmosphere.

**LOUISE IMOGEN  
GUINEY**

***THE MARTYRS'  
IDYL, AND  
SHORTER  
POEMS***

**Louise Imogen Guiney**

# **The Martyrs' Idyl, and Shorter Poems**

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# THE MARTYRS' IDYL [1]

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[1] The outlines of this story, and much of the dialogue, in Scenes II., IV. and V., are taken from the Acta Sanctorum and S. Ambrose.

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Sunset. A high rocky pasture above Alexandria. In the year of Our Lord 304.

*Didymus, a young soldier, enters and throws himself down.*

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Didymus.



THIS mound is sweet to me. All my blood aches,  
Since driven onward like a dark hill-cloud,  
Dizzy with secret lightnings nowhere spent,  
I chase yon happy sun to his bright death,  
Alas, I know not whither: but I know  
I shall not see the myriad shields uphung  
In camp to-night, nor on our cypresses  
Smoke rise and sink in loath blue fountain spray.  
So far, so far I drift from even them  
Who fill one gourd with me, who cheer my heart,  
Who come in, warm and singing, to the tent,  
And miss me who am gone away, I think,

Forever, though a day; out of their world,  
Though over a few leagues of upland grass!  
Why hast Thou laid on me magic of pain,  
God unrevealèd? Was I drawn from sleep,  
Man's duty, body's health, to be mere wind,  
Wind undirected over fallow wastes?  
What wouldst Thou ask of me, no sword of Thine,  
No ark of service? Yet aware of Thee  
I am and shall be. All my thought, outspread,  
Is open unto Thee: a lonely beach  
Where the wide sobbing surf ebbs everywhere,  
And, hard upon each dawn-encolored wave,  
Flutters the wavy line of drying sand  
Back to the verge: the white line, shadow-quick,  
Thrilling there in the dark: an earthen gleam,  
Vain huntress of the sea. Suffer me now  
To follow and attain Thee, fugitive,  
And be my rest, who hast, my whole life long,  
Been mine unrest: implored, immortal Love!

*A Child enters, with a reed, wearing a wreath of thorns in his hair.*

*The Child.* Soldier, pipe up for me, a herd-boy, glad  
Because his flocks are folded.

*Didymus.* Ah, not I!

My star is withered; I am man no more.  
Sigh after sigh the builder Grief takes up,  
To heighten over me her gradual arch.

*The Child.* An arch of entrance to a generous garden,  
Where spirits and the moonlit waters are.