

Trysted Oath

Jane Adams

(Inspired by William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*)

White satined feet, arms draped in pearly brocade
I stepped and twirled with poised young Capulets.

Skip turned to fumble-foot whilst music played;
when chiselled smile and lustrous eyes were met.

Brief touch of fingers, secretive caress,
my breathless need against his body pressed

'til Tybalt's hand pushed through to intervene
and lead me back; from precipice it seemed.

My blushed flesh leaned on marbled balustrade.
I vowed that love's path would not be impaired

despite fools' feuds from peacock's vain parade.
Then love's refrain and passion were declared,

Hot words steamed out from orchards hidden shade
as promises of union were made.

Our trysted oath was blessed at morning's light
by friars' lawful hand, within God's sight.

Our secret led Mercutio to die.
My husband's hand dealt cousin Tybalt's end.

Sentence of exile could not be denied.
Yet execution threat could not suspend

our first and final night of true amour;
A legal bond of love would be assured.

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With naive trust we had not thought too much
about strife that came from lover's touch.

Love's consummation planned he then slipped in
to marriage bed. Quick sweetened breath exhaled,

joined fevered flesh, shared heat kept fuelled within.
Attempts to separate with exile failed.

At last on crumpled sheets entwined limbs slept
until dawns' light into our bedroom crept.

Desperate parting made, friars answer sought.
Feigned deaths embrace contained in crystal pot

From dreams of courtly love I slowly wake
To find you - laid beside me.

Cold.

So cold and pale.

Gently shake,

then push,

your sweet-breathed mouth lies agape, parched dry .

Stroking my fingers on lips, blue-hued like twilight sky
awaiting night's progression,

I have no breath to free the racked sob trapped
then mortared into place.

Your stiffened skin refuses hot tears' warmth.

My arms entwine with passive flesh.

No.

No, no. Pleading refrain; mantra

to eulogize the resurrection.

Cold silver clasped close through breasts' blushed skin,

I lay to pillow my head on your shoulder;

my crimson warmth sheds as limbs entwine

on marbled slab.