

To Flush, My Dog Full Poem

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To Flush, My Dog Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61)

LOVING friend, the gift of one, Who, her own true faith, hath run, Through thy lower nature ; Be my benediction said With my hand upon thy head, Gentle fellow-creature !
Like a lady's ringlets brown, Flow thy silken ears adown Either side demurely, Of thy silver-suited breast Shining out from all the rest Of thy body purely.

Darkly brown thy body is, Till the sunshine, striking this, Alchemize its dulness, — When the sleek curls manifold Flash all over into gold, With a burnished fulness.

Underneath my stroking hand, Startled eyes of hazel bland Kindling, growing larger, — Up thou leapest with a spring, Full of prank and curvetting, Leaping like a charger.

Leap ! thy broad tail waves a light ; Leap ! thy slender feet are bright, Canopied in fringes. Leap — those tasselled ears of thine Flicker strangely, fair and fine, Down their golden inches

Yet, my pretty sportive friend, Little is 't to such an end That I praise thy rareness ! Other dogs may be thy peers Haply in these drooping ears, And this glossy fairness.

But of thee it shall be said, This dog watched beside a bed Day and night unwearied, — Watched within a curtained room, Where no sunbeam brake the gloom Round the sick and dreary.

Roses, gathered for a vase, In that chamber died apace, Beam and breeze resigning — This dog only, waited on, Knowing that when light is gone, Love remains for shining.

Other dogs in thymy dew Tracked the hares and followed through Sunny moor or meadow — This dog only, crept and crept Next a languid cheek that slept, Sharing in the shadow.

Other dogs of loyal cheer Bounded at the whistle clear, Up the woodside hieing — This dog only, watched in reach Of a faintly uttered speech, Or a louder sighing.

And if one or two quick tears Dropped upon his glossy ears, Or a sigh came double, — Up he sprang in eager haste, Fawning, fondling, breathing fast, In a tender trouble.

And this dog was satisfied, If a pale thin hand would glide, Down his dewlaps sloping, — Which he pushed his nose within, After, — platforming his chin On the palm left open.

This dog, if a friendly voice Call him now to blyther choice Than such chamber-keeping, Come out ! ' praying from the door, — Presseth backward as before, Up against me leaping.

Therefore to this dog will I, Tenderly not scornfully, Render praise and favour ! With my hand upon his head, Is my benediction said Therefore, and for ever.

And because he loves me so, Better than his kind will do Often, man or woman, Give I back more love again Than dogs often take of men, — Leaning from my Human.

Blessings on thee, dog of mine, Pretty collars make thee fine, Sugared milk make fat thee ! Pleasures wag on in thy tail — Hands of gentle motion fail Nevermore, to pat thee !

Downy pillow take thy head, Silken coverlid bestead, Sunshine help thy sleeping ! No fly 's buzzing wake thee up — No man break thy purple cup, Set for drinking deep in.

Whiskered cats aointed flee — Sturdy stoppers keep from thee Cologne distillations ; Nuts lie in thy path for stones, And thy feast-day macaroons Turn to daily rations !

Mock I thee, in wishing weal ? — Tears are in my eyes to feel Thou art made so straightly, Blessing needs must straighten too, — Little canst thou joy or do, Thou who lovest greatly.

Yet be blessed to the height Of all good and all delight Pervious to thy nature, — Only loved beyond that line, With a love that answers thine, Loving fellow-creature !