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On Parent Knees

Attributed to
Sir WILLIAM JONES (1746-1794)
(From the Persian)



GERALD FINZI
Op. posth.

Andante semplice ♩ = c. 58

VOICE

PIANO

p cantabile

On pa - rent

knees a na - ked new-born child, Weep - ing thou sat'st while

all a - round thee smiled. So live, that sink -

- ing to thy life's last sleep,

poco riten.

Calm thou may'st smile while all a-round thee

a tempo

weep.

pp

[1'5]

[Composer's note:-]

Although this translation appears in the prose works of Sir William Jones and has always been accepted as his work, the following extract from "Chronicles of Holland House" by the Earl of Ilchester (John Murray 1937) will show that one source attributes a variant of it to Samuel Rogers. As a charming example of Rogers' short stanzas we may quote his version of a translation by Joseph Dacre Carlyle of an Arabic epigram. These lines he was wont to attribute to Sir William Jones, the celebrated Orientalist, though in reality they were his own:-

Thee, on thy mother's knees a new born child
 In tears we saw, when all around thee smiled.
 So live, that sinking in thy last long sleep
 Smiles may be thine, when all around thee weep.