

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, "Solitude"

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;  
Weep, and you weep alone.  
For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,  
But has trouble enough of its own.  
Sing, and the hills will answer;  
Sigh, it is lost on the air.  
The echoes bound to a joyful sound,  
But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and men will seek you;  
Grieve, and they turn and go.  
They want full measure of all your pleasure,  
But they do not need your woe.  
Be glad, and your friends are many;  
Be sad, and you lose them all.  
There are none to decline your nectared wine,  
But alone you must drink life's gall.

Feast, and your halls are crowded;  
Fast, and the world goes by.  
Succeed and give, and it helps you live,  
But no man can help you die.  
There is room in the halls of pleasure  
For a long and lordly train,  
But one by one we must all file on  
Through the narrow aisles of pain.