

0735-0804- Alcuinus - Cella Alcuini (Steven Perkins 'line-by-line' Translatio)

"Alcuin's Cell"

Line-by-line translation

Copyright © 2005 by Steven R. Perkins

O my cell, for me a dwelling sweet, beloved,
Ever into eternity, o my cell, farewell.
On every side a tree with resounding branches encloses you,
A small forest ever laden with flower-bearing foliage.
All the fields will yet bloom with health-bringing herbs, 5
Which the doctor's hand seeks as a resource of health.
Rivers surround you on all sides with flowering banks,
Where the rejoicing fisherman stretches his nets.
Throughout the gardens your cloisters are redolent with fruit-bearing branches,
The white lilies are mixed with little red roses. 10
Every type of flying creatures cries out the morning odes,
And praises the creator God in its mouth.
In you the nourishing voice of the teacher once cried out,
Which handed on the books of wisdom with a sacred mouth.
In you at certain times the holy praise of the thunderer 15
Sounded with peacemaking voices and spirits.
You, my cell, I now lament with tearful songs,
And groaning I lament your downfall in my breast.
Because you have suddenly fled the songs of the bards,
And an entirely unknown band holds you now. 20
Neither Flaccus nor the bard Homer will have you now,
Nor do boys sing the muses through your roofs.
All the glory of the age is thus turned, for suddenly
All things are changed by various orders.
Nothing remains forever, nothing is truly immutable. 25
Shady night obscures the sacred day,
And suddenly frigid winter casts off the beautiful flowers,
And a harsher wind disturbs the placid sea.
The sacred youth that used to chase deer in the meadows
Now reclines tired, older on a staff. 30
Poor us, why do we love you a fugitive, o world?
You flee from us always, everywhere rushing.
You who flee, may you flee, let us always love Christ.
Always may the love of God hold our hearts.
May that holy One defend His servants from their dire enemy, 35
Taking our hearts, His own, to heaven.
Whom with our whole heart let us equally praise and love.
That holy One is our glory, life, and welfare.

Beloved cell, retirement's sweet abode!
Farewell, a last farewell, thy poet bids thee!
Beloved cell, by smiling woods embraced,
Whose branches, shaken by the genial breeze,
To meditation oft my mind disposed.
Around thee too, their health-reviving herbs
In verdure gay the fertile meadows spread;
And murmuring near, by flowery banks confined,
Through fragrant meads the crystal streamlets glide,
Wherein his nets the joyful fisher casts,
And fragrant with the apple bending bough,
With rose and lily joined, the gardens smile;
While jubilant, along thy verdant glades
At dawn his melody each songster pours,
And to his God attunes the notes of praise.

(<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13814/13814-h/13814-h.htm>)