

John Clare (1793-1864)

The Secret

I loved thee, though I told thee not,
 Right early and long,
Thou wert my joy in every spot,
 My theme in every song.

And when I saw a stranger face
 Where beauty held the claim,
I gave it like a secret grace
 The being of thy name.

And all the charms of face or voice
 Which I in others see
Are but the recollected choice
 Of what I felt for thee.

1815

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