

The Mansions of the Dead

By Robert Blair

See yonder hallow'd fane, the pious work
Of names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot,
And buried 'midst the wreck of things which were:
There lie interr'd the more illustrious dead.
The wind is up: Hark! how it howls! Methinks
Till now, I never heard a sound so dreary:
Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's fowl bird,
Rook'd in the spire, screams loud: The gloomy aisles
Black-plaster'd, and hung round with shreds of 'scutcheons
And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound
Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults,
The mansions of the dead. Rous'd from their slumbers
In grim array the grizly spectres rise,
Grin horrible, and obstinately sullen
Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of night.
Again! the screech-owl shrieks: ungracious sound!
I'll hear no more, it makes one's blood run chill.
Quite round the pile, a row of reverend elms,
Coæval near with that, all ragged shew,
Long lash'd by the rude winds: some rift half down
Their branchless trunks: others so thin a'top,
That scarce two crows could lodge in the same tree,
Strange things, the neighbours say, have happened here:
Wild shrieks have issu'd from the hollow tombs,
Dead men have come again, and waik'd about,
And the great bell has toll'd, unring, untouch'd.