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### **The language and poetry of flowers**

**London, 1877**

Roses in a Garden.

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## ROSES IN A GARDEN.

DOWN this side of the gravel-walk

She went, while her robe's edge brushed the box :  
And here she paused in her gracious talk

To point me a moth on the milk-white flox.  
Roses, ranged in valiant row,

I will never think that she passed you by !  
She loves you, noble roses, I know ;  
But yonder, see where the rock-plants lie.

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,  
Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim ;  
Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,  
Its soft meandering Spanish name.

What a name ! was it love or praise ?  
Speech half-asleep, or song half-awake ?  
I must learn Spanish, one of these days,  
Only for that slow sweet name's sake.

Roses, if I live and do well,  
I may bring her one of these days,  
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,  
Fit you each with his Spanish phrase !  
But do not detain me now ; for she lingers  
There, like sunshine over the ground,  
And ever I see her soft white fingers  
Searching after the bud she found.

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow not,  
Stay as you are and be loved for ever !  
Bud, if I kiss you 't is that you blow not,  
Mind, the shut pink mouth opens never !  
For while thus it pouts, her fingers wrestle,  
Twinkling the audacious leaves between,  
Till round they turn and down they nestle—  
Is not the dear mark still to be seen ?



Where I found her not, beauties vanish ;  
 Whither I follow her, beauties flee ;  
 Is there no method to tell her in Spanish  
 June's twice June since she breathed it with me?  
 Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,  
 Treasure my lady's lightest foot-fall ;  
 Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—  
 Roses, you are not so fair after all !

*Robert Browning.*