



Longfellow was an American poet who lived for most of the 19th century. It is especially fitting that he should be as “Chorus to this story” that tells of friendship in its many forms, since he has come to be known to generations after him as one of five, the five Fireside Poets.

These were men who forged a fellowship among themselves using their words for bonds. Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Whit- tier and Holmes would become household names to all lovers of poetry of their time.

They formed, as it were, the Inklings ante litteram. They found in each other not only glad companionship and intellectual stimulus but also, and per- haps most importantly for men or their craft, the proper shrine for their creations.

Nowhere better than in “The Arrow and the Song” is this idea set to words. Great poems shine in their own right, but they shine brightest when they reflect the benevolent sparkle that is found in the eye of a friend.

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,

That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak

I found the arrow, still unbroke;

And the song, from beginning to end,

I found again in the heart of a friend.