

# Riddle

by *Anna Laetitia Barbauld*

From rosy bowers we issue forth,  
From east to west, from south to north,  
Unseen, unfelt, by night, by day,  
Abroad we take our airy way:  
We foster love and kindle strife,  
The bitter and the sweet of life:  
Piercing and sharp, we wound like steel;  
Now, smooth as oil, those wounds we heal:  
Not strings of pearl are valued more,  
Or gems enchased in golden ore;  
Yet thousands of us every day,  
Worthless and vile, are thrown away.  
Ye wise, secure with bars of brass  
The double doors through which we pass;  
For, once escaped, back to our cell  
No human art can us compel.