

Anna L. Snelling, "The Baby in Daguerreotype" (poem) February 1851

(keywords: Anna L. Snelling, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

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—The following little poem has been so much admired, that, although it has been frequently published, we cannot refrain from giving it a place in our columns.

THE BABY IN DAGUERREOTYPE.

BY ANNA L. SNELLING.

WHAT! put *her* in daguerreotype,
And victimize the pet!
Those ruby lips, so cherry-ripe,
On lifeless silver set!

The frisking, laughing, bouncing thing,
So full of life and glee—
A restless bird upon the wing—
A sunbeam on the sea!

Put shadows on that forehead fair—
That look of quick surprise—
And give a dull unmeaning stare
To those blue laughing eyes!

Now, do you think a chance you've caught?
Out with the colors quick;
She's screaming at the very thought
Of such a shabby trick.

Now she is still—fly to the stand;
The smiling features trace!
In vain—up goes a tiny hand,
And covers half her face.

Give up the task—let childhood be
Nature's own blooming rose!
You cannot catch the spirit free,
Which only childhood knows.

Earth's shadows o'er that brow will pass,
Then paint her at your will;

When time shall make her wish, alas!
She were a baby still.

[End of text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Anna L. Snelling was a author, poet, editor, and wife of Henry Hunt Snelling, the editor of the *Photographic Art-Journal*. Anna Snelling was a contributor to several publications including *Photographic Art-Journal*, *Family Circle and Parlor Annual*, *Youth's Parlor Annual*, *Orion Monthly Magazine*, as well as editing the short-lived juvenile periodical *Pierian*. See also the fictional work, Anna L. Snelling, *Kabaosa ; or, the Warriors of the West A Tale of the Last War*. (New York: D. Adee, printer, 1842). In a review of *Kabosa*, it is stated, "The story is interesting, and written in a style as a lady should write."¹ Anna L. Snelling is listed in Peter E. Palmquist, *A Bibliography of Writings By and About Women in Photography: 1850–1990* (Arcata: Peter E. Palmquist, 1994).

This poem was also published in *Republic: A Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Politics & Art* (New York) 1:2 (February 1851): 74.

For another poem by Snelling, see Anna L. Snelling, "On Seeing Mr. Anthony's Portrait of Jenny Lind," *New-York Tribune* as reprinted in *Daily Evening Transcript* (Boston) (21 September 1850).² Snelling also contributed prose to the *Photographic Art-Journal*. See Anna L. Snelling, "The Artists of America—Washington Allston," 1:5 (May 1851): 295–99.

1. *Brother Jonathan* (New York) 1:10 (5 March 1842): 269.

2. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8500002_LIND_ANTH-SNELL_B-TRANS_1850-09-21.pdf

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