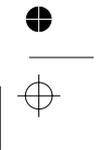
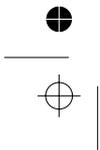
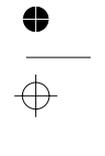
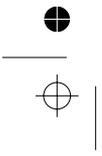
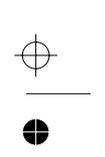
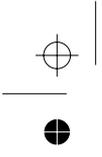
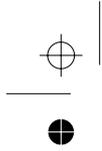


AN ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH POETRY
FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE END
OF THE 1930s



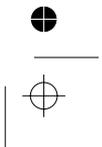
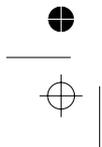


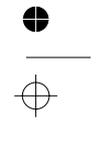
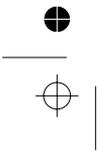
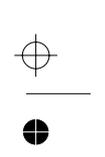
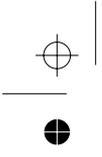


Dr. Kodó Krisztina

AN ANTHOLOGY
OF ENGLISH POETRY FROM THE MIDDLE
AGES TO THE END OF THE 1930s

2006







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FOREWORD

The compilation of this work had taken considerable time and effort as the basic aim in editing this anthology, in the first place, was to provide an easy-to-use and accessible material for the teachers, as well as for the students within the sphere of Hungarian higher education. The intention was to include not only the poems, but also a brief overview of the poet's life, achievement and major role within English literary history, which would provide students with enough information at first glance to be able to understand and classify the poet chronologically according to his/her specific age and place within the English Literary Canon.

The principle of selection has been defined by a fourfold ambition. 1. The anthology endeavours to provide Hungarian students studying English at the B.A. and M.A. levels with a comprehensive resource material that reflects the new critical awareness created by the most significant critical approaches that have redefined "tradition" in the English, Scottish and Irish poetic history by the beginning of the 21st century. An attempt has been made to give due emphasis to female poets brought into focus by feminist criticism (Aphra Behn, Emily Brontë, Christina Rossetti), to texts distinguished by deconstruction (e.g. Percy Shelley's *Triumph of Life*) and poems representing poetic careers that the New Historicists have found representative of the ever varying but specific historical milieu (John Clare, Charlotte Smith, and Anna Letitia Barbauld). 2. Another important ambition of the compiler has been to reflect, in a modest way, Hungarian literary history, including cases of direct influence (Pope's mock heroic epic and *Essay on Man* exercising a decisive influence on Mihály Csokonai and György Bessenyei) and influence through translation (*Sir Patrick Spens*). 3. Last but not least, a specific aim has been to offer poems which may lend themselves easily to classroom treatment in teaching English as a foreign language in this country.

We sincerely hope that the anthology will enable Hungarian students majoring in English language and literature to benefit from the wide selection of poets and their works presented here, thereby helping to

FOREWORD

enhance and further their studies, and simultaneously awaken their interest in further research and study within the field of English poetry.

I would like to thank all my colleagues at János Kodolányi University College, who have helped with their numerous comments and advice in the making of this anthology, because it would not have been written without them. And a very special thanks to Professor Ágnes Péter for her advice, comments and help in the selection of the material and Keith Hardwick for his comments and corrections.

Krisztina Kodó, Ph.D
Editor



MIDDLE ENGLISH LYRICS

English language began to develop in the late 14th century the kinds of aristocratic, formal, learned and literary types of lyric that had long been cultivated on the Continent by the Troubadour poets in the south of France, the Minnesänger in Germany, or the Italian poets. The Middle English Lyric is a genre of English Literature that was popular in the 14th century and is characterized by its brevity and emotional expression. Conventionally, the lyric expresses “a moment,” usually spoken or performed in the first person. Although some lyrics have narratives, the plots are usually simple to emphasize an occasional, common experience. Even though lyrics appear to be individual and personal, they are not “original”. Instead, the lyrics express a common state of mind. Many are marked by strong accentual rhythms with a good deal of alliteration.

Most Middle English Lyrics are anonymous. Because the lyrics reflect on a sort of “community property” of ideas, the concept of copyrighting a lyric to a particular author is usually inappropriate. Many lyrics that survive today were widely recited in various forms before being written down. Some were undoubtedly set to music, and in a few cases the music has survived. One of the earliest among the lyrics is *The Cuckoo Song*, which is a canon or round in which the voices follow one another and join together echoing the joyous cry, “Cuckou”.

The Cuckoo Song

Summer is ycomen in,
Loude sing cuckou!
Groweth seed and bloweth meed,¹
And springth the wode² now.
Sing cuckou!

1 The meadow blossoms.

2 wood

MIDDLE ENGLISH LYRICS

Ewe bleteth after lamb,
Loweth after calve cow,
Bulloc sterteth,³ bucke verteth,⁴
Merye sing cuckou!
Wel singest thou cuckou:
Ne swik⁵ thou never now!
(ca. 1240)

Western Wind

Westron wind, when will thou blow?
The smart rain down can rain.
Christ, that my love were in my arms,
And I in my bed again.
(early 16th century)

3 leaps
4 farts
5 cease



GEOFFREY CHAUCER

(ca. 1343–1400)

Chaucer was born into a well-to-do bourgeois family, in London, probably in the year 1343. His father was a prosperous wine merchant, who was an important member of the emerging English middle classes. In 1357 he was employed in the service of Lionel, third son of King Edward III, and later Duke of Clarence. He entered military service in 1359, served in France, where he was taken prisoner, but was shortly ransomed. Chaucer held various positions at court, and was sent on a mission to Genoa and Florence in 1372-3, when he perhaps met Boccaccio and Petrarch. The last period of his life Chaucer spent in England, and this is his most fruitful period, when he wrote his masterpiece the *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1387). Chaucer died in 1400, and was the first to be buried in the now famous Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

From the *General Prologue*

Here Biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour,
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tender croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his half cours yronnes,
And smale foweles maken melodye
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages,
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes kouthe in sondry londes,
And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

Bifel that in that sesoun on a day
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To caunterbury, with ful devout corage,
At nyght was come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felawshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambers and the stables weren wyde
And wel we weren esed ate beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon
That I was if hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse
To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.

But natheless whil I have tyme and space
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it acordant to resoun
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem so as it semed me
And whiche they weren and of what degree
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a knight than wol I first bigynne.

A knyght ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
As wel in Cristendom as in hethenesse,
And evere honoured for his worthynesse.
At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.

In Grenade at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyveys was he and at Satalye
Whan they were wonne and in the Grete See
At many a noble armee hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feith at Tramyssene
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also
Som tyme with the lord of Palatye
Agayn another hethen in Turkye.
And evere moore he hadde a sovereyn prys;
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
In al his lyf unto no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knyght.
But, for to tellen yow of his array,
Hise hors were goode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gypoun
Al bismotered with his habergeon
For he was late ycome from his viage
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

With hym ther was his sone, a yong squier,
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler
With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe
And wonderly delyvere and of greet strengthe.
And he hadde been som tyme in chyvachie
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Pycardie,
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.
Syngyng he was, or floytyng al the day;
He was as fressh as is the month of May.

Short was his gowne, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde.
He koude songes make and wel endite,
Juste and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write.
So hoot he lovede that by nyghtertale
He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.
Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

A yeman hadde he and servantz namo
At that tyme, for hym liste ride so,
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.
A sheef of pecok arwes bright and kene,
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily –
Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped nocht with fetheres lowe –
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wodecraft wel koude he al the usage.
Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler
And on that oother syde a gay daggere
Harneised wel and sharp as point of spere;
A Cristopher on his brest of silver sheene,
An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a nonne, a Prioressse,
That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;
Hir gretteste ooth was but by Seinte Loy,
And she was cleped Madame Eglentyne.
Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely,
And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At mete wel ytaught was she with alle:
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,

Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce deepe;
 Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel keepe
 That no drope ne fille upon hire brest.
 In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest:
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene
 That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
 Of grece whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
 And sikerly she was of greet desport,
 And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port,
 And peyned hire to countrefete cheere
 Of court, and to been estatlich of manere,
 And to been holden digne of reverence.
 But, for to speken of hire conscience,
 She was so charitable and so pitous
 She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
 Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
 With rosted flessh or milk and wastel-breed,
 But soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte,
 And al was conscience and tendre herte.
 Ful semyly hir wympel pynched was,
 Hir nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,
 Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed;
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
 Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war.
 Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,
 And theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,
 And after *Amor Vincit Omnia*.

Another nonne with hire hadde she,
 That was hir chapeleyne and preestes thre.
 A monk ther was, a fair for the maistrie,

An outridere, that lovede venerie
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,
And whan he rood, men myghte his brydel heere
Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd as cleere
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle
Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle.
The reule of Seint Maure or of Seint Beneit,
By cause that it was old and som del streit
This ilke monk leet olde thynges pace,
And heeld after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith that hunters been nat holy men,
Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,
Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees, —
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.
But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre;
And I seyde his opinion was good:
What sholde he studie and make hym selven wood,
Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
Or swynken with his handes, and laboure,
As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austyn have his swynk to hym reserved!
Therefore he was a prikasour aright:
Grehoundes he hadde as swift as fowel in flight;
Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves purfild at the hond
With grys and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chyn,
He hadde of gold wroght a ful curious pyn;
A love knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt.
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;
His eyen stepe and rolyng in his heed
That stemed as a forneys of a leed,
His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.

Now certainly he was a fair prelaat;
 He was nat pale as a forpyned goost.
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A frere ther was, a wantowne and a merye,
 A lymytour, a ful solempne man:
 In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan
 So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
 He hadde maad ful many a mariage
 Of yonge wommen at his owene cost.
 Unto his ordre he was a noble post .
 Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
 With frankeleyns over al in his contree,
 And with worthy wommen of the toun;
 For he hadde power of confessioun,
 As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,
 For of his ordre he was licenciat.
 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun:
 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce,
 Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce,
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive
 Is signe that a man is wel yshryve;
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt:
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,
 He may nat wepe, although hym soore smerte;
 Therefore in stede of wepyng and preyeres
 Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres.
 His typet was ay farsed ful of knyves
 And pynnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
 And certainly he hadde a murye note:
 Wel koude he synge and pleyen on a rote;
 Of yeddynges he baar outrely the pris.
 His nekke whit was as the flour-delys,
 Therto he strong was as a champioun.
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun

And every hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere,
For unto swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat as by his facultee
To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce,
It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce
For to deelen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
And over al ther as profit sholde arise,
Curteis he was and lowely of servyse.
Ther nas no man no wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
(and yaf a certeyne ferme for the graunt:
Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;)
For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his *In principio*,
Yet wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente:
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
And rage he koude, as it were right a whelpe.
In lovedayes ther koude he muchel helpe,
For ther he was nat lyk a cloysterer
With a thredbare cope as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope:
Of double worstede was his semycope
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Som what he lipped for his wantownesse
To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge;
And in his harpyng whan that he hadde songe
His eyen twynkled in his heed aryght,
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.
This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A marchant was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee, and hye on hors he sat;
Upon his heed a Flaundryssh bevere hat,
His bootes clasped faire and fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely
Sownynge alwey th' encrees of his wynnyng.

He wolde the see were kept for any thyng
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette:
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes and with his chevysaunce.
For soothe he was a worthy man with alle,
But, sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

A clerk ther was of Oxenford also
That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.
As leene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
But looked holwe and therto sobrelly.
Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy
For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice
Ne was so worldly for to have office,
For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes clad in blak or reed
Of Aristotle and his philosophie
Than robes riche, or fithle or gay sautrie.
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he myghte of his freendes hente
On bookes and on lernynge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye.
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede,
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede
And that was seyde in forme and reverence,
And short and quyke and ful of hy sentence:
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

A sergeant of the lawe, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the Parvys,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.

Discreet he was and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wise.
Justice he was ful often in assise
By patente and by pleyn commissioun.
For his science and for his heigh renoun,
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour was nowher noon:
Al was fee symple to hym in effect;
His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle
That from the tyme of Kyng William were falle.
Therto he koude endite and make a thyng
Ther koude no wight pynchen at his writyng;
And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A frankelyn was in his compaignye.
Whit was his berd as is the dayesy;e;
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn;
To lyven in delyt was evere his wone
For he was Epicurus owene sone
That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit
Was verray felicitee parfit.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian he was in his contree.
His breed, his ale, was always after oon,
A bettre envyned man was nowher noon.
Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous
Of fissh and flessch and that so plentevous
It sneweds in his hous of mete and drynke,
Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.

Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe
And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.
Wo was his cook but if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his geere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.
An anlaas and a gipser al of silk
Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a contour.
Was nowher swich a worthy vavasour.

An haberdasshere and a carpenter,
A webbe, a dyere, and a tapycer
And they were clothed alle in o lyveree
Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.
Ful fressh and newe hir geere apiked was;
Hir knyves were chaped noght with bras
But al with silver; wroght ful clene and wel
Hire girdles and hir pouches everydel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys
To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he kan
Was shaply for to been an alderman,
For catel hadde they ynogh and rente
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certeyn were they to blame:
It is ful fair to been ycleped 'Madame',
And goon to vigilies al bifore
And have a mantel roialliche ybore.

A cook they hadde with hem for the nones
To boille the chiknes with the marybones
And poudre marchant tart and galyngale.
Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun ale.
He koude rooste and seethe and broille and frye,
Maken mortreux and wel bake a pye.

But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shyne a mormal hadde he.
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

A shipman was ther, wonyng fer by weste:
For aught I woot he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood upon a rouncey as he kouthe
In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.
A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer hadde maad his hewe al broun;
And certainly he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he drawe
Fro Burdeuxward whil that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.
But of his craft, to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers hym bisydes,
His herberwe and his moone, his lodemenage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew alle the havenes as they were,
Fro Gootlond to the Cape of Fynystere,
And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.
His barge ycleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a doctour of phisik;
In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik,
To speke of phisik and of surgerye
For he was grounded in astronomye:
He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel
In houres by his magyk natureel.
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendant
Of his ymages for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot, or coold, or moyste, or drye,

And where engendred and of what humour:
He was a verray, parfit praktisour.
The cause yknowe and of his harm the roote,
Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries
To sende hym drogges and his letuaries,
For ech of hem made oother for to wynne;
Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne.
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius
And Deyscorides and eek Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,
Serapion, Razis, and Avycen,
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitee
But of greet norissing and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal,
And yet he was but esy of dispence:
He kepte that he wan in pestilence,
For gold in phisik is a cordial;
Ther fore he loved gold in special.

A good wif was ther of biside Bathe,
But she was som del deaf and that was scathe.
Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground,
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sondag weren upon hir heed;
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed
Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.

Boold was hir face and fair and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve:
Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.
And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at Seint-Jame, and at Coloigne;
She koude muche of wandrynge by the weye:
Gat-tothed was she soothly for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat
Ywympled wel and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe,
A foot mantel aboute hir hipes large
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe;
Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,
For she koude of that art the olde daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre persoun of a toun,
But riche he was of hooly thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche:
His parisspens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benygne he was and wonder diligent
And in adversitee ful pacient
And swich he was ypreved ofte sithes.
Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven out of doute
Unto his povre parisspens aboute
Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce;
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe and houses fer asonder,
But he ne lefte nat for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,

Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf
 That first he wroghte and afterward he taughte;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
 And this figure he added eek therto
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a prest take keep,
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep;
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive
 By his clenness how that his sheep sholde lyve.
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre
 And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules
 To seken hym a chaunterie for soules
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde
 So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie:
 He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie.
 And though he hooly were and vertuous,
 He was to synful men nat despitous
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
 But in his techyng discreet and benygne;
 To drawen folk to hevne by fairnesse,
 By good ensample, this was his bisynesse;
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
 Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.
 A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys:
 He waited after no pompe and reverence
 Ne maked him a spiced conscience,
 But Cristes loore and his apostles twelve
 He taughte but first he folwed it hym selve.

With hym ther was a plowman, was his brother,
 That hadde ylad of dong ful many a fother;
 A trewe swynkere and a good was he

Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hoole herte
At alle tymes thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighebor right as hym selve:
He wolde thresshe and therto dyke and delve
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght;
His tithes payde he ful faire and wel
Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a reve and a millere,
A somnour and a pardoner also,
A maunciple, and myself – ther were namo.

The millere was a stout carl for the nones,
Ful byg he was of brawn and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over al ther he cam
At wrastlyng he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre:
Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre
Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed
And therto brood as though it were a spade;
Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys
Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
His nosethirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde.
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys,
He was a jangler and a goliardeys,
And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whit cote and a blew hood wered he,
A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne
And therwithalin he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil maunciple was ther of a temple,
 Of which achatours myghte take exemple
 For to be wise in byynge of vitaille:
 For whether that he payde or took by taille
 Algate he wayted so in his achaat
 That he was ay biforn and in good staat.
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace
 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
 The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
 Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten
 That weren of lawe expert and curious,
 Of which ther were a dozeyne in that hous
 Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
 Of any lord that is in Engelond
 To make hym lyve by his propre good
 In honour dettelees, but if he were wood,
 Or lyve as scarsly as him lyst desire;
 And able for to helpen al a shire
 In any caas that myghte falle or happe;
 And yet this manciple sette hir aller cappe.

The reve was a sclendre colerik man.
 His berd was shave as neigh as ever he kan,
 His heer was by his erys ful round yshorn,
 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn,
 Ful longe were his legges and ful lene
 Ylyk a staf, ther was no calf ysene.
 Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne,
 Ther was noon auditour koude on him wyne;
 Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn
 The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyn.
 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
 His swyn, his hors, his stoor and his pultrye
 Was hoolly in this reves governyng,
 And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng
 Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
 Ther koude no man bryng hym in arrerage.
 Ther nas baillif, ne hierde nor oother hyne

That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;
They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.
His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth;
With grene trees yshadwed was his place.
He koude bettre than his lord purchace;
Ful riche he was astored pryvely;
His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly
To yeve and lene hym of his owene good
And have a thank and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster:
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat upon a ful good stot
That was al pomely grey and highte Scot;
A long surcote of pers upon he hade
And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve of which I telle,
Biside a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked in he was as is a frere aboute
And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.

A somonour was ther with us in that place
That hadde a fyr reed cherubynnes face,
For saucefleem he was with eyen narwe;
As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,
With scalled browes blake and piled berd;
Of his visage children were aferd:
Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge ne brymston,
Boras, ceruce ne oile of tartre noon
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte
That hym myghte helpen of his whelkes white
Nor of the knobbes sittyng on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes
And for to drynken strong wyn reed as blood;
Thanne wolde he speke and crie asas if he were wood,
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn
Thanne wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three
That he had lerned out of som decree:

No wonder is, he herde it al the day,
 And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
 Kan clepen "Watte" as wel as kan the pope.
 But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie:
 Ay "Questio quid iuris" wolde he crie.
 He was a gentil harlot and a kynde,
 A bettre felawe sholde men noght fynde:
 He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn
 A good felawe to have his concubyn
 A twelf month and excuse hym atte fulle;
 Ful prively a finch eek koude he pulle.
 And if he foond owher a good felawe
 He wolde techen him to have noon awe
 In swich caas of the Ercedeknes curs,
 But if a mannes soule were in his purs,
 For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be:
 "Purs is the Ercedeknes helle," seyde he;
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede:
 Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede
 For curs wol slee right as assoilyng savith,
 And also war hym of a *significavit*.
 In daunger hadde he at his owene gise
 The yonge girles of the diocise,
 And knew hir conseil and was al hir reed.
 A gerland hadde he set upon his heed
 As greet as it were for an ale-stake;
 A bokeleer hadde he maad hym of a cake.

With hym ther rood a gentil pardoner
 Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
 Ful loude he soong "Com hider, love, to me!"
 This somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun,
 Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.
 This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
 But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;
 By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde

And therwith he his shuldres overspradde,
But thynne it lay by colpons oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee wered he noon
For it was trussed up in his walet;
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet:
Dischevelee save his cappe he rood al bare.
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe,
His walet biforn hym in his lappe
Bretful of pardoun comen from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot;
No berd hadde he ne nevere sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late shave:
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwyk into Ware
Ne was ther swich another pardoner,
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer
Which that he seyde was Oure Lady veyl;
He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That Seint Peter hadde whan that he wente
Upon the see til Jesu Crist hym hente;
He hadde a croys of latoun ful of stones
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones;
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwellynge upon lond,
Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;
And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen atte laste
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste:
Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie
But alderbest he song an offertorie,
For wel he wiste whan that song was songe
He moste preche and wel affile his tonge
To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude;
Ther fore he song the murierly and loude.

Now have I toold you soothly in a clause
Th' estaat, th' array, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this compaignye
In Southwerk at this gentil hostelrye
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle;
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke nyght
Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght;
And after wol I telle of our viage
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow of youre curteisye
That ye n' arrete it nat my vileynye
Thogh that I pleyedly speke in this mateere
To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere,
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely,
For this ye knowen al so wel as I,
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce as neigh as evere he kan
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he nevere so rudeliche and large,
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrew
Or feyne thyng or fynde wordes newe;
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother,
He may as wel seye oone word as another.
Crist spak hym self ful brode in hooly writ
And wel ye woot no vileynye is it;
Eek Plato seith, whoso kan hym rede,
The wordes moote be cosyng to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Heere in this tale as that they sholde stonde:
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet cheere made oure hoost us everichon
And to the soper sette he us anon.
He served us with vitaille at the beste:
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us leste.

A semely man oure hooste was with alle
For to been a marchal in an halle:

A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe,
Boold of his speche and wys and wel ytaught
And of manhod hym lakked right naught.
Eek therto he was right a myrie man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan
And spak of myrthe amonges othere thynges
Whan that we hadde maad oure rekenynges,
And seyde thus: "Now, lordynges, trewely
Ye been to me right welcome, hertely,
For by my trouthe if that I shal nat lye,
I saugh nat this yeer so myrie a compaignye
At ones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste I how;
And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
Ye goon to Caunterbury, God yow speede;
The blisful martir quite yow youre meede!
And wel I woot as ye goon by the weye
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewely confort ne myrthe is noon
To ride by the weye doumb as a stoon,
And ther fore wol I maken yow disport
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort;
And if yow liketh alle by oon assent
For to stonden at my juggement
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
Tomorwe whan ye riden by the weye,
Now by my fader soule that is deed,
But ye be myrie I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hoold up youre hondes, withouten moore speche."

Oure conseil was nat longe for to seche,
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,
And graunted hym withouten moore avys
And bad him seye his voirdit as hym leste.
"Lordynges," quod he, "now herkneth for the beste,
But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn;

This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow to shorte with oure weye
In this viage shal telle tales tweye
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And homward he shal tellen othere two,
Of adventures that whilom han bifalle;
And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and moost solas,
Shal have a soper at oure aller cost
Heere in this place, sittynge by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the moore mury
I wol myselven goodly with yow ryde
Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde;
And whoso wole my juggement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche sauf that it be so
Tel me anon withouten wordes mo
And I wol erly shape me ther fore.”

This thyng was graunted, and oure othes swore
With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also
That he wolde vouche sauf for to do so
And that he wolde been oure governour
And oure tales juge and reportour
And sette a soper at a certeyn pris
And we wol reuled been at his devys
In heigh and lough; and thus by oon assent
We been acorded to his juggement.
And therupon the wyn was fet anon,
We dronken, and to reste wente echon
Withouten any lenger tarynge.

Amorwe whan that day bigan to sprynge,
Up roos oure hoost, and was oure aller cok
And gadred us togidre alle in a flok
And forth we riden a litel moore than paas

Unto the wateryng of Seint Thomas;
And there oure hoost bigan his hors areste
And seyde, "Lordynges, herkneth, if yow leste!
Ye woot youre foreward and it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song accorde,
Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,
Whoso be rebel to my juggement
Shal paye for al that by the wey is spent.
Now draweth cut er that we ferrer twynne:
He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.
Sire Knyght," quod he, "my mayster and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
Cometh neer," quod he, "My lady Prioressse,
And ye, Sire Clerk, lat be youre shamefastnesse
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man!"
Anon to drawen every wightperson bigan,
And shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knyght,
Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght;
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun
By foreward and by composicioun
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his foreward by his free assent,
He seyde, "Syn I shal bigynne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye."
And with that word we ryden forth oure weye,
And he bigan with right a myrie cheere
His tale anon, and seyde as ye may heere.

(ca. 1387)



EARLY MODERN BALLADS

The English and Scottish popular ballads were originally poems transmitted orally and only rarely recorded in writing. The ballad was considered to be the earliest form of poetry in the native tradition when a systematic effort was made in the 18th and 19th centuries to collect and publish them. Many of the best ballads derive from the regions between the Scottish Highlands and Lowlands, and between Scotland and England. The distinctive quality shared by most ballads is their spareness, where the narrative usually strips the story down to a few objective and dramatic scenes. Ballads are apt to deal with the culminating incident or climax of a plot, which describes the event with intense compression. Oral poetry depends on regular metre and a heavy use of formulaic expressions. The stanzas are often linked by repetition. The most common stanza form, called ballad stanza, is a quatrain rhyming *abcb* in which the *a* and *c* lines usually have four beats and the *b* lines three. Their subject usually concerns a tragic incident, often a murder or accidental death, and at times involving supernatural elements. These motifs are part of the common legacy of European folklore, and many of the Scottish and English ballads have their counterparts in other languages.

Sir Patrick Spens

The King sits in Dumferline town,
Drinking the blude-ried wine:
'O whar will I get a guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?'

Up and spank an eldern knight,
Sat at the king's richt knee:
'Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor,
That sails upon the sea.'



EARLY MODERN BALLADS

The King has writtē a braid⁶ letter,
And signed it wi^h his hand;
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Parick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The tear blinded his e^e.

‘O wha⁷ is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o[’] the yier,
To sail upon the sea?

Mak haste, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne.⁹
‘O say na sae,⁸ my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone
Wi[’] the auld moone in hir arme;
And I feir, I feir my deir master
That we will come to harme.⁹

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith⁹
To weet their cork-heil[’]d schoone;¹⁰
Bot lang owre a[’] the play wer played,
Thair hats they swam aboone.¹¹

O lang, lang may thair ladies sit
Wi[’] thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spens
Com sailing to the land.

6 broad
7 who
8 not/ so
9 loath
10 wet / shoes
11 above

O lang, land may the ladies sit
Wi' thair gold kems¹² in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain¹³ deir lords
For they'll se thame na mair.

Haf owre, haf owre¹⁴ to Aberdour
It's fiftie fadom¹⁵ deip:
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feit.

(1765)

12 combs
13 own
14 halfway over
15 fathoms

SIR THOMAS WYATT
(1503–1542)

Wyatt was born in Kent in 1503 and educated at St. John's College in Cambridge. He was a courtier and diplomat whose travels to Italy and France in 1526 and 1527 acquainted him with the High Renaissance abroad. He held various posts at home and abroad, including that of ambassador to Charles V (1537-9), in the service of Henry VIII. He was charged with treason, but was acquitted a year before his death. Wyatt's translations and adaptations of Petrarch not only brought the sonnet form to English, but also sought to work out from the Italian eleven-syllable line a viable English equivalent. None of Wyatt's poems was published during his lifetime – the first book to feature his verse was printed a full fifteen years after his death. He and Lord Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, were the first poets to use the form of the sonnet in English. One of his sonnets, *Whoso List to Hunt*, is thought to be about Anne Boleyn with whom he had allegedly been in love.

*Whoso List to Hunt*⁶

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind¹⁷,
But as for me, alas I may no more.
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,
I am of them that farthest cometh behind.
Yet may I, by no means, my wearied mind
Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore,
Fainting I follow. I leave off, therefore,
Since in a net I seek to hold the wind.
Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,
As well as I, may spend his time in vain.
And graven with diamonds in letters plain
There is written, her fair neck round about,
“*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar's I am,
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.”

From the Egerton MS.

16 An adaptation of Petrarch's *Rima* 190. Wyatt's sonnet is usually supposed to refer to Anne Boleyn, in whom Henry VIII became interested in 1526.
17 Female deer

They Flee From Me

They flee from me, that sometime did me seek
With naked foot stalking¹⁸ in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek
That now are wild and do not remember
That sometime they put themself in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range,
Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise
Twenty times better; but once in special,
In thin array, after a pleasant guise,
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small,¹⁹
Therewithal sweetly did me kiss
And softly said, “Dear heart, how like you this?”

It was no dream, I lay broad waking.
But all is turned, thorough my gentleness,
Into a strange fashion of forsaking;
And I have leave to go, of her goodness,
And she also to use newfangledness.²⁰
But since that I so kindly²¹ am served,
I fain would know what she hath deserved.

From the Egerton MS.

18 Walking softly

19 slender

20 fickleness

21 Naturally, but with an ironic suggestion of the modern meaning of “kindly”. Based on Wyatt’s spelling the word should presumably be pronounced as three syllables.

*My Galley*²²

My galley chargèd with forgetfulness
Thorough²³ sharp seas, in winter nights doth pass
‘Tween rock and rock; and eke²⁴ mine enemy, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelty,
And every oar a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.²⁵
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forcèd sighs and trusty fearfulness.²⁶
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance;
Wreathèd with error and eke with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain.
Drownèd is reason that should me consort,²⁷
And I remain despairing of the port.

From the Egerton MS.

22 Translated from Petrarch's Rime 189.
23 through
24 also
25 As though my destruction would not matter much.
26 Fear to trust
27 Accompany

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY
(1517–1547)

Surrey was a soldier and courtier from the time of his youth. He was in and out of favour with King Henry VIII who married, then beheaded, Surrey's cousin Catherine. He was finally condemned and executed for treason when barely 30 years old in 1547. He appears to have made translations into English verse when young, and was an admirer and friend of Thomas Wyatt. His works consist of sonnets and miscellaneous poems in various metres that are noteworthy for their grace and finish. Like Wyatt, he studied Italian models, especially Petrarch, and shared with Wyatt the merit of bringing the sonnet form into England. He and his friend Thomas Wyatt were the first English poets to write in the sonnet form that Shakespeare later used, and Henry Howard was the first English poet to publish blank verse.

*Love, that Doth Reign and Live Within My Thought*²⁸

Love, that doth reign and live within my thought,
And built his seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.
But she that taught me love and suffer pain,
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
With shamefast²⁹ look to shadow and refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.
And coward Love, then, to the heart apace
Taket h his flight, where he doth lurk and plain,³⁰
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pain,
Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove:
Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.

(1557)

28 This is Surrey's version of Petrarch's *Rima* 140.

29 modest

30 complain

Alas! So all things now do hold their peace³¹

So all things now do hold their peace,
Heaven and earth disturbèd in no thing.
The beasts, the air, the birds their song do cease;
The nightèd charc³² the stars about doth bring;
Calm is the sea, the waves work less and less.
So am not I, whom love, alas, doth wring,
Bringing before my face the great increase
Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing,
In joy and woe, as in a doubtful ease:
For my sweet thoughts sometime do pleasure bring,
But by and by the cause of my disease³³
Gives me a pang that inwardly doth sting,
When that I think what grief it is again
To live and lack the thing should rid my pain.

(1557)

When youth had led me half the race

WHEN youth had led me half the race
That Cupid's scourge had made me run;
I looked back to mete the place
From whence my weary course begun.

And then I saw how my desire
By guiding ill had led the way:
Mine eyes, to greedy of their hire,
Had made me lose a better prey.

For when in sighs I spent the day,
And could not cloak my grief with game;
The boiling smoke did still bewray
The present heat of secret flame.

31 Adapted from Petrarch's *Rima* 164.

32 From Italian *carro* (the Great Bear).

33 Dis-ease, i.e., discomfort.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

And when salt tears do bain my breast,
Where Love his pleasant trains hath sown;
Her beauty hath the fruits opprest,
Ere that the buds were sprung and blown.

And when mine eyen did still pursue
The flying chase of their request;
Their greedy looks did oft renew
The hidden wound within my breast.

When every look these cheeks might stain,
From deadly pale to glowing red;
By outward signs appeared plain,
To her for help my heart was fled.

But all too late Love learneth me
To paint all kind of colours new;
To blind their eyes that else should see
My speckled cheeks with Cupid's hue.

And now the covert breast I claim,
That worshipp'd Cupid secretly;
And nourished his sacred flame,
From whence no blazing sparks do fly.

(1557)

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
(1554–1586)

Sidney was born into an important family. His father was Sir Henry Sidney (who was thrice Lord Deputy of Ireland) and his uncles were the Earls of Leicester and Warwick. His mother, too, was an unusually educated lady for her day. He travelled extensively abroad assisting on diplomatic missions, fought in Ireland, and met many learned and influential men who would strengthen his commitments to the skills of knowledge, and to Protestantism. In 1586 he joined as a volunteer the attack on a Spanish convoy for the relief of Zutphen, in Holland. Here, he received a fatal wound in the thigh while fighting the Spanish forces of his godfather, King Philip of Spain. Sidney began writing the sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella* in 1581, and probably finished them the following year. The poems circulated widely in manuscript form, and finally appeared in 1591 in three unauthorized editions. The sequence is considered to be an important stage in English Renaissance poetry. In it, Sidney partially anglicised the key features of his Italian model, Petrarch: variation of emotion from poem to poem, with the attendant sense of an ongoing, but partly obscure, narrative; the philosophical trappings; the musings on the act of poetic creation itself. His experiments with rhyme scheme were also noteworthy; they served to free the English sonnet from the strict rhyming requirements of the Italian form.

From *Astrophel and Stella*

1

Loving in truth, and fain³⁴ in verse my love to show,
That the dear She might take some pleasure of my pain,
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,
 I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain.

34 desirous

But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay³⁵;
 Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows,
 And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
 Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
 Biting my trewand³⁶ pen, beating myself for spite,
 "Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart and write."

5

It is most true that eyes are formed to serve
 The inward light³⁷, and that the heavenly part
 Ought to be king, from whose rules who do swerve,
 Rebels to nature, strive for their own smart.
 It is most true, what we call Cupid's dart
 An image is, which for ourselves we carve
 And, fools, adore in temple of our heart,
 Till that good god make church and churchmen starve.
 True, that true beauty virtue is indeed,
 Whereof this beauty can be but a shade³⁸,
 Which elements with mortal mixture breed.
 True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made,
 And should in soul up to our country move.
 True, and yet true that I must Stella love.

39

Come sleep! O sleep the certain knot of peace,
 The baiting place³⁹ of wit, the balm of woe,
 The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
 Th' indifferent judge between the high and low;
 With shield of proof shield me from out the prease⁴⁰
 Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:

35 prop

36 truant

37 Reason, which ought to rule over the whole person; yet love, by another convention, enters at the eye and imprints the beloved one's image on the heart.

38 An image or picture, which was a standard Platonic theme.

39 A resting place on a journey.

40 Throng

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.
 Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland, and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine by right,
 Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me
 Livelier than elsewhere Stella's image see.

(1591)



EDMUND SPENSER

(1552–99)

Spenser was born in London, and though he himself was not rich, he was connected with a noble family of Spensers. He received a good education, and by working for the richer students he was able to attend Cambridge University through a charitable grant. In 1580 he became secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, the new Lord Deputy of Ireland; and apart from visits to London he spent most of his life in that country. He settled down on the 3000-acre estate he had acquired at Kilcolman. It was here that he wrote the first three books of his *Faerie Queene*. Spenser's sonnet sequence, the *Amoretti* (meaning "little loves" or "little cupids") was published in 1595 with the *Epithalamion*. These poems seem to embrace his cycle of courtship and marriage to Elizabeth Boyle whom he married in 1594. Towards the end of his life he was forced to return to London, where he died in great poverty. He was buried beside Chaucer in Westminster Abbey. The inscription upon his tomb proclaims him to have been "The Prince of the Poets of his Tyme". His influence on Milton and the Romantics was most significant.

From *Amoretti*

3

The souerayne beauty which I doo admyre,
witness the world how worthy to be prayed:
the light wherof hath kindled heauenly fyre,
in my fraile spirit by her from basenesse raysed.
That being now with her huge brightnesse dazed,
base thing I can no more endure to view:
but looking still on her I stand amazed,
at wondrous sight of so celestially hew.
So when my tounge would speak her praises dew,
it stopped is with thoughts astonishment:
and when my pen would write her titles true,
it rausht is with fancies wonderment:
Yet in my hart I then both speake and write,
the wonder that my wit cannot endite.

67

Lyke as a huntsman after weary chace,
Seeing the game from him escapt away:
sits downe to rest him in some shady place,
with panting hounds beguiled of their pray.
So after long pursuit and vaine assay,
when I all weary had the chace forsooke,
the gentle deare returnd the selfe-same way,
thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke.
There she beholding me with mylder looke,
sought not to fly, but fearelesse still did bide:
till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,
and with her owne goodwill hir fymely tyde.
Strange thing me seemd to see a beast so wyld,
so goodly wonne with her owne will beguyld.

75

One day I wrote her name vpon the strand,
but came the waues and washed it away:
agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
but came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray.
"Vayne man," sayd she, "that doest in vaine assay,
a mortall thing so to immortalize.
for I my selue shall lyke to this decay,
and eek my name bee wyped out lykewize."
"Not so," (quod I) "let baser things deuize,
to dy in dust, but you shall liue by fame:
my verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
and in the heuens wryte your glorious name.
Where whenas death shall all the world subdew,
our loue shall liue, and later life renew."

79

Men call you fayre, and you doe credit it,
For that your selfe ye dayly such doe see:
but the trew fayre, that is the gentle wit,
and vertuous mind is much more prayisd of me.

For all the rest, how euer fayre it be,
 shall turne to nought and loose that glorious hew:
 but onely that is permanent and free
 from frayle corruption, that doth flesh ensew.
 That is true beautie: that doth argue you
 to be diuine and borne of heauenly seed:
 deriu'd from that fayre Spirit, from whom all true
 and perfect beauty did at first proceed.
 He only fayre, and what he fayre hath made,
 all other fayre lyke flowres untymely fade.

(1595)

Epithalamion

Ye learned sisters which haue oftentimes
 beene to me ayding, others to adorne:
 Whom ye thought worthy of your gracefull rymes,
 That euen the greatest did not greatly scorne
 To heare theyr names sung in your simple layes,
 But ioyed in theyr prayse.
 And when ye list your owne mishaps to mourne,
 Which death, or loue, or fortunes wreck did rayse,
 Your string could soone to sadder tenor turne,
 And teach the woods and waters to lament
 Your dolefull dreriment.
 Now lay those sorrowfull complaints aside,
 And hauing all your heads with girland crownd,
 Helpe me mine owne loues prayses to resound,
 Ne let the fame of any be enuide,
 So Orpheus did for his owne bride,
 So I vnto my selfe alone will sing,
 The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring.
 Early before the worlds light giuing lampe,

His golden beame vpon the hils doth spred,
 Hauing disperst the nights vnchearefull dampe,
 Doe ye awake and with fresh lusty hed,
 Go to the bowre of my beloued loue,

My truest turtle doue
Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake,
And long since ready forth his maske to moue,
With his bright Tead that flames with many a flake,
And many a bachelor to waite on him,
In theyr fresh garments trim.

Bid her awake therefore and soone her dight,
For lo the wished day is come at last,
That shall for al the paynes and sorrowes past,
Pay to her vsury of long delight,
And whylest she doth her dight,
Doe ye to her of ioy and solace sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.
Bring with you all the Nymphes that you can heare
both of the riuers and the forrests greene:
And of the sea that neighbours to her neare,

Al with gay girlands goodly wel bescene.
And let them also with them bring in hand,
Another gay girland
my fayre loue of lillyes and of roses,
Bound trueloue wize with a blew silke riband.
And let them make great store of bridale poses,
And let them eeke bring store of other flowers
To deck the bridale bowers.
And let the ground whereas her foot shall tread,
For feare the stones her tender foot should wrong,

Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,
And diapred lyke the discolored mead.
Which done, doe at her chamber dore awayt,
For she will waken strayt,
The while doe ye this song vnto her sing,
The woods shall to you answer and your Eccho ring.
Ye Nymphes of Mulla which with carefull heed,
The siluer scaly trouts doe tend full well,
and greedy pikes which vse therein to feed,
(Those trouts and pikes all others doo excell)

And ye likewise which keepe the rushy lake,
 Where none doo fishes take.
 Bynd vp the locks the which hang scatterd light,
 And in his waters which your mirror make,
 Behold your faces as the christall bright,
 That when you come whereas my loue doth lie,
 No blemish she may spie.
 And eke ye lightfoot mayds which keepe the d[ee]re,
 That on the hoary mountayne vie to towre,
 And the wylde wolues which seeke them to deuoure,

With your steele darts doo chace from comming neer
 Be also present heere,
 To helpe to decke her and to help to sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.
 Wake now my loue, awake; for it is time,
 The Rosy Morne long since left Tithones bed,
 All ready to her siluer coche to clyme,
 And Phoebus gins to shew his glorious hed.
 Hark how the cheerefull birds do chaunt theyr laies
 And carroll of loues praise.

The merry Larke hir mattins sings aloft,
 The thrush replyes, the Mauis descant playes,
 The Ouzell shrills, the Ruddock warbles soft,
 So goodly all agree with sweet consent,
 To this dayes meriment.
 Ah my deere loue why doe ye sleepe thus long,
 When meeter were that ye should now awake,
 T'awayt the comming of your ioyous make,
 And hearken to the birds louelearned song,
 The deawy leaues among.

For they of ioy and pleasance to you sing.
 That all the woods them answer & theyr eccho ring.
 My loue is now awake out of her dreame,
 and her fayre eyes like stars that dimmed were
 With darksome cloud, now shew theyr goodly beams
 More bright then Hesperus his head doth rere.

Come now ye damzels, daughters of delight,
Helpe quickly her to dight,
But first come ye fayre houres which were begot
In Ioues sweet paradice, of Day and Night,

Which doe the seasons of the yeare allot,
And al that euer in this world is fayre
Doe make and still repayre.
And ye three handmayds of the Cyprian Queene,
The which doe still adorne her beauties pride,
Helpe to addorne my beautifullest bride
And as ye her array, still throw betweene
Some graces to be seene,
And as ye vse to Venus, to her sing,
The whiles the woods shal answer & your eccho ring.

Now is my loue all ready forth to come,
Let all the virgins therefore well awayt,
And ye fresh boyes that tend vpon her groome
Prepare your selues; for he is comming strayt.
Set all your things in seemely good aray
Fit for so ioyfull day,
The ioyfulst day that euer sunne did see.
Faire Sun, shew forth thy fauourable ray,
let thy lifull heat not feruent be
For feare of burning her sunshyny face,
Her beauty to disgrace.
O fayrest Phoebus, father of the Muse,
If euer I did honour thee aright,
Or sing the thing, that mote thy mind delight,
Doe not thy seruants simple boone refuse,
But let this day let this one day be myne,
Let all the rest be thine.
Then I thy souerayne prayses loud wil sing,
That all the woods shal answer and theyr eccho ring.
Harke how the Minstrels gin to shrill aloud,
Their merry Musick that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling Croud,

That well agree withouten breach or iar.
 But most of all the Damzels doe delite,
 When they their tymbrels smyte,
 And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,
 That all the sences they doe rauish quite,
 The whyles the boyes run vp and downe the street,
 Crying aloud with strong confused noyce,
 As if it were one voyce.

Hymen io Hymen, Hymen they do shout,
 That euen to the heauens theyr shouting shrill
 Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill,
 To which the people standing all about,
 As in approuance doe thereto applaud
 And loud aduaunce her laud,
 And euermore they Hymen Hymen sing,
 that al the woods them answer and theyr eccho ring.
 Loe where she comes along with portly pace,
 Lyke Phoebe from her chamber of the East,

Arysing forth to run her mighty race,
 Clad all in white, that seemes a virgin best.
 So well it her beseemes that ye would weene
 Some angell she had beene.
 Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden wyre,
 Sprinkled with perle, and perling flowres a tweene,
 Doe lyke a golden mantle her attyre,
 And being crowned with a girland greene,
 Seeme lyke some mayden Queene,
 Her modest eyes abashed to behold

So many gazers, as on her do stare,
 Vpon the lowly ground affixed are.
 Ne dare lift vp her countenance too bold,
 But blush to heare her prayses sung so loud,
 So farre from being proud.
 Nathlesse doe ye still loud her prayses sing,
 That all the woods may answer and your eccho ring.

Tell me ye merchants daughters did ye see
So fayre a creature in your towne before,
So sweet, so louely, and so mild as she,

Adornd with beautyes grace and vertues store,
Her goodly eyes lyke Saphyres shining bright,
Her forehead yuory white,
Her cheekes lyke apples which the sun hath rudded,
Her lips lyke cherries charming men to byte,
Her brest like to a bowle of creame vncruded,
Her paps lyke lillies budded,
Her snowie necke lyke to a marble towre,
And all her body like a pallace fayre,
Ascending vppe with many a stately stayre,

To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre.
Why stand ye still ye virgins in amaze,
Vpon her so to gaze,
Whiles ye forget your former lay to sing,
To which the woods did answer and your eccho ring?
But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,
The inward beauty of her liuely spright,
Garnisht with heauenly guifts of high degree,
Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,
And stand astonisht lyke to those which red

Medusaes mazeful hed.
There dwels sweet loue and constant chastity,
Vnspotted fayth and comely womanhood,
Regard of honour and mild modesty,
There vertue raynes as Queene in royal throne,
And giueth lawes alone.
The which the base affections doe obay,
And yeeld theyr seruices vnto her will
Ne thought of thing vncomely euer may
Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill.
Had ye once seene these her celestial threasures,
And vnreuealed pleasures,
Then would ye wonder and her prayses sing,

That all the woods should answer and your echo ring.
Open the temple gates vnto my loue,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the postes adorne as doth behoue,
And all the pillours deck with girlands trim,
For to recyue this Saynt with honour dew,
That commeth in to you.

With trembling steps and humble reuerence,
She commeth in, before th' almighties vew,
Of her ye virgins learne obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces,
Bring her vp to th' high altar that she may,
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endlesse matrimony make,
And let the roring Organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in liuely notes,

The whiles with hollow throates,
The Choristers the ioyous Antheme sing,
That all the woods may answee, and their eccho ring.
Behold whiles she before the altar stands
Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush vp in her cheekes,
And the pure snow with goodly vermill stayne,
Like crimson dyde in grayne,
That euen th' Angels which continually,

About the sacred Altare doe remaine,
Forget their seruice and about her fly,
Ofte peeping in her face that seemes more fayre,
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes still fastened on the ground,
Are gouerned with goodly modesty,
That suffers not one looke to glaunce awry,
Which may let in a little thought vnsownd,

Why blush ye loue to giue to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band?

Sing ye sweet Angels Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answere and your eccho ring.
Now al is done; bring home the bride againe,
bring home the triumph of our victory,
Bring home with you the glory of her gaine,
With ioyance bring her and with iollity.
Neuer had man more ioyfull day then this,
Whom heauen would heape with blis.
Make feast therefore now all this liue long day,
This day for euer to me holy is,
Poure out the wine without restraint or stay,
Poure not by cups, but by the belly full,
Poure out to all that wull,
And sprinkle all the postes and wals with wine,
That they may sweat, and drunken be withall.
Crowne ye God Bacchus with a coronall,
And Hymen also crowne with wreathes of vine,
And let the Graces daunce vnto the rest;
For they can doo it best:
The whiles the maydens doe theyr carroll sing,

To which the woods shal answer & theyr eccho ring.
Ring ye the bells, ye yong men of the towne,
And leaue your wonted labors for this day:
This day is holy; doe ye write it downe,
that ye for euer it remember may.
This day the sunne is in his chieftest hight,
With Barnaby the bright,
From whence declining daily by degrees,
He somewhat loseth of his heat and light,
When once the Crab behind his back he sees.

But for this time it ill ordained was,
To chose the longest day in all the yeare,
And shortest night, when longest fitter wear:

Yet neuer day so long, but late would passe.
 Ring ye the bells, to make it weare away,
 And bonefiers make all day,
 And daunce about them, and about them sing:
 that all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.
 AH when will this long vveary day haue end,
 and lende me leaue to come vnto my loue?

Hovv slovvly do the houres theyr numbers spend?
 How slowly does sad Time his feathers moue?
 Hast thee O fayrest Planet to thy home
 Within the Westernne fome:
 Thy tyred steedes long since haue need of rest.
 Long though it be, at last I see it gloome,
 And the bright euening star with golden creast
 Appeare out of the East.
 Fayre childe of beauty, glorious lampe of loue
 That all the host of heauen in rankes dost lead,

And guydest louers through the nights dread,
 How chearefully thou lookest from aboue,
 And seemst to laugh atweene thy twinkling light
 As ioying in the sight
 Of these glad many which for ioy doe sing,
 That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.
 Now ceasse ye damsels your delights forepast;
 Enough is it, that all the day was youres:
 Now day is doen, and night is nighing fast:
 Now bring the Bryde into the brydall boures.

Now night is come, now soone her disaray,
 And in her bed her lay;
 Lay her in lillies and in violets,
 And silken courteins ouer her display,
 The odour sheetes, and Arras couerlets,
 Behold how goodly my faire loue does ly
 In proud humility;
 Like vnto Maia, when as Ioue her tooke,

In Tempe, lying on the flowry gras,
Twixt sleepe and wake, after she weary was,

With bathing in the Acidalian brooke,
Now it is night, ye damsels may be gon,
And leaue my loue alone,
And leaue likewise your former lay to sing:
The woods no more shal answere, nor your echo ring.
Now welcome night, thou night so long expected,
that long daies labour doest at last defray,
And all my cares, which cruell loue collected,
Hast sumd in one, and cancelled for aye:
Spread thy broad wing ouer my loue and me,
That no man may vs see,
And in thy sable mantle vs enwrap,
From feare of perrill and foule horror free.
Let no false treason seeke vs to entrap,
Nor any dread disquiet once annoy
the safety of our ioy:
But let the night be calme and quiet some,
Without tempestuous storms or sad afray:
Lyke as when Ioue with fayre Alcmena lay,
When he begot the great Tirynthian groome:

Or lyke as when he with thy selfe did lie,
And begot Maiesty.
And let the mayds and yongmen cease to sing:
Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr eccho ring.
Let no lamenting cryes, nor dolefull teares,
Be heard all night within nor yet without:
Ne let false whispers breeding hidden feares,
Breake gentle sleepe with misconceiued dout.
Let no deluding dreames, nor dreadful sights,
Make sudden sad affrights;

Ne let housefyres, nor lightnings helpelesse harmes,
Ne let the Pouke, nor other euill sprights,
Ne let mischieuous witches with theyr charmes,

Ne let hob Goblins, names whose sence we see not,
 Fray vs with things that be not.
 Let not the shriech Oule, nor the Storke be heard:
 Nor the night Rauen that still deadly yels,
 Nor damned ghosts cald vp with mighty spels,
 Nor grievly vultures make vs once affeard:
 Ne let th' vnpleasant Quayre of Frogs still croking

Make vs to wish theyr choking.
 Let none of these theyr drery accents sing;
 Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr eccho ring.
 But let stil Silence trew night watches keepe,
 That sacred peace may in assurance rayne,
 And tymely sleep, when it is tyme to sleepe,
 May poure his limbs forth on your pleasant playne,
 The whiles an hundred little winged loues,
 Like diuers fethered doues,
 Shall fly and flutter round about your bed,

And in the secret darke, that none reproues
 Their prety stealthes shal worke, & snares shal spread
 To filch away sweet snatches of delight,
 Conceald through couert night.
 Ye sonnes of Venus, play your sports at will,
 For greedy pleasure, carelesse of your toyes,
 Thinks more vpon her paradise of ioyes,
 Then what ye do, albe it good or ill.
 All night therefore attend your merry play,
 For it will soone be day:

Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing,
 Ne will the woods now answer, nor your Eccho ring.
 Who is the same, which at my window peepes?
 Or whose is that faire face, that shines so bright,
 Is it not Cinthia, she that neuer sleeps,
 But walkes about high heauen al the night?
 O fayrest goddessse, do thou not enuy
 My loue with me to spy:

For thou likewise didst loue, though now vnthought,
And for a fleece of woll, which priuily,

The Latmian shephard once vnto thee brought,
His pleasures with thee wrought,
Therefore to vs be faorable now;
And sith of wemens labours thou hast charge,
And generation goodly dost enlarge,
Encline they will t'effect our wishfull vow,
And the chaste wombe informe with timely seed,
That may our comfort breed:
Till which we cease our hopefull hap to sing,
Ne let the woods vs answere, nor our Eccho ring.

And thou great Iuno, which with awful might
the lawes of wedlock still dost patronize,
And the religion of the faith first plight
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnize:
And eeke for comfort often called art
Of women in their smart,
Eternally bind thou this louely band,
And all thy blessings vnto vs impart.
Thou glad Genius, in whose gentle hand,
The bridale bowre and geniall bed remaine,

Without blemish or staine,
And the sweet pleasures of theyr loues delight
With secret ayde doest succour and supply,
Till they bring forth the fruitfull progeny,
Send vs the timely fruit of this same night.
And thou fayre Hebe, and thou Hymen free,
Grant that it may so be.
Til which we cease your further prayse to sing,
Ne any woods shal answer, nor your Eccho ring.
And ye high heauens, the temple of the gods,
In which a thousand torches flaming bright
Do burne, that to vs wretched earthly clods:
In dreadful darknesse lend desired light;

And all ye powers which in the same remayne,
More then we men can fayne,
Poure out your blessing on vs plentifully,
And happy influence vpon vs raine,
That we may raise a large posterity,
Which from the earth, which they may long possesse
With lasting happinesse,
Vp to your haughty pallaces may mount,
And for the guerdon of theyr glorious merit
May heauenly tabernacles there inherit,
Of blessed Saints for to increase the count.
So let vs rest, sweet loue, in hope of this,
And cease till then our tymely ioyes to sing,
The woods no more vs answer, nor our eccho ring.

Song made in lieu of many ornaments,
With which my loue should duly haue bene dect,
Which cutting off through hasty accidents,
Ye would not stay your dew time to expect,
But promist both to recompens,
Be vnto her a goodly ornament,
And for short time an endlesse monument.

(1595)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(1564–1616)

Shakespeare was baptized on 26 April 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire. His father was a Stratford tradesman, but also a dealer in timber and wool. William was the third of seven children. He was sent to the Free Grammar School at Stratford, where the teaching was mostly of Latin grammar and rhetoric. He did not go to university, but married the pregnant Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior, in November 1582. Nothing is known about his going to London, but he was almost certainly there by 1589. Shakespeare retired to Stratford around 1610. *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* were probably written there. He continued his business life until his death, at the age of fifty-two, on 23 April 1616. The sonnets were written over an indeterminate period and published together in 1609, after the vogue of sonneteering was over. Their compact language, range of tone, profound word-play and intense moral vision are unsurpassed by any of the regular sonnet sequences of Sidney or Spenser. The sonnets do not revolve around a central mythical lady. Instead, there is a constellation of three figures providing greater irony and dramatic range: a blond young aristocrat, a dark lady and a rival poet.

The Phoenix and the Turtle

Let the bird of loudest lay,
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

But thou shrieking harbinger,
Foul precurrer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop come thou not near!

From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feather'd king:
Keep the obsequy so strict.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Let the priest in surplice white,
That defunctive music can,
Be the death-divining swan,
Lest the requiem lack his right.

And thou treble-dated crow,
That thy sable gender makest
With the breath thou givest and takest,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.
Here the anthem doth commence:
Love and constancy is dead;
Phoenix and the turtle fled
In a mutual flame from hence.

So they loved, as love in twain
Had the essence but in one;
Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain.

Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
Distance, and no space was seen
'Twixt the turtle and his queen:
But in them it were a wonder.

So between them love did shine,
That the turtle saw his right
Flaming in the phoenix' sight;
Either was the other's mine.

Property was thus appalled,
That the self was not the same;
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called.

Reason, in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together,
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded,



That it cried, How true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one!
Love hath reason, reason none,
If what parts can so remain.

Whereupon it made this threne
To the phoenix and the dove,
Co-supremes and stars of love,
As chorus to their tragic scene.

THRENOS.

Beauty, truth, and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclosed in cinders lie.

Death is now the phoenix' nest
And the turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest,

Leaving no posterity:
'Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.

Truth may seem, but cannot be:
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and beauty buried be.

To this urn let those repair
That are either true or fair
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

(1601)

Sonnets

1

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding:
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

12

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls, all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

75

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
Or as sweet-season'd showers are to the ground;
And for the peace of you I hold such strife
As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found;
Now proud as an enjoyer and anon
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure,
Now counting best to be with you alone,
Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure;
Sometime all full with feasting on your sight
And by and by clean starved for a look;

Possessing or pursuing no delight,
Save what is had or must from you be took.
Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

138

When my love swears that she is made of truth
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false speaking tongue:
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And age in love loves not to have years told:
Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

(1609)

Song

Fear no more the heat o' th' sun
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' th' great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke.
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this and come to dust.
Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor th' all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finish'd joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have,
And renowned be thy grave!

(1623)

JOHN DONNE
(1572–1631)

Donne was born in London, in 1572, as the son of a prosperous London merchant, and a mother not only Catholic, but also connected by marriage to Sir Thomas More. His early education was Catholic, and, although he came to reject it, his thinking and his temperament were affected throughout his life by his Catholic training. As a Catholic, Donne could not take a degree, though he spent three years at Oxford, and three at Cambridge. He probably declared for the Anglican religion by 1602, but he resisted royal pressure to take orders until 1615, after which his ecclesiastical advancement was rapid. He preached sermons which rank among the best of the 17th century. From 1621 until his death he was Dean of St. Paul's and frequently preached before Charles I. In verse he wrote satires, epistles, elegies, and miscellaneous poems, distinguished by wit, profundity of thought and erudition, passion, and subtlety, coupled with a certain roughness of form. He was the greatest of the writers of "metaphysical poetry", in which passion is interwoven with reasoning.

The Flea

MARK but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest me is ;
It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be.
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead ;
 Yet this enjoys before it woo,
 And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two ;
 And this, alas ! is more than we would do.

O stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea, more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is.
Though parents grudge, and you, we're met,

And cloister'd in these living walls of jet.
 Though use make you apt to kill me,
 Let not to that self-murder added be,
 And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it suck'd from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thyself nor me the weaker now.
'Tis true ; then learn how false fears be ;
Just so much honour, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

(1633)

A Valediction: Forbidden Mourning

AS virtuous men pass mildly away,
 And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
 "Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."
So let us melt, and make no noise,
 No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
 To tell the laity our love.
Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears;
 Men reckon what it did, and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
 Though greater far, is innocent.
Dull sublunary lovers' love
 – Whose soul is sense – cannot admit
Of absence, 'cause it doth remove
 The thing which elemented it.
But we by a love so much refined,
 That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assurèd of the mind,

Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.
 Our two souls therefore, which are one,
 Though I must go, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to aery thinness beat.
 If they be two, they are two so
 As stiff twin compasses are two;
 Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if th' other do.
 And though it in the centre sit,
 Yet, when the other far doth roam,
 It leans, and hearkens after it,
 And grows erect, as that comes home.
 Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
 Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
 Thy firmness makes my circle just,
 And makes me end where I begun.

(1633)

From the *Holy Sonnets*

1

THOU hast made me, and shall Thy work decay?
 Repair me now, for now mine end doth haste;
 I run to death, and Death meets me as fast,
 And all my pleasures are like yesterday.
 I dare not move my dim eyes any way;
 Despair behind, and Death before doth cast
 Such terror, and my feeble flesh doth waste
 By sin in it, which it towards hell doth weigh.
 Only Thou art above, and when towards Thee
 By Thy leave I can look, I rise again;
 But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,
 That not one hour myself I can sustain.
 Thy grace may wing me to prevent his art
 And thou like adamant draw mine iron heart.

(1635)

14

Batter my heart, three-person'd God ; for you
As yet but knock ; breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but O, to no end.
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy ;
Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

(1633)

19

Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one:
Inconstancy unnaturally hath begot
A constant habit; that when I would not
I change in vows, and in devotion.
As humorous is my contrition
As my profane love, and as soon forgot:
As riddlingly distempered, cold and hot,
As praying, as mute; as infinite, as none.
I durst not view heaven yesterday; and today
In prayers and flattering speeches I court God:
Tomorrow I quake with true fear of his rod.
So my devout fits come and go away
Like a fantastic ague; save that here
Those are my best days, when I shake with feare.

(1899)

*Elegy XIX. To His Mistress Going to Bed*⁴¹

COME, madam, come, all rest my powers defy;
 Until I labour, I in labour lie.
 The foe oft-times, having the foe in sight,
 Is tired with standing, though he never fight.
 Off with that girdle, like heaven's zone glittering,
 But a far fairer world encompassing.
 Unpin that spangled breast-plate, which you wear,
 That th' eyes of busy fools may be stopp'd there.
 Unlace yourself, for that harmonious chime
 Tells me from you that now it is bed-time.
 Off with that happy busk, which I envy,
 That still can be, and still can stand so nigh.
 Your gown going off such beauteous state reveals,
 As when from flowery meads th' hill's shadow steals.
 Off with your wiry coronet, and show
 The hairy diadems which on you do grow.
 Off with your hose and shoes ; then softly tread
 In this love's hallow'd temple, this soft bed.
 In such white robes heaven's angels used to be
 Revealed to men ; thou, angel, bring'st with thee
 A heaven-like Mahomet's paradise; and though
 Ill spirits walk in white, we easily know
 By this these angels from an evil sprite;
 Those set our hairs, but these our flesh upright.
 Licence my roving hands, and let them go
 Before, behind, between, above, below.
 O, my America, my Newfoundland,
 My kingdom, safest when with one man mann'd,
 My mine of precious stones, my empery;
 How am I blest in thus discovering thee!
 To enter in these bonds, is to be free;
 Then, where my hand is set, my soul shall be.
 Full nakedness! All joys are due to thee;
 As souls unbodied, bodies unclodeth must be

41 This poem reworks the central situation of Ovid's *Amores* 1.5 in much more dramatic terms.

JOHN DONNE

To taste whole joys. Gems which you women use
Are like Atlanta's ball cast in men's views;
That, when a fool's eye lighteth on a gem,
His earthly soul might court that, not them.
Like pictures, or like books' gay coverings made
For laymen, are all women thus array'd.
Themselves are only mystic books, which we
– Whom their imputed grace will dignify –
Must see reveal'd. Then, since that I may know,
As liberally as to thy midwife show
Thyself ; cast all, yea, this white linen hence;
There is no penance due to innocence:
To teach thee, I am naked first; why then,
What needst thou have more covering than a man?

(1669)

ANDREW MARVELL
(1620–1678)

Marvell, the son of a Yorkshire clergyman, was educated at Hull Grammar School and Trinity College, Cambridge. When the Civil War began in 1642 he was travelling in Europe. At the end of the war he found himself on the winning anti-Royalist side, and became tutor at Nunappleton in Yorkshire, to Mary Fairfax, daughter of the victorious Commonwealth general. Later he was tutor to William Dutton, Cromwell's prospective son-in-law, and in 1657 he was Milton's assistant as Latin Secretary. In 1659, after the death of Cromwell, he became Member of Parliament for Hull, and held the seat till his death, serving also as secretary to English embassies in Russia, Denmark, and Sweden. His lyric poetry, then out of fashion, is highly individual yet related, in close and interesting ways, to that of some of his contemporaries.

*To His Coy Mistress*⁴²

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day;
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood;
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;

⁴² One of the most well known 'carpe diem' (seize the day) poems of the period, which develops the motifs of time and space introduced in line 1.

An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserv'd virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapp'd power.
Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one ball;
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life.
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

(1681)

The Garden

How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the palm, the oak, or bays;
And their uncessant labors see
Crowned from some single herb or tree,
Whose short and narrow-vergèd shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all the flowers and trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose.

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear!
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men:
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow;
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So amorous as this lovely green;
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name.
Little, alas, they know or heed,
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees! wheresoe'er your barks I wound
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat:
The gods who mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race.
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow,
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There like a bird it sits and sings,
Then whets and combs its silver wings;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate:
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.



ANDREW MARVELL

How well the skillful gard'ner drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new;
Where from above the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;
And, as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers!

(1681)

The Definition of Love

My love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis for object strange and high;
It was begotten by Despair
Upon Impossibility.

Magnanimous Despair alone
Could show me so divine a thing
Where feeble Hope could ne'er have flown,
But vainly flapp'd its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive
Where my extended soul is fixt,
But Fate does iron wedges drive,
And always crowds itself betwixt.

For Fate with jealous eye does see
Two perfect loves, nor lets them close;
Their union would her ruin be,
And her tyrannic pow'r depose.

And therefore her decrees of steel
Us as the distant poles have plac'd,
(Though love's whole world on us doth wheel)
Not by themselves to be embrac'd;





ANDREW MARVELL

Unless the giddy heaven fall,
And earth some new convulsion tear;
And, us to join, the world should all
Be cramp'd into a planisphere.

As lines, so loves oblique may well
Themselves in every angle greet;
But ours so truly parallel,
Though infinite, can never meet.

Therefore the love which us doth bind,
But Fate so enviously debars,
Is the conjunction of the mind,
And opposition of the stars.

(1681)

JOHN MILTON
(1608–1674)

Milton was the son of a scrivener and composer of music. He was educated at St. Paul's School and Christ's College, Cambridge, receiving his B.A. in 1629 and M.A. in 1632. While at college he wrote some poems, Latin elegies and epigrams. After leaving Cambridge, Milton lived with his father at Horton from 1632 to 1637, reading the classics and preparing himself for his vocation as a poet. During these years of solitude he composed *Lycidas*, *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso* and a few sonnets. From 1637 to 1639 he travelled abroad, chiefly in Italy, and visited Grotius and Galileo. When the Civil war broke out Milton immediately cut his tour short and hurried home. For the next twenty years he devoted himself to politics and prose. After the execution of King Charles I, Milton became Latin Secretary in the new government. His eyesight began to fail around 1651 and by 1652 he was totally blind. With the return of the Stuart monarch, Charles II, Milton was in danger of royal prosecution both as a propagandist and as a former Latin Secretary within the government. He lost most of his fortune and lived in great poverty. The most ambitious of Milton's works, such as *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, *Samson Agonistes*, were written during these years. He was buried in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

L'Allegro

Hence loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born,
In Stygian Cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shreiks, and sights unholy,
Find out som uncouth cell,
Wher brooding darknes spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-Raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-brow'd Rocks,
As ragged as thy Locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But com thou Goddes fair and free,
In Heav'n yclept Euphrosyne,

And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely *Venus* at a birth
With two sister Graces more
To Ivy-crowned *Bacchus* bore;
Or whether (as som sager sing)
The frolick Wind that breathes the Spring,
Zephir with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a Maying,
There on Beds of Violets blew,
And fresh-blown Roses washt in dew,
Filled her with thee a daughter fair,
So bucksom, blith, and debonair.
Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
Nods, and Becks, and Wreathed Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinced Care derides,
 And Laughter holding both his sides.
Com, and trip it as ye go
On the light fantastick toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee,
The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty;
And if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crue
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproued pleasures free;
To hear the Lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night,
From his watch-towre in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to com in spight of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the Sweet-Briar, or the Vine,
Or the twisted Eglantine.
While the Cock with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darknes thin,

And to the stack, or the Barn dore,
Stoutly struts his Dames before,
Oft list'ning how the Hounds and horn,
Chearly rouse the slumbring morn,
From the side of som Hoar Hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill.
Some time walking not unseen
By Hedge-row Elms, on Hillocks green,
Right against the Eastern gate,
Wher the great Sun begins his state,
Rob'd in flames, and Amber light,
The clouds in thousand Liveries dight.
While the Plowman neer at hand,
Whistles ore the Furrow'd Land,
And the Milkmaid singeth blithe,
 And the Mower whets his sithe,
And every Shepherd tells his tale
Under the Hawthorn in the dale.
Streit mine eye hath caught new pleasures
Whilst the Lantskip round it measures,
 Russet Lawns, and Fallows Gray,
Where the nibling flocks do stray,
Mountains on whose barren brest
The labouring clouds do often rest:
Meadows trim with Daisies pide,
Shallow Brooks, and Rivers wide.
Towers, and Battlements it sees
Boosom'd high in tufted Trees,
Wher perhaps som beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by, a Cottage chimney smokes,
From betwixt two aged Okes,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
Are at their savory dinner set
Of Hearbs, and other Country Messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her Bowre she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the Sheaves;

Or if the earlier season lead
To the tann'd Haycock in the Mead,
 Som times with secure delight
The up-land Hamlets will invite,
When the merry Bells ring round,
And the jocond rebecks sound
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the Chequer'd shade;
And young and old com forth to play
On a Sunshine Holyday,
Till the live-long day-light fail,
Then to the Spicy Nut-brown Ale,
 With stories told many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat,
She was pincht, and pull'd she sed,
And he by Friars Lanthorn led
Tells how the drudging Goblin swet
To ern his Cream-bowle duly set,
When in one night, ere glimps of morn,
His shadowy Flale hath thresh'd the Corn
That ten day-labourers could not end,
Then lies him down the Lubbar Fend.
And stretch'd out all the Chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And Crop-full out of dores he flings,
Ere the first Cock his Mattin rings.
Thus don the Tales, to bed they creep,
 By whispering Windes soon lull'd asleep.
Towred Cities please us then,
And the busie humm of men,
Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,
In weeds of Peace high triumphs hold,
With store of Ladies, whose bright eies
Rain influence, and judge the prise
Of Wit, or Arms, while both contend
To win her Grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In Saffron robe, with Taper clear,

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
 With mask, and antique Pageantry,
 Such sights as youthfull Poets dream
 On Summer eeves by haunted stream.
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,
 If *Jonsons* learned Sock be on,
 Or sweetest *Shakespear* fancies childe,
 Warble his native Wood-notes wilde,
 And ever against eating Cares,
 Lap me in soft Lydian Aires,
 Married to immortal verse,
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce
 In notes, with many a winding bout
 Of lincked sweetnes long drawn out,
 With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
 The melting voice through mazes running;
 Untwisting all the chains that ty
 The hidden soul of harmony.
 That Orpheus self may heave his head
 From golden slumber on a bed
 Of heapt Elysian flowres, and hear
 Such streins as would have won the ear
 Of Pluto, to have quite set free
 His half regain'd Eurydice.
 These delights, if thou canst give,
 Mirth with thee, I mean to live.

(ca. 1631)

(1645)

Il Penseroso

Hence vain deluding joyes,
 The brood of folly without father bred,
 How little you bested,
 Or fill the fixed mind with all your toyes;
 Dwell in som idle brain,
 And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
 As thick and numberless

As the gay motes that people the Sun Beams,
Or likest hovering dreams
The fickle Pensioners of Morpheus train.
 But hail thou Goddess, sage and holy,
Hail divinest Melancholy,
Whose Saintly visage is too bright
To hit the Sense of human sight;
And therefore to our weaker view,
Ore laid with black staid Wisdoms hue.
Black, but such as in esteem,
Prince Memnons sister might beseem,
Or that Starr'd Ethiopie Queen that strove
To set her beauties praise above
The Sea Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended,
Thee bright- hair'd Vesta long of yore,
To solitary *Saturn* bore;
His daughter she (in Saturns raigin,
 Such mixture was not held a stain).
Oft in glimmering Bowres, and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of Jove.
Com pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestick train,
And sable stole of Cipres Lawn,
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Com, but keep thy wonted state,
With eev'n step, and musing gate,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There held in holy passion still,
Forget thy self to Marble, till
With a sad Leaden downward cast,
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And joyn with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,

Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring,
Ay round about *Joves* Altar sing.
And adde to these retired leasure,
That in trim Gardens takes his pleasure;
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The Cherub Contemplation,
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will daign a Song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While Cynthia checks her Dragon yoke,
Gently o're th' accustom'd Oke;
Sweet Bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musicall, most melancholy!
Thee Chauntress oft the Woods among,
I woo to hear thy eeven-Song;
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven Green,
To behold the wandring Moon,
Riding neer her highest noon,
Like one that had bin led astray
Through the Heav'ns wide pathles way;
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft on a Plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off *Curfeu* sound,
Over som wide-water'd shoar,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or if the Ayr will not permit,
Som still removed place will fit,
Where glowing Embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the Cricket on the hearth,
Or the Belmans drousie charm,

To bless the doers from nightly harm:
Or let my Lamp at midnight hour,
Be seen in som high lonely Towr,
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphear
The spirit of *Plato* to unfold
What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
And of those Daemons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With Planet, or with Element.
Som time let Gorgeous Tragedy
In Scepter'd Pall com sweeping by,
Presenting Thebs, or Pelops line,
Or the tale of Troy divine.
Or what (though rare) of later age,
Ennobled hath the Buskind stage.
But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musaeus from his bower,
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as warbled to the string,
Drew Iron tears down *Pluto's* cheek,
And made Hell grant what Love did seek.
Or call up him that left half told
The story of *Cambuscan* bold,
Of *Camball*, and of *Algarsife*,
And who had *Canace* to wife,
That own'd the vertuous Ring and Glass,
And of the wondrous Hors of Brass,
On which the *Tartar* King did ride;
And if ought els, great Bards beside,
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of Turneys and of Trophies hung;
Of Forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant then meets the ear.
Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,

Till civil-suited Morn appeer,
Not trickt and frounc't as she was wont,
With the Attick Boy to hunt,
But Chercheft in a comly Cloud,
While rocking Winds are Piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the russling Leaves,
With minute drops from off the Eaves.
And when the Sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me Goddes bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves
Of Pine, or monumental Oake,
Where the rude Ax with heaved stroke,
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There in close covert by som Brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from Day's garish eie,
While the Bee with Honied thie,
That at her flowry work doth sing,
And the Waters murmuring
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;
And let som strange mysterious dream,
Wave at his Wings in Airy stream,
Of lively portrature display'd,
Softly on my eye-lids laid.
And as I wake, sweet musick breath
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by som spirit to mortals good,
Or th' unseen Genius of the Wood.
But let my due feet never fail,
To walk the studious Cloysters pale,
And love the high embowed Roof,
With antick Pillars massy proof,
And storied Windows richly dight,

Casting a dimm religious light.
There let the pealing Organ blow,
To the full voic'd Quire below,
In Service high, and Anthems cleer,
As may with sweetnes, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peacefull hermitage,
The Hairy Gown and Mossy Cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell,
Of every Star that Heav'n doth shew,
And every Herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like Prophetic strain.
These pleasures *Melancholy* give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

(ca. 1631)

(1645)

Paradise Lost, Book 8 (ll. 491–559)

This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benigne,
Giver of all things faire, but fairest this
Of all thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self
Before me; Woman is her Name, of Man
Extracted; for this cause he shall forgoe
Father and Mother, and to his Wife adhere;
And they shall be one Flesh, one Heart, one Soule.

She heard me thus, and though divinely brought,
Yet Innocence and Virgin Modestie,
Her vertue and the conscience of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir'd,
The more desirable, or to say all,
Nature her self, though pure of sinful thought,

Wrought in her so, that seeing me, she turn'd;
I follow'd her, she what was Honour knew,
And with obsequious Majestic approv'd
My pleaded reason. To the Nuptial Bowre
I led her blushing like the Morn: all Heav'n,
And happie Constellations on that houre
Shed thir selectest influence; the Earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Aires
Whisper'd it to the Woods, and from thir wings
Flung Rose, flung Odours from the spicie Shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night
Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Eevning Starr
On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp.
Thus I have told thee all my State, and brought
My Storie to the sum of earthly bliss
Which I enjoy, and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed, but such
As us'd or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement desire, these delicacies
I mean of Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits and Flours,
Walks, and the melodie of Birds; but here
Farr otherwise, transported I behold,
Transported touch; here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmov'd, here onely weake
Against the charm of Beauties powerful glance.
Or Nature faild in mee, and left some part
Not proof enough such Object to sustain,
Or from my side subducting, took perhaps
More then enough; at least on her bestow'd
Too much of Ornament, in outward shew
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end
Of Nature her th' inferiour, in the mind
And inward Faculties, which most excell,
In outward also her resembling less
His Image who made both, and less expressing

The character of that Dominion giv'n
O're other Creatures; yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in her self compleat, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, vertuosest, discreetest, best;
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her
Looses discount'nanc't, and like folly shewes;
Authority and Reason on her waite,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness thir seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard Angelic plac't.

(1667)

On the Late Massacre in Piedmont

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold,
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones;
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubl'd to the hills, and they
To Heav'n. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who having learnt thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

(1655)

(1673)

When I Consider How My Light is Spent

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."

(ca. 1652)

(1673)

APHRA BEHN
(1640?–1689)

Much of Behn's life remains a mystery. She seems to have left no record of her date and place of birth, her family name and upbringing. She was almost certainly from East Kent, and she may well have been named Johnson. Behn almost surely performed spy-work long before the 2nd Dutch War. She travelled to Suriname in 1663-4. After her time in Suriname, she is married, whether in Suriname or on ship home. The likely Behn is a Johan Behn of Frankfurt, who was probably a slave trader and a Dutch go-between trader (a literal middleman). He likely died during the plague year of 1665-6. Behn went to live near the Temple Bar, where she met many playwrights. In London, Behn flourished in the cosmopolitan world of the playhouse and the court. Dryden and other wits encouraged her. She mixed with actresses, playwrights and managers and exchanged verses with a lively literary set that she called her "cabal". She kept up with the most advanced thinking and joined in public debates with pointed satire against the Whigs. Her poetry may be considered very fine, and it is the basis of her fame in the 18th century – with admirers including Burns, Blake, and later Wordsworth and Coleridge. It would be the basis of her reputation for the generation after her life. Her drama was very popular. Only Dryden's plays were staged more often in the 1670's. Her most well known novel is *Oroonoko*. She was not the first female professional author in English, but she was the first professional woman dramatist, and the first female professional poet and novelist of her time.

The Disappointment

One Day the Amorous Lisander,
By an impatient Passion sway'd,
Surpris'd fair Cloris, that lov'd Maid,
Who cou'd defend her self no longer;
All things did with his Love conspire,
The gilded Planet of the Day,
In his gay Chariot, drawn by Fire,
Was now descending to the Sea,
And left no Light to guide the World,
But what from Cloris brighter Eyes was hurl'd.

In alone Thicket, made for Love,
 Silent as yielding Maids Consent,
 She with a charming Languishment
 Permits his force, yet gently strove?
 Her Hands his Bosom softly meet,
 But not to put him back design'd,
 Rather to draw him on inclin'd,
 Whilst he lay trembling at her feet;
 Resistance 'tis to late to shew,
 She wants the pow'r to say – Ah! what do you do?

Her bright Eyes sweat, and yet Severe,
 Where Love and Shame confus'dly strive,
 Fresh Vigor to Lisander give:
 And whispering softly in his Ear,
 She Cry'd – Cease – cease – your vain desire,
 Or I'll call out – What wou'd you do?
 My dearer Honour, ev'n to you,
 I cannot – must not give – retire,
 Or take that Life whose chiefest part
 I gave you with the Conquest of my Heart.

But he as much unus'd to fear,
 As he was capable of Love,
 The blessed Minutes to improve,
 Kisses her Lips, her Neck, her Hair!
 Each touch her new Desires alarms!
 His burning trembling Hand he prest
 Upon her melting Snowy Breast,
 While she lay panting in his Arms!
 All her unguarded Beauties lie
 The Spoils and Trophies of the Enemy.

And now, without Respect or Fear,
He seeks the Objects of his Vows;
His Love no Modesty allows:
By swift degrees advancing where
His daring Hand that Alter seiz'd,
Where Gods of Love do Sacrifice;
That awful Throne, that Paradise,
Where Rage is tam'd, and Anger pleas'd;
That Living Fountain, from whose Trills
The melted Soul in liquid Drops distils.

Her balmy Lips encountering his,
Their Bodies as their Souls are joyn'd,
Where both in Transports were confin'd,
Extend themselves upon the Moss.
Cloris half dead and breathless lay,
Her Eyes appear'd like humid Light,
Such as divides the Day and Night;
Or falling Stars, whose Fires decay;
And now no signs of Life she shows,
But what in short-breath-sighs returns and goes.

He saw how at her length she lay,
He saw her rising Bosom bare,
Her loose thin Robes, through which appear
A Shape design'd for Love and Play;
Abandon'd by her Pride and Shame,
She do's her softest Sweets dispence,
Offering her Virgin-Innocence
A Victim to Loves Sacred Flame;
Whilst th' or'e ravish'd Shepherd lies,
Unable to perform the Sacrifice.

Ready to taste a Thousand Joys,
Thee too transported hapless Swain,
Found the vast Pleasure turn'd to Pain:
Pleasure, which too much Love destroys!
The willing Garments by he laid,
And Heav'n all open to his view;
Mad to possess, himself he threw
On the defenceless lovely Maid.
But oh! what envious Gods conspire
To snatch his Pow'r, yet leave him the Desire!

Natures support, without whose Aid
She can no humane Being give,
It self now wants the Art to live,
Faintness it slacken'd Nerves invade:
In vain th' enraged Youth assaid
To call his fleeting Vigour back,
No Motion 'twill from Motion take,
Excess of Love his Love betray'd;
In vain he Toils, in vain Commands,
Th' Insensible fell weeping in his Hands.

In this so Am'rous cruel strife,
Where Love and Fate were too severe,
The poor Lisander in Despair,
Renounc'd his Reason with his Life.
Now all the Brisk and Active Fire
That should the Nobler Part inflame,
Unactive Frigid, Dull became,
And left no Spark for new Desire;
Not all her Naked Charms cou'd move,
Or calm that Rage that had debauch'd his Love.

Cloris returning from the Trance
Which Love and soft Desire had bred,
Her tim'rous Hand she gently laid,
Or guided by Design or Chance,
Upon that Fabulous Priapus,
That Potent God (as Poets feign.)
But never did young Shepherdess
(Gath'ring of Fern upon the Plain)
More nimbly draw her Fingers back,
Finding beneath the Verdant Leaves a Snake.

Then Cloris her fair Hand withdrew,
Finding that God of her Desires
Disarm'd of all his pow'rful Fires,
And cold as Flow'rs bath'd in the Morning-dew.
Who can the Nymphs Confusion guess?
The Blood forsook the kinder place,
And strew'd with Blushes all her Face,
Which both Disdain and Shame express;
And from Lisanders Arms she fled,
Leaving him fainting on the gloomy Bed.

Like Lightning through the Grove she hies,
Or Daphne from the Delphick God;
No Print upon the Grassie Road
She leaves, t' instruct pursuing Eyes.
The Wind that wanton'd in her Hair,
And with her ruffled Garments plaid,
Discover'd in the flying Maid
All that the Gods e're made of Fair.
So Venus, when her Love was Slain,
With fear and haste flew o're the fatal Plain.

The Nymphs resentments, none but I
 Can well imagin, and Condole;
 But none can guess Lisander's Soul,
 But those who sway'd his Destiny:
 His silent Griefs, swell up to Storms,
 And not one God, his Fury spares,
 He Curst his Birth, his Fate, his Stars,
 But more the Shepherdesses Charms ;
 Whose soft bewitching influence,
 Had Damn'd him to the Hell of Impotence.

(1680)

Song

Love in fantastic triumph sate
 Whilst bleeding hearts around him flow'd,
 For whom fresh pains he did create
 And strange tyrannic power he show'd:
 From thy bright eyes he took his fires,
 Which round about in sport he hurl'd;
 But 'twas from mine he took desires
 Enough t' undo the amorous world.

From me he took his sighs and tears,
 From thee his pride and cruelty;
 From me his languishments and fears,
 And every killing dart from thee.
 Thus thou and I the god have arm'd
 And set him up a deity;
 But my poor heart alone is harm'd,
 Whilst thine the victor is, and free!

(1688)

Libertine

A thousand martyrs I have made,
All sacrificed to my desire,
A thousand beauties have betray'd
That languish in resistless fire:
The untamed heart to hand I brought,
And fix'd the wild and wand'ring thought.

I never vow'd nor sigh'd in vain,
But both, tho' false, were well received;
The fair are pleased to give us pain,
And what they wish is soon believed:
And tho' I talk'd of wounds and smart,
Love's pleasures only touch'd my heart.

Alone the glory and the spoil
I always laughing bore away;
The triumphs without pain or toil,
Without the hell the heaven of joy;
And while I thus at random rove
Despise the fools that whine for love.

(1688)

EDWARD YOUNG
(1683–1765)

Edward Young was born at his father's rectory at Upham, near Winchester, in 1683. He was educated at Winchester College and in 1702 matriculated at New College, Oxford. In 1708 he was nominated to a law fellowship at All Souls'. He wrote a series of dedications to a number of important personalities of his time (including Queen Anne, the Countess of Salisbury, and Joseph Addison) using an extravagant style and a pious tone. In 1728 Young became a royal chaplain and then the rector of Welwyn in 1730, where he spent the remainder of his life. His literary work includes two plays, *Busiris*, a tragedy of violence and ungoverned passion, successfully produced at Drury Lane in 1719, and *The Revenge*, another tragedy, produced in 1721. In 1725–28 Young published a series of satires under the title *The Universal Passion* (the Love of Fame). These were quite witty and brilliant, and much admired. *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (a didactic poem of some 10,000 lines of blank verse, in nine books) was published in 1742, and followed by other "Nights," the eighth and ninth appearing in 1745. This is the work by which he is principally remembered and had made him immediately famous. Although *Night Thoughts* is long and somewhat disconnected, it abounds in brilliant isolated passages. The work has been translated into many languages and became a classic of the romantic school in Germany and France. He published *The Brothers*, a tragedy written in 1753, and *Resignation*, his last considerable poem in 1762. He died at Welwyn in 1765.

*The Complaint: or Night Thoughts on Life, Death,
and Immortality*

The Last Day

(Excerpt ll. 169–192)

Book I

Sooner or later, in some future date,
(A dreadful secret in the book of Fate)
This hour, for aught all human wisdom knows,

Or when ten thousand harvests more have rose;
When scenes are chang'd on this revolving Earth,
Old empires fall, and give new empires birth;
While other Bourbons rule in other lands,
And, (if man's sin forbids not) other Annes;
While the still busy world is treading o'er
The paths they trod five thousand years before,
Thoughtless as those who now life's mazes run,
Of earth dissolv'd, or an extinguish'd sun;
(Ye sublunary worlds, awake, awake!
Ye rulers of the nation, hear and shake)
Thick clouds of darkness shall arise on day;
In sudden night all Earth's dominions lay;
Impetuous winds the scatter'd forests rend;
Eternal mountains, like their cedars, bend;
The valleys yawn, the troubled ocean roar
And break the bondage of his wonted shore;
A sanguine stain the silver moon o'erspread;
Darkness the circle of the sun invade;
From inmost Heaven incessant thunders roll
And the strong echo bound from pole to pole.

(1713)

Night the First

(Excerpt ll.1371–1422)

By Nature's law, what may be, may be now;
There's no prerogative in human hours.
In human hearts what bolder thought can rise,
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?
Where is to-morrow? In another world.
For numbers this is certain; the reverse
Is sure to none; and yet on this perhaps,
This peradventure, infamous for lies,
As on a rock of adamant we build
Our mountain hopes, spin out eternal schemes

As we the Fatal Sisters could out-spin,
And big with life's futurities, expire.
Not ev'n Philander had bespoke his shroud,
Nor had he cause; a warning was deny'd:
How many fall as sudden, not as safe!
As sudden, though for years admonish'd home.
Of human ills the last extreme beware;
Beware, Lorenzo, a slow-sudden death.
How dreadful that deliberate surprise!
Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
If not so frequent, would not this be strange?
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.
Of man's miraculous mistakes this bears
The palm, "That all men are about to live,"
For ever on the brink of being born,
All pay themselves the compliment to think
They, one day, shall not drivel: and their pride
On this reversion takes up ready praise;
At least, their own; their future selves applauds;
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead!
Time lodg'd in their own hands is Folly's vails;
That lodg'd in Fate's to Wisdom they consign.
The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone.
'Tis not in folly not to scorn a fool,
And scarce in human wisdom to do more.
All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage; when young, indeed,
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish,
As duteous sons our fathers were more wise.
At thirty man suspects himself a fool,
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;



EDWARD YOUNG

At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves, and re-resolves, then dies the same.

(1742)

ALEXANDER POPE
(1688–1744)

He was the son of a Roman Catholic linen-draper of London. His health was ruined and his figure distorted by a severe illness at the age of 12. Being a Roman Catholic he was not allowed to attend public schools or university. He began writing very early. At the age of nine he translated a Latin poem into English, at twelve he wrote a play. Because of his religion there were few jobs available to him, so he decided to make literature his life's work. In 1712 he wrote *The Rape of the Lock* (a playful mock-epic describing a feud between two families, because a young gentleman cut off a lock of hair without a young lady's acknowledgement), which made his name known all over England. For the next twelve years Pope was busy with poetry. In 1715 he issued the first volume of Homer's *Iliad*, which was completed in 1720. He bought himself a villa at Twickenham and settled there. Here his literary friends (Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, Atterbury, etc.) came to visit him. *Essay on Man* is a poem written by Alexander Pope in 1734. It is a rationalistic effort to use philosophy in order to, as John Milton attempted, justify the ways of God to man. More than any other work, it popularized optimistic philosophy throughout England and the rest of Europe. He died on 30th May 1744, and was buried at Twickenham, because his religion denied him the honour, which he certainly deserved, of being buried in Poets' Corner.

The Rape of the Lock

An Heroi-Comical Poem In Five Cantos

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;

Sed juvat, hoc precibus me trebuisse tuis. – Martial

To Mrs. Arabella Fermor

MADAM,

It will be vain to deny that I have some Value for this Piece, since I dedicate it to You. Yet You may bear me Witness, it was intended only to divert a few young Ladies, who have good Sense and good Humour enough, to laugh not only at their Sex's little unguarded Follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the Air of a Secret, it soon

found its Way into the World. An imperfect Copy having been offered to a Bookseller, You had the good-Nature for my Sake to consent to the Publication of one more correct: This I was forced to before I had executed half my Design, for the *Machinery* was entirely wanting to compleat it. The *Machinery*, Madam, is a term invented by the Criticks, to signify that Part which the Deities, Angels, or Daemons, are made to act in a Poem: For the ancient Poets are in one Respect like many modern Ladies: Let an Action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost Importance. These Machines I determin'd to raise on a very new and odd Foundation, the *Rosicrucian* Doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard Words before a Lady: but 'tis so much the Concern of a Poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your Sex, that You must give me leave to explain two or three difficult Terms.

The *Rosicrucians* are a People I must bring You acquainted with. The best Account I know of them is in a French book called *Le Comte de Gabalis*, which both in its Title and Size is so like a Novel, that many of the Fair Sex have read it for one by Mistake. According to these Gentlemen the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call *Sylphs*, *Gnomes*, *Nymphs*, and *Salamanders*. The *Gnomes*, or Daemons of Earth, delight in Mischief: but the *Sylphs*, whose Habitation is Air, are the best-conditioned Creatures imaginable. For they say, any Mortals may enjoy the most intimate Familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a Condition very easy to all true *Adepts*, an inviolate Preservation of Chastity.

As to the following Canto's, all the Passages of them are as Fabulous, as the Vision at the Beginning, or the Transformation at the End; (except for the Loss of your Hair, which I always name with Reverence.) The Human Persons are as Fictitious as the Airy ones; and the Character of *Belinda*, as it is now manag'd, resembles You in nothing but in Beauty.

If this Poem had as many Graces as there are in Your Person, or in Your Mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the World half so Uncensured as You have done. But let its Fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this Occasion of assuring You that I am, with the truest Esteem,

Madam,
Your most Obedient
Humble Servant,
A. POPE

Canto I

What dire Offence from am'rous Causes springs,
 What mighty Contests rise from trivial Things,
 I sing-This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due;
 This, ev'n *Belinda* may vouchsafe to view:
 Slight is the Subject, but not so the Praise,
 If She inspire, and He approve, my Lays.
 Say what strange Motive, Goddess! cou'd compel
 A well-bred *Lord* t'assault a gentle *Belle*?
 Oh say what stranger Cause, yet unexplor'd,
 Cou'd make a gentle *Belle* reject a *Lord*?
 In tasks so bold, can little Men engage,
 And in soft Bosoms, dwell such mighty Rage?
 Sol through white Curtains shot a tim'rous Ray,
 And ope'd those Eyes that must eclipse the Day:
 Now Lap-dogs give themselves the rouzing Shake,
 And sleepless Lovers, just at Twelve, awake:
 Thrice rung the Bell, the Slipper knock'd the Ground,
 And the press'd Watch return'd a silver sound,
Belinda still her downy Pillow prest,
 Her guardian *Sylph* prolng'd the balmy rest.
 'Twas he had summon'd to her silent Bed
 The Morning Dream that hover'd o'er her Head.
 A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau
 (That ev'n in slumber caus'd her Cheek to glow)
 Seem'd to her Ear his winning Lips to lay,
 And thus in Whispers said, or seemed to say.
 Fairest of Mortals, thou distinguish'd Care
 Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air!
 If e'er one Vision touch'd thy infant Thought,
 Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught,
 Of airy Elves by Moonlight Shadows seen,
 The silver Token, and the Circled Green,
 Or Virgins visited by Angel-powers
 With Golden Crowns and Wreaths of heav'nly Flow'rs;
 Hear and believe! thy own Importance know,
 Nor bound thy narrow Views to things below.

Some secret Truths, from Learned Pride conceal'd,
To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd:
What tho' no Credit doubting Wits may give?
The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.
Know then, unnumber'd Spirits round thee fly,
The light *Militia* of the lower sky:
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the Wing,
Hang o'er the *Box*, and hover round the *Ring*.
Think what an Equipage thou hast in Air,
And view with scorn *Two Pages* and a *Chair*.
As now your own, our Beings were of old,
And once inclos'd in Woman's beauteous Mold;
Thence, by a soft Transition, we repair
From earthly Vehicles to these of Air.
Think not, when Woman's transient Breath is fled,
That all her Vanities at once are dead.
Succeeding Vanities she still regards,
And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the Cards.
Her Joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And love of Ombre, after Death survive.
For when the Fair in all their Pride expire,
To their first Elements the Souls retire:
The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame
Mount up, and take a *Salamander's* name.
Soft yielding Minds to Water glide away,
And sip, with *Nymphs*, their elemental Tea.
The graver Prude sinks downward to a *Gnome*,
In search of Mischief still on Earth to roam.
The light Coquettes in *Sylphs* aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the Fields of Air.
Know further yet; Whoever fair and chaste
Rejects Mankind, is by some *Sylph* embrac'd:
For Spirits, freed from mortal Laws, with ease
Assume what Sexes and what Shapes they please.
What guards the Purity of melting Maids,
In Courtly Balls, and Midnight Masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous Friend, the daring Spark,
The Glance by Day, the Whisper in the Dark;

When kind Occasion prompts their warm Desires,
 When Music softens, and when Dancing fires?
 'Tis but their *Sylph*, the wise Celestials know,
 Tho' *Honour* is the Word with Men below.
 Some Nymphs there are, too conscious of their Face,
 For Life predestin'd to the *Gnomes*' Embrace.
 Who swell their Prospects and exalt their Pride,
 When Offers are disdain'd, and Love deny'd.
 Then gay Ideas crowd the vacant Brain,
 While Peers and Dukes, and all their sweeping Train,
 And Garters, Stars, and Coronets appear,
 And in soft sounds, Your Grace salutes their Ear.
 'Tis these that early taint the Female Soul,
 Instruct the eyes of young *Coquettes* to roll,
 Teach Infant Cheeks a bidden Blush to know,
 And little Hearts to flutter at a *Beau*.
 Oft when the World imagine Women stray,
 The *Sylphs* through Mystic mazes guide their Way.
 Thro' all the giddy Circle they pursue,
 And old Impertinence expel by new.
 What tender Maid but must a Victim fall
 To one Man's Treat, but for another's Ball?
 When *Florio* speaks, what Virgin could withstand,
 If gentle *Damon* did not squeeze her Hand?
 With varying Vanities, from ev'ry Part,
 They shift the moving Toyshop of their Heart;
 Where Wigs with Wigs, with Sword-knots Sword-knots strive,
 Beaux banish Beaux, and Coaches Coaches drive.
 This erring Mortals Levity may call,
 Oh blind to Truth! the *Sylphs* contrive it all.
 Of these am I, who thy Protection claim,
 A watchful Sprite, and *Ariel* is my name.
 Late, as I rang'd the crystal Wilds of Air,
 In the clear Mirror of thy ruling *Star*
 I saw, alas! some dread Event impend,
 Ere to the Main this morning's Sun descend,
 But Heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where:
 Warn'd by thy *Sylph*, oh pious Maid beware!

This to disclose is all thy Guardian can.
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!
He said: when *Shock*, who thought she slept too long,
Leap'd up, and wak'd his Mistress with his Tongue.
'Twas then, *Belinda!* if Report say true,
Thy Eyes first open'd on a *Billet-doux*;
Wounds, Charms, and Ardors, were no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy Head.
And now, unveil'd, the *Toilet* stands display'd,
Each Silver Vase in mystic Order laid.
First, rob'd in White, the Nymph intent adores
With Head uncover'd, the *Cosmetic* Pow'rs.
A heav'nly Image in the Glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her Eyes she rears;
Th' inferior Priestess, at her Altar's side,
Trembling, begins the sacred Rites of Pride.
Unnumber'd Treasures ope at once, and here
The various Offrings of the World appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious Toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring Spoil.
This casket *India's* glowing Gems unlocks,
And all *Arabia* breathes from yonder Box.
The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
Transform'd to *Combs*, the speckled and the white.
Here Files of Pins extend their shining Rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, *Billet-doux*.
Now awful Beauty puts on all its Arms;
The Fair each moment rises in her Charms,
Repairs her Smiles, awakens ev'ry Grace,
And calls forth all the Wonders of her Face;
Sees by Degrees a purer Blush arise,
And keener Lightnings quicken in her Eyes.
The busy *Sylphs* surround their darling Care;
These set the Head, and those divide the Hair,
Some fold the Sleeve, whilst others plait the Gown;
And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own.

Canto II

Not with more Glories, in th' Ethereal Plain,
 The Sun first rises o'er the purpled Main,
 Than issuing forth, the Rival of his Beams
 Launch'd on the Bosom of the Silver *Thames*.
 Fair Nymphs, and well-drest Youths around her shone,
 But ev'ry Eye was fix'd on her alone.
 On her white Breast a sparkling *Cross* she wore,
 Which *Jews* might kiss, and Infidels adore.
 Her lively Looks a sprightly Mind disclose,
 Quick as her Eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
 Favours to none, to all she Smiles extends,
 Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
 Bright as the Sun, her Eyes the Gazers strike,
 And, like the Sun, they shine on all alike.
 Yet graceful Ease, and Sweetness void of Pride,
 Might hide her Faults, if *Belles* had Faults to hide:
 If to her share some Female Errors fall,
 Look on her Face, and you'll forget 'em all.
 This Nymph, to the Destruction of Mankind,
 Nourish'd two Locks which graceful hung behind
 In equal Curls, and well conspir'd to deck
 With shining Ringlets the smooth Iv'ry Neck.
 Love in these Labyrinths his Slaves detains,
 And mighty Hearts are held in slender Chains.
 With hairy sprindges we the Birds betray,
 Slight lines of Hair surprise the Finny Prey,
 Fair Tresses Man's Imperial Race insnare,
 And Beauty draws us with a single Hair.
 Th' Advent'rous *Baron* the bright Locks admir'd,
 He saw, he wish'd, and to the Prize aspir'd:
 Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
 By Force to ravish, or by Fraud betray;
 For when Success a Lover's Toil attends,
 Few ask, if Fraud or Force attain'd his Ends.
 For this, ere Phoebus rose, he had implor'd
 Propitious Heav'n, and ev'ry Power ador'd,

But chiefly *Love-to Love* an Altar built,
Of twelve vast *French* Romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three Garters, half a Pair of Gloves,
And all the Trophies of his former Loves.
With tender *Billet-doux* he lights the Pyre,
And breathes three am'rous Sighs to raise the Fire.
Then Prostrate falls, and begs with ardent Eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the Prize:
The Pow'rs gave Ear, and granted half his Pray'r,
The rest, the Winds dispers'd in empty Air.
But now secure the painted Vessel glides,
The Sun-beams trembling on the floating Tydes,
While Musick steals upon the Sky,
And soften'd Sounds along the Waters die.
Smooth flow the Waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd, and all the World was gay.
All but the *Sylph*-With careful Thoughts opprest,
Th' impending Woe sat heavy on his Breast.
He summons straight his Denizens of Air;
The lucid Squadrons round the Sails repair:
Soft o'er the Shrouds Aerial Whispers breath,
That seem'd but Zephyrs to the Train beneath.
Some to the Sun their Insect-Wings unfold,
Waft on the Breeze, or sink in Clouds of Gold.
Transparent Forms, too fine for mortal Sight,
Their fluid Bodies half dissolv'd in Light.
Loose to the Wind their airy Garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring Textures of the filmy Dew;
Dipt in the richest Tincture of the Skies,
Where Light disports in ever-mingling Dies,
While ev'ry Beam new transient Colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their Wings.
Amid the Circle, on the gilded mast,
Superiour by the Head, was *Ariel* plac'd:
His Purple Pinions op'ning to the Sun,
He rais'd his Azure Wand, and thus begun.
Ye *Sylphs* and *Sylphids*, to your Chief give ear,
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Daemons hear!

Ye know the Spheres and various Tasks assign'd
 By Laws Eternal to th' Aerial Kind.
 Some in the Fields of purest *Aether* play,
 And bask and whiten in the Blaze of Day.
 Some guide the Course of wand'ring Orbs on high,
 Or roll the Planets through the boundless Sky.
 Some less refin'd, beneath the Moon's pale Light
 Pursue the Stars that shoot athwart the Night;
 Or suck the Mists in grosser Air below,
 Or dip their Pinions in the painted Bow,
 Or brew fierce Tempests on the wintry Main,
 Or o'er the Glebe distil the kindly Rain.
 Others on Earth o'er human Race preside,
 Watch all their Ways, and all their Actions guide:
 Of these the Chief the Care of Nations own,
 And guard with Arms Divine the *British Throne*.
 Our humbler Province is to tend the Fair,
 Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious Care.
 To save the Powder from too rude a Gale,
 Nor let th' imprison'd Essences exhale;
 To draw fresh Colours from the vernal Flow'rs,
 To steal from Rainbows ere they drop in Show'rs
 A brighter Wash; to curl their waving Hairs,
 Assist their Blushes, and inspire their Airs;
 Nay oft, in Dreams, Invention we bestow,
 To change a Flounce, or add a *Furbelo*!
 This Day, black Omens threat the brightest Fair
 That e'er deserv'd a watchful Spirit's Care;
 Some dire Disaster, or by Force, of Slight,
 But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt in Night.
 Whether the Nymph shall break Diana's law,
 Or some frail *China* jar receive a Flaw,
 Or stain her Honour, or her new Brocade,
 Forget her Pray'rs, or miss a Masquerade,
 Or lose her Heart, or Necklace, at a Ball;
 Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that *Shock* must fall.
 Haste then ye Spirits! to your Charge repair;
 The flutt'ring Fan be *Zephyretta's* Care;

The Drops to thee, *Brillante*, we consign;
And, *Momentilla*, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, *Crispissa*, tend her fav'rite Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of *Shock*
To Fifty chosen *Sylphs*, of special Note,
We trust th' important Charge, the *Petticoat*:
Oft have we known that sev'nfold Fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with Hoops, and arm'd with Ribs of Whale.
Form a strong Line about the Silver Bound,
And guard the wide Circumference around.
Whatever Spirit, careless of his Charge,
His Post neglects, or leaves the Fair at large,
Shall feel sharp Vengeance soon o'ertake his Sins,
Be stop'd in *Vials*, or transfixt with *Pins*;
Or plung'd in Lakes of bitter *Washes* lie,
Or wedg'd whole Ages in a Bodkin's Eye:
Gums and *Pomatumms* shall his Flight restrain,
While clog'd he beats his silken Wings in vain;
Or *Alom-Stypticks* with contracting Pow'r
Shrink his thin Essence like a rivell'd Flower.
Or, as *Ixion* fix'd, the Wretch shall feel
The giddy Motion of the whirling Mill,
Midst Fumes of burning Chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the Sea that froaths below!
He spoke; the Spirits from the Sails descend;
Some, Orb in Orb, around the Nymph extend,
Some thrid the mazy Ringlets of her Hair,
Some hang upon the Pendants of her Ear;
With beating Hearts the dire Event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the Birth of Fate.

Canto III

Close by those Meads for ever crown'd with Flow'rs,
Where *Thames* with Pride surveys his rising Tow'rs,
There stands a Structure of Majestic Fame,
Which from the neighb'ring *Hampton* takes its Name.

Her *Britain's* Statesmen oft the Fall foredoom
 Of foreign Tyrants, and of Nymphs at home;
 Here Thou, great *Anna!* whom three Realms obey,
 Dost sometimes Counsel take-and sometimes *Tea*.
 Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs resort,
 To taste awhile the Pleasures of a Court;
 In various Talk th' instructive Hours they past,
 Who gave a *Ball*, or paid the *Visit* last:
 One speaks the Glory of the *British Queen*,
 And one describes a charming *Indian Screen*;
 A third interprets Motions, Looks, and Eyes;
 At every Word a Reputation dies.
Snuff, or the *Fan*, supply each Pause of Chat,
 With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that*.
 Mean while, declining from the Noon of Day,
 The Sun obliquely shoots his burning Ray;
 The hungry Judges soon the Sentence sign,
 And Wretches hang that Jury-men may Dine;
 The Merchant from th' *Exchange* returns in Peace,
 And the long Labours of the Toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom Thirst of Fame invites,
 Burns to encounter two adventurous Knights,
 At *Ombre* singly to decide their Doom;
 And swells her Breast with Conquests yet to come.
 Straight the three Bands prepare in Arms to join,
 Each Band the number of the Sacred Nine.
 Soon as she spreads her Hand, th' Aerial Guard
 Descend, and sit on each important Card:
 First *Ariel* perch'd upon a *Matadore*,
 Then each, according to the Rank they bore;
 For *Sylphs*, yet mindful of their ancient Race,
 Are, as when women, wond'rous fond of Place.
 Behold, four *Kings*, in Majesty rever'd,
 With hoary Whiskers and a forky Beard;
 And four fair *Queens* whose Hands sustain a Flow'r,
 Th' expressive Emblem of their softer Pow'r;
 Four *Knaves* in Garbs succinct, a trusty Band;
 Caps on their heads, and Halberds in their hand;

And particolour'd Troops, a shining Train,
Draw forth to combat on the Velvet Plain.
The skilful Nymph reviews her Force with Care;
Let Spades be Trumps! she said, and Trumps they were.
Now move to War her Sable *Matadores*,
In show like Leaders of the swarthy *Moors*.
Spadillio first, unconquerable Lord!
Let off two captive Trumps, and swept the Board.
As many more *Manillio* forc'd to yield,
And march'd a Victor from the verdant Field.
Him *Basto* follow'd, but his Fate more hard
Gain'd but one Trump and one *Plebian* card.
With his broad Sabre next, a Chief in Years,
The hoary Majesty of *Spades* appears;
Puts forth one manly Leg, to sight reveal'd,
The rest, his many-colour'd Robe conceal'd.
The Rebel-*Knave*, that dares his Prince engage,
Proves the just Victim of his Royal Rage.
Ev'n mighty *Pam*, that Kings and Queens o'erthrew,
And mow'd down Armies in the Fights of *Lu*,
Sad Chance of War! now, destitute of Aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the Victor *Spade!*
Thus far both Armies to *Belinda* yield;
Now to the *Baron* Fate inclines the Field.
His warlike *Amazon* her Host invades,
Th' Imperial Consort of the Crown of *Spades*.
The *Club's* black Tyrant first her Victim dy'd,
Spite of his haughty Mien, and barb'rous Pride:
What boots the Regal Circle on his Head,
His Giant Limbs, in State unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous Robe,
And of all Monarchs only grasps the Globe?
The *Baron* now his *Diamonds* pours apace;
Th' embroider'd *King* who shows but half his Face,
And his refulgent *Queen*, with pow'rs combin'd,
Of broken Troops an easy Conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild Disorder seen,
With Throngs promiscuous strew the level Green.

Thus when dispers'd a routed Army runs,
 Of *Asia's* Troops, and *Afric's* Sable Sons,
 With like Confusion different Nations fly,
 In various Habits, and of various Dye,
 The pierc'd Battalions dis-united fall,
 In Heaps on Heaps; one Fate o'erwhelms them all.
 The *Knave* of *Diamonds* tries his wily Arts,
 And wins (oh shameful Chance!) the *Queen* of *Hearts*.
 At this, the Blood the Virgin's Check forsook,
 A livid Paleness spreads o'er all her Look;
 She sees, and trembles at th' approaching Ill,
 Just in the Jaws of Ruin, and *Codille*.
 And now (as oft in some distemper'd State)
 On one nice *Trick* depends the gen'ral Fate,
 An *Ace* of Hearts steps forth: The *King* unseen
 Lurk'd in her Hand, and mourn'd his captive *Queen*.
 He springs to Vengeance with an eager Pace,
 And falls like Thunder on the prostrate *Ace*
 The Nymph exulting fills with Shouts the Sky;
 The Walls, the Woods, and long Canals reply.
 Oh thoughtless Mortals! ever blind to Fate,
 Too soon dejected, and too soon elate!
 Sudden these Honours shall be snatch'd away,
 And curs'd for ever this Victorious Day.
 For lo! the Board with Cups and Spoons is crown'd,
 The Berries crackle, and the Mill turns round;
 On shining Altars of *Japan* they raise
 The silver Lamp, and fiery Spirits blaze:
 From silver Spouts the grateful Liquors glide,
 And *China's* earth receives the smoking Tyde.
 At once they gratify their Scent and Taste,
 While frequent Cups prolong the rich Repast.
 Strait hover round the Fair her Airy Band;
 Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming Liquor fann'd,
 Some o'er her Lap their careful Plumes display'd,
 Trembling, and conscious of the rich Brocade.
Coffee (which makes the Politician wise,
 And see through all things with his half-shut Eyes)

Sent up in Vapours to the *Baron's* Brain
New Stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah cease rash Youth! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of *Scylla's* Fate!
Chang'd to a Bird, and sent to flit in Air,
She dearly pays for *Nisus'* injur'd Hair!
But when to Mischief Mortals bend their Will,
How soon they find fit Instruments of Ill!
Just then, *Clarissa* drew with tempting Grace
A two-edg'd Weapon from her shining Case;
So Ladies in Romance assist their Knight,
Present the Spear, and arm him for the Fight.
He takes the Gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little Engine on his Fingers' Ends;
This just behind *Belinda's* Neck he spread
As o'er the fragrant Steams she bends her Head:
Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprights repair,
A thousand Wings, by turns, blow back the Hair;
And thrice they twitch'd the Diamond in her Ear,
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the Foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious *Ariel* sought
The close Recesses of the Virgin's thought;
As on the Nosegay in her Breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' Ideas rising in her Mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her Art,
An Earthly Lover lurking at her Heart.
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his Power expir'd,
Resign'd to Fate, and with a Sigh retir'd.
The *Peer* now spreads the glittering *Forfex* wide,
T' inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal Engine clos'd,
A wretched *Sylph* too fondly interpos'd;
Fate urged the Sheers, and cut the *Sylph* in twain,
(But Airy Substance soon unites again)
The meeting Points the sacred Hair dis sever
From the fair Head, for ever and for ever!
Then flah'd the living Lightnings from her Eyes,
And Screams of Horror rend th' affrighted Skies.

Not louder Shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast,
 When Husbands, or when Lapdogs breath their last,
 Or when rich *China* Vessels, fal'n from high,
 In glitt'ring Dust and painted Fragments lie!
 Let Wreaths of Triumph now my Temples twine,
 (The Victor cry'd) the glorious Prize is mine!
 While Fish in Streams, or Birds delight in Air,
 Or in a Coach and Six the *British* Fair,
 As long as *Atalantis* shall be read,
 Or the small Pillow grace a Lady's Bed,
 While *Visits* shall be paid on solemn Days,
 When num'rous Wax-lights in bright Order blaze,
 While Nymphs take Treats, or Assignations give,
 So long my Honour, Name, and Praise shall live!
 What Time would spare, from Steel receives its date,
 And Monuments, like Men, submit to Fate!
 Steel cou'd the Labour of the Gods destroy,
 And strike to Dust th' Imperial Tow'rs of *Troy*;
 Steel cou'd the Works of mortal Pride confound,
 And hew Triumphal Arches to the Ground.
 What Wonder then, fair Nymph! thy Hair shou'd feel
 The conqu'ring Force of unresisted Steel?

Canto IV

But anxious Cares the pensive Nymph oppress'd,
 And secret Passions labour'd in her Breast.
 Not youthful Kings in Battle seiz'd alive,
 Not scornful Virgins who their Charms survive,
 Not ardent Lovers robb'd of all their Bliss,
 Not ancient Ladies when refus'd a Kiss,
 Not Tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
 Not *Cynthia* when her *Manteau's* pinn'd awry,
 E'er felt such Rage, Resentment, and Despair,
 As Thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd Hair.
 For, that sad moment, when the *Sylphs* withdrew,
 And *Ariel* weeping from *Belinda* flew,

Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy Sprite,
As ever sully'd the fair Face of Light,
Down to the Central Earth, his proper Scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy Cave of *Spleen*.
Swift on his sooty Pinions flits the *Gnome*,
And in a Vapour reach'd the dismal Dome.
No cheerful Breeze this sullen Region knows,
The dreaded *East* is all the Wind that blows.
Here in a Grotto, shelter'd close from Air,
And screen'd in Shades from Day's detested Glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive Bed,
Pain at her Side, and *Megrim* at her Head.
Two Handmaids wait the Throne: Alike in Place,
But differing far in Figure and in Face.
Here stood *Ill-nature* like an *ancient Maid*,
Her wrinkled form in *Black* and *White* array'd;
With store of Pray'rs, for Mornings, Nights, and Noons,
Her Hand is fill'd; her Bosom with Lampoons.
There *Affectation* with a sickly Mien,
Shows in her Cheek the Roses of Eighteen,
Practis'd to Lisp, and hang the Head aside,
Faints into Airs, and languishes with Pride;
On the rich Quilt sinks with becoming Woe,
Wrapt in a Gown, for Sickness, and for Show.
The Fair ones feel such Maladies as these,
When each new Night-Dress gives a new Disease.
A constant *Vapour* o'er the Palace flies;
Strange Phantoms rising as the Mists arise;
Dreadful, as Hermits' Dreams in haunted Shades,
Or bright, as Visions of expiring Maids.
Now glaring Fiends, and Snakes on rolling Spires,
Pale Spectres, gaping Tombs, and Purple Fires:
Now Lakes of liquid Gold, *Elysian* Scenes,
And Crystal Domes, and Angels in Machines.
Unnumber'd Throngs, on ev'ry side are seen,
Of Bodies chang'd to various forms by *Spleen*.
Here living *Teapots* stand, one Arm held out,
One bent; the Handle this, and that the Spout:

A Pipkin there like *Homer's Tripod* walks;
 Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pye talks;
 Men prove with Child, as pow'rful Fancy works,
 And Maids turn'd Bottels, call aloud for Corks.
 Safe past the *Gnome* through this fantastic Band,
 A branch of healing *Spleenwort* in his Hand.
 Then thus address the Pow'r-Hail wayward Queen;
 Who rule the Sex to Fifty from Fifteen,
 Parent of Vapors and of Female Wit,
 Who give th' *Hysteric* or *Poetic* Fit,
 On various Tempers act by various Ways,
 Make some take Physic, others scribble Plays;
 Who cause the Proud their Visits to delay,
 And send the Godly in a Pett, to pray.
 A Nymph there is, that all thy pow'r disdains,
 And thousands more in equal Mirth maintains.
 But oh! if e'er thy *Gnome* could spoil a Grace,
 Or raise a Pimple on a beauteous Face,
 Like Citron-Waters Matrons' Cheeks inflame,
 Or change Complexions at a losing Game;
 If e'er with airy Horns I planted Heads,
 Or rumbled Petticoats, or tumbled Beds,
 Or cause'd Suspicion when no Soul was rude,
 Or discompos'd the Head-Dress of a Prude,
 Or e'er to costive Lap-Dog gave Disease,
 Which not the Tears of brightest Eyes could ease:
 Hear me, and touch *Belinda* with Chagrin;
 That single Act gives half the World the Spleen.
 The Goddess with a discontented Air
 Seems to reject him, tho' she grants his Pray'r.
 A wond'rous Bag with both her Hands she binds,
 Like that where once *Ulysses* held the Winds;
 There she collects the Force of Female Lungs,
 Sighs, Sobs, and Passions, and the War of Tongues.
 A Vial next she fills with fainting Fears,
 Soft Sorrows, melting Griefs, and flowing Tears.
 The *Gnome* rejoicing bears her Gift away,
 Spreads his black Wings, and slowly mounts to Day.

Sunk in *Thalestris*' Arms the Nymph he found,
Her Eyes dejected, and her Hair unbound.
Full o'er their Heads the swelling Bag he rent,
And all the Furies issu'd at the Vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal Ire,
And fierce *Thalestris* fans the rising Fire.
O wretched Maid! she spread her Hands, and cry'd,
(While *Hampton's* Ecchoes, wretched Maid! reply'd)
Was it for this you took such constant Care
The *Bodkin*, *Comb* and *Essence* to prepare;
For this your Locks in Paper-Durance bound,
For this with tort'ring Irons wreath'd around!
For this with Fillets strain'd your tender Head,
And bravely bore the double Loads of Lead?
Gods! shall the Ravisher display your Hair,
While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrivall'd Shrine
Ease, Pleasure, Virtue, All, our Sex resign.
Methinks already I your Tears survey,
Already hear the horrid Things they say,
Already see you a degraded Toast,
And all your Honour in a Whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your hapless Fame defend?
'Twill then be Infamy to seem your Friend!
And shall this Prize, th' inestimable Prize,
Expos'd through Crystal to the gazing Eyes,
And heighten'd by the Diamond's circling Rays,
On that Rapacious Hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall Grass in *Hide-Park Circus* grow,
And Wits take Lodgings in the sound of *Bow*;
Sooner let Earth, Air, Sea, to *Chaos* fall,
Men, Monkeys, Lap-dogs, Parrots, perish all!
She said; then raging to Sir *Plume* repairs,
And bids her *Beau* demand the precious Hairs:
(Sir *Plume*, of *Amber Snuff-box* justly vain,
And the nice Conduct of a *Clouded Cane*)
With earnest Eyes and round unthinking Face,
He first the Snuff-box open's, then the Case,

And thus broke out – "My Lord, why, what the Devil!
 "Z——ds! damn the Lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
 "Plague on't! 'tis past a Jest—nay, prithee, Pox!
 "Give her the Hair" – he spoke, and rapp'd his Box.
 It grieves me much (replied the Peer again)
 Who speaks so well shou'd ever speak in vain.
 But by this Lock, this sacred Lock I swear,
 (Which never more shall join its parted Hair;
 Which never more its Honours shall renew,
 Clipp'd from the lovely Head where late it grew)
 That while my Nostrils draw the vital Air,
 This Hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.
 He spoke, and speaking, in proud Triumph spread
 The long-contended Honours of her Head.
 But *Umbriel*, hateful *Gnome*! forbears not so;
 He breaks the Vial whence the Sorrows flow.
 Then see! the Nymph in beauteous Grief appears,
 Her Eyes half-languishing, half-drown'd in Tears;
 On her heav'd Bosom hung her drooping Head,
 Which with a Sigh, she rais'd; and thus she said.
 For ever curs'd be this detested Day,
 Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite Curl away!
 Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,
 If *Hampton-Court* these Eyes had never seen!
 Yet am not I the first mistaken Maid,
 By love of *Courts* to num'rous Ills betray'd.
 Oh had I rather unadmir'd remain'd
 In some lone Isle, or distant *Northern* land;
 Where the gilt *Chariot* never mark'd the way,
 Where none learn *Ombre*, none e'er taste *Bohea*!
 There kept my Charms conceal'd from the mortal Eye,
 Like Roses that in Desarts bloom and die.
 What mov'd my Mind with youthful Lords to rome?
 O had I stay'd, and said my Pray'rs at home!
 'Twas this the Morning *Omens* did foretel;
 Thrice from my trembling Hand the *Patch-box* fell;
 The tott'ring *China* shook without a Wind,
 Nay, *Poll* sate mute, and *Shock* was most Unkind!

A *Sylph* too warn'd me of the Threats of Fate,
In mystic Visions, now believ'd too late!
See the poor Remnants of these slighted Hairs!
My Hands shall rend what ev'n thy Rapine spares.
These, in two sable Ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new Beauties to the snowy Neck.
The Sister-Lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its Fellow's Fate foresees its own;
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal Sheers demands;
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious Hands.
Oh hadst thou, Cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any Hairs but these!

Canto V

She said: The pitying Audience melt in Tears,
But *Fate* and *Jove* had stopp'd the *Baron's* Ears.
In vain *Thalestris* with Reproach assails,
For who can move when fair *Belinda* fails?
Not half so fix'd the *Trojan* could remain,
While *Anna* begg'd and *Dido* rag'd in vain.
Then grave *Clarissa* graceful wav'd her Fan;
Silence ensu'd, and thus the Nymph began.
Say, why are Beauties prais'd and honour'd most,
The Wise Man's Passion, and the Vain Man's Toast?
Why deck'd with all that Land and Sea afford,
Why Angels call'd, and Angel-like ador'd?
Why round our Coaches crowd the white-gloved Beaux,
Why bows the Side-box from its inmost Rows?
How vain are all these Glories, all our Pains,
Unless good Sense preserve what Beauty gains:
That Men may say, when we the Front-box grace,
Behold the first in Virtue as in Face!
Oh! if to dance all Night, and dress all Day,
Charm'd the Small-pox, or chas'd old Age away;
Who would not scorn what Housewife's Cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly Thing of Use?

To patch, nay ogle, might become a Saint,
 Nor could it sure be such a Sin to paint.
 But since, alas! frail Beauty must decay,
 Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to grey;
 Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
 And she who scorns a Man, must die a Maid,
 What then remains but well our Pow'r to use,
 And keep good Humour still whate'er we lose?
 And trust me, dear! good Humour can prevail,
 When Airs, and Flights, and Screams, and Scolding fail.
 Beauties in vain their pretty Eyes may roll;
 Charms strike the Sight, but Merit wins the Soul.
 So spoke the Dame, but no Applause ensu'd:
Belinda frown'd, *Thalestris* call'd her Prude.
 To Arms, to Arms! the fierce Virago cries,
 And swift as Lightning to the Combate flies.
 All side in Parties, and begin th' Attack;
 Fans clap, Silks rustle, and tough Whalebones crack;
 Heroes' and Heroins' Shouts confus'dly rise,
 And base, and treble Voices strike the Skies.
 No common Weapons in their Hands are found,
 Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal Wound.
 So when bold *Homer* makes the Gods engage,
 And heav'nly Breasts with human Passions rage;
 'Gainst *Pallas*, *Mars*; *Latona*, *Hermes*, Arms;
 And all *Olympus* rings with loud Alarms.
Jove's Thunder roars, Heav'n trembles all around;
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing Deeps resound;
Earth shakes her nodding Tow'rs, the Ground gives way,
 And the pale Ghosts start at the Flash of Day!
 Triumphant *Umbriel* on a Sconce's Height
 Clapp'd his glad Wings, and sate to view the Fight,
 Propp'd on their Bodkin Spears the Sprites survey
 The growing Combat, or assist the Fray.
 While through the Press enrag'd *Thalestris* flies,
 And scatters Death around from both her Eyes,
 A *Beau* and *Witling* perish'd in the Throng,
 One dy'd in *Metaphor*, and one in *Song*.

O cruel Nymph! a living death I bear,
Cried *Dapperwit*, and sunk beside his Chair.
A mournful Glance Sir *Fopling* upwards cast,
Those eyes are made so killing – was his last:
Thus on *Meander's* flow'ry Margin lies
Th' expiring Swan, and as he sings he dies.
As bold Sir *Plume* had drawn *Clarissa* down,
Chloe stepp'd in, and kill'd him with a Frown;
She smil'd to see the doughty Hero slain,
But at her Smile, the Beau reviv'd again.
Now *Jove* suspends his golden Scales in Air,
Weighs the Men's Wits against the Lady's Hair;
The doubtful Beam long nods from side to side;
At length the Wits mount up, the Hairs subside.
See fierce *Belinda* on the *Baron* flies,
With more than usual Lightning in her Eyes:
Nor fear'd the Chief th' unequal Fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his Foe to die.
But this bold Lord, with manly Strength endu'd,
She with one Finger and a Thumb subdu'd:
Just where the Breath of Life his Nostrils drew,
A charge of *Snuff* the wily Virgin threw;
The *Gnomes* direct, to ev'ry Atome just,
The pungent Grains of titillating Dust,
Sudden, with starting Tears each Eye o'erflows,
And the high Dome re-ecchoes to his Nose.
Now meet thy Fate, incens'd *Belinda* cry'd,
And drew a deadly *Bodkin* from her Side.
(The same, his ancient Personage to deck,
Her great great Grandsire wore about his Neck
In three *Seal-Rings*; which after melted down,
Form'd a vast *Buckle* for his Widow's Gown:
Her infant Grandame's *Whistle* next it grew,
The Bells she gingled, and the *Whistle* blew;
Then in a *Bodkin* grac'd her Mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now *Belinda* wears.)
Boast not my Fall (he cry'd) insulting Foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low.

Nor think, to die dejects my lofty Mind.
 All that I dread, is leaving you behind!
 Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
 And burn in *Cupid's* Flames-but burn alive.
Restore the Lock! she cries; and all around
Restore the Lock! the Vaulted Roofs rebound.
 Not fierce *Othello* in so loud a Strain
 Roar'd for the Handkerchief that caus'd his Pain.
 But see how oft Ambitious Aims are cross'd,
 And Chiefs contend 'till all the Prize is lost!
 The Lock, obtain'd with Guilt, and kept with Pain,
 In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
 With such a Prize no Mortal must be blest,
 So Heav'n decrees! with Heav'n who can contest?
 Some thought it mounted to the Lunar Sphere,
 Since all things lost on Earth, are treasur'd there.
 There Heroe's Wits are kept in pond'rous Vases,
 And Beau's in *Smuff-boxes* and *Tweezer-cases*.
 There broken Vows, and Death-bed Alms are found,
 And Lovers' Hearts with Ends of Riband bound;
 The Courtier's Promises, and the Sick Man's Pray'rs,
 The Smiles of Harlots, and the Tears of Heirs,
 Cages for Gnats, and Chains to Yoak a Flea;
 Dried Butterflies, and Tomes of Casuistry.
 But trust the Muse-she saw it upward rise,
 Tho' marked by none but quick Poetic eyes:
 (So *Rome's* great Founder to the Heav'ns withdrew,
 To *Proculus* alone confess'd in view.)
 A sudden Star, it shot through liquid Air,
 And drew behind a radiant *Trail of Hair*.
 Not *Berenice's* Locks first rose so bright,
 The Skies bespangling with dishevel'd Light.
 The *Sylphs* behold it kindling as it flies,
 And pleas'd pursue its Progress through the Skies.
 This the Beau-monde shall from the *Mall survey*,
 And hail with *Musick* its propitious Ray.
 This the blest Lover shall for *Venus* take,
 And send up Vows from *Rosamonda's* Lake.

This *Partridge* soon shall view in cloudless Skies
When next he looks through *Gallileo's* Eyes;
And hence th' Egregious Wizard shall foredoom
The fate of *Louis*, and the fall of *Rome*.
Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn the ravish'd Hair
Which adds new Glory to the shining Sphere!
Not all the Tresses that fair Head can boast
Shall draw such Envy as the Lock you lost.
For, after all the Murders of your Eye,
When, after Millions slain, yourself shall die;
When those fair Suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those Tresses shall be laid in dust;
This *Lock*, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe *Belinda's* Name!

(1712)

(1714)

From *An Essay on Man*
Epistle I. Of the Nature and State of Man,
With Respect to the Universe

VIII.

See thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth
All matter quick, and bursting into birth:
Above, how high progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began;
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, who no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee;
From thee to nothing. – On superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed:
From Nature's chain whatever link you like,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.



ALEXANDER POPE

And if each system in gradation roll,
Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the Whole must fall.
Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
Planets and stars run lawless thro' the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And Nature tremble to the throne of God!
All this dread order break – for whom? for thee?
Vile worm! – O madness! pride! impiety!

(1733)

JAMES THOMSON
(1700–1748)

Thomson was born in 1700 in Ednam, Roxburghshire near the Scottish boundary with England. He received a Scottish Calvinist upbringing from his father, who was a Presbyterian minister. Thomson studied at the College of Edinburgh (which later became the University of Edinburgh). His early writing clearly showed his fondness for rustic scenes. In 1725 he went to London, where he met other literary figures including Alexander Pope. He wrote *Winter* the first of his *Seasons*, which was published in 1726, and soon became popular. He published *Summer* (1727), *Spring* (1728), and *Autumn* in the first collected edition of *The Seasons* (1730), to which he also added the *Hymn to the Seasons*. Thomson continued to revise and add to this poem, which gradually grew in length to 5,541 lines. *Seasons* is a didactic poem consisting of four parts presenting the seasonal cycle which combines empirical description of the natural world through a belief in the workings of Divine Providence. The poem continued to be popular well into the Romantic period, and was printed fifty times between 1730 and 1800. Thomson also produced a series of tragedies, *Sophonisba* (1730), *Agamemnon* (1738), *Edward and Eleonora* (1739), but his last two plays *Sigismunda* (1745) and *Coriolanus* (1749) were produced after his death. His last poem *The Castle of Indolence* (1748) contains a portrait of himself as an inmate of the castle and is a witty imitation of Edmund Spenser.

The Seasons: Winter
(Excerpt ll. 1–16)

See, Winter comes to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train –
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my theme,
These, that exalt the soul to solemn thought
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms!
Congenial horrors, hail! With frequent foot,
Pleas'd have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nurs'd by careless solitude I liv'd

And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
 Pleas'd have I wander'd through your rough domain;
 Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
 Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst;
 Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd
 In the grim evening-sky. Thus pass'd the time,
 Till through the lucid chambers of the south
 Look'd out the joyous Spring—look'd out and smil'd.

(1726)

The Seasons: Summer
 (Excerpt ll. 352–411)

Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead;
 The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
 Healthful and strong; full as the summer-rose
 Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid,
 Half-naked, swelling on the sight, and all
 Her kindled graces burning o'er her cheek.
 Even stooping age is here; and infant-hands
 Trail the long rake, or with the fragrant load
 O'ercharg'd, amid the kind oppression roll.
 Wide flies the tedded grain; all in a row
 Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,
 They spread the breathing harvest to the sun
 That throws refreshful round a rural smell;
 Or, as they rake the green-appearing ground,
 And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
 The russet hay-cock rises thick behind,
 In order gay: while, heard from dale to dale,
 Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
 Of happy labour, love, and social glee.

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,
 They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
 Compell'd, to where the mazy-running brook
 Forms a deep pool; this bank abrupt and high,
 And that fair-spreading in a pebbled shore.

Urg'd to the giddy brink, much is the toil,
The clamour much of men, and boys, and dogs,
Ere the soft, fearful people to the flood
Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
On some impatient seizing, hurls them in:
Embolden'd then, nor hesitating more,
Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
And, panting, labour to the farther shore.
Repeated this, till deep the well-wash'd fleece
Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt
The trout is banish'd by the sordid stream;
Heavy, and dripping, to the breezy brow
Slow move the harmless race; where, as they spread
Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
Inly disturb'd, and wondering what this wild
Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints
The country fill; and, toss'd from rock to rock,
Incessant bleatings run around the hills.
At last, of snowy white, the gather'd flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerable press'd,
Head above head; and, rang'd in lusty rows,
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.
The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,
With all her gay-dress'd maids attending round.
One, chief, in gracious dignity enthron'd,
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and rays
Her smiles, sweet-beaming, on her shepherd-king;
While the glad circle round them yield their souls
To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.
Meantime, their joyous task goes on apace:
Some mingling stir the melted tar, and some,
Deep on the new-shorn vagrant's heaving side
To stamp his master's cipher ready stand;
Others the unwilling wether drag along;
And, glorying in his might, the sturdy boy
Holds by the twisted horns th' indignant ram.

(1727)

The Seasons: Spring
(Excerpt ll. 1–18)

At last from Aries rolls the bounteous sun,
 And the bright Bull receives him. Then no more
 Th' expansive atmosphere is cramp'd with cold;
 But, full of life and vivifying soul,
 Lifts the light clouds sublime, and spreads them thin,
 Fleecy and white, o'er all-surrounding heaven.
 Forth fly the tepid airs; and unconfin'd,
 Unbinding earth, the moving softness strays.
 Joyous, th' impatient husbandman perceives
 Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers
 Drives from their stalls, to where the well-us'd plough
 Lies in the furrow, loosen'd from the frost.
 There, unrefusing, to the harness'd yoke,
 They lend their shoulder, and begin their toil,
 Cheer'd by the simple song and soaring lark.
 Meanwhile incumbent o'er the shining share
 The master leans, removes th' obstructing clay,
 Winds the whole work, and sidelong lays the glebe.

(1728)

The Seasons: Autumn
(Excerpt ll. 1–33)

Defeating oft the labours of the year,
 The sultry South collects a potent blast.
 At first, the groves are scarcely seen to stir
 Their trembling tops; and a still murmur runs
 Along the soft-inclining fields of corn.
 But as th' aerial tempest fuller swells,
 And in one mighty stream, invisible,
 Immense, the whole excited atmosphere
 Impetuous rushes o'er the sounding world;
 Strain'd to the root, the stooping forest pours
 A rustling shower of yet untimely leaves.

JAMES THOMSON

High-beat, the circling mountains eddy in,
From the bare wild, the dissipated storm,
And send it in a torrent down the vale.
Expos'd and naked to its utmost rage,
Through all the sea of harvest rolling round,
The billowy plain floats wide; nor can evade,
Though pliant to the blast, its seizing force;
Or whirl'd in air, or into vacant chaff
Shook waste. And sometimes too a burst of rain,
Swept from the black horizon, broad, descends
In one continuous flood. Still overhead
The mingling tempest weaves its gloom, and still
The deluge deepens; till the fields around
Lie sunk and flatted in the sordid wave.
Sudden, the ditches swell; the meadows swim.
Red, from the hills, innumerable streams
Tumultuous roar, and high above its banks
The river lift; before whose rushing tide,
Herds, flocks, and harvests, cottages and swains,
Roll mingled down; all that the winds had spar'd
In one wild moment ruin'd, the big hopes
And well-earn'd treasures of the painful year.

(1730)

THOMAS GRAY
(1716–1771)

Gray was educated at Eton with Horace Walpole, and at Cambridge. He accompanied Walpole on a tour of the Continent in 1739-41, but they quarrelled in 1741 and returned home separately. Their friendship was renewed in 1744. Gray then resided at Cambridge. He refused the laureateship in 1757, and was appointed professor of history and modern languages at Cambridge in 1768. He was buried at Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire, a village with which the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* is traditionally identified. The “Elegy” was recognized immediately for its beauty and skill, and the Churchyard Poets are so named because they wrote in the shadow of Gray’s great poem.

*Ode On the Death of a Favourite Cat,
Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes*

‘Twas on a lofty vase’s side,
Where China’s gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers, that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purred applause.

Still had she gazed; but ‘midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour’s Tyrian hue
Through richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by and smiled)
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in!

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mewed to every watery god,
Some speedy aid to send: -
No dolphin came, no Nereid stirred:
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard.
A favourite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold:
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts is lawful prize;
Nor all that glisters, gold!

(1748)

Ode on the Spring

Lo! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Fair Venus' train appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,

The untaught harmony of spring:
While whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,
Cool zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
Their gather'd fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader, browner shade;
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclin'd in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indigent the great!

Still is the toiling hand of Care:
The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how thro' the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gaily-gilded trim
Quick-glancing to the sun.

To Contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the busy and the gay
But flutter thro' life's little day,
In fortune's varying colours drest:
Brush'd by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chill'd by age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glitt'ring female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone –
We frolic, while 'tis May.

(1748)

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
 How jocund did they drive their team afield!
 How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
 Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
 If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
 Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
 Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
 Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
 Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample
 Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
 Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee who, mindful of the unhonoured dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
'Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
'To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
'That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
'His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
'And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

'Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
'Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
'Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
'Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

'One morn I missed him on the custom'd hill,
'Along the heath and near his favourite tree;
'Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
'Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

'The next with dirges due in sad array
'Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
'Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay,
'Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

THOMAS GRAY

The Epitaph

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

(1751)

ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD
(1743–1825)

Anna Barbault, born Anna Letitia Aikin, was born on June 20th, 1743. Her family lived near the village of Kibworth Harcourt, in Leicestershire. Her father, John Aikin, was a Presbyterian minister and schoolteacher. She made her literary debut with *Poems*, a work that went through five editions between 1773 and 1777, and immediately established her as a leading poet. In 1774 she married Rochemont Barbault, a dissenting minister, and with him co-managed a boarding school at Palgrave, in Suffolk. She was strongly in favour of abolition, as shown by her *Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. on the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade of 1791*. Mrs. Barbault became increasingly active in London literary circles. She edited the six volumes of Samuel Richardson's *Correspondence* (1804), and published a 50-volume collection, *The British Novelists* (1810), which included biographical essays and critical reviews. Anna Letitia Aikin Barbault's writing spans a wide range, from the poetry that brought her both acclaim and rebuffs, to her essays, literary reviews, educational writings, and political works. Oliver Goldsmith, the young Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth all admired her poetry. Barbault often wrote of home, of children, and of her faith, but she did so in an individual voice, speaking from personal conviction and generally avoiding clichés. Her educational and political writing also reflects her independence of thought, and strength of conviction.

To Mr. S. T. Coleridge

Midway the hill of Science, after steep
And rugged paths that tire th' unpractised feet,
A Grove extends, in tangled mazes wrought,
And fill'd with strange enchantment: – dubious shapes
Flit thro' dim glades, and lure the eager foot
Of youthful ardour to eternal chase.
Dreams hang on every leaf; unearthly forms
Glide thro' the gloom, and mystic visions swim

Before the cheated sense. Athwart the mists,
Far into vacant space, huge shadows stretch
And seem realities; while things of life,
Obvious to sight and touch, all glowing round
Fade to the hue of shadows. Scruples here
With filmy net, most like th' autumnal webs
Of floating Gossamer, arrest the foot
Of generous enterprize; and palsy hope
And fair ambition, with the chilling touch
Of sickly hesitation and blank fear.
Nor seldom Indolence these lawns among
Fixes her turf-built seat, and wears the garb
Of deep philosophy, and museful sits,
In dreamy twilight of the vacant mind,
Soothed by the whispering shade; for soothing soft
The shades; and vistas lengthening into air,
With moon beam rainbows tinted. Here each mind
Of finer mould, acute and delicate,
In its high progress to eternal truth
Rests for a space, in fairy bowers entranced;
And loves the softened light and tender gloom;
And, pampered with most unsubstantial food,
Looks down indignant on the grosser world,
And matter's cumbrous shapings. Youth below'd
Of Science—of the Muse below'd, not here,
Not in the maze of metaphysic lore
Build thou thy place of resting; lightly tread
The dangerous ground, on noble aims intent;
And be this Circe of the studious cell
Enjoyed, but still subservient. Active scenes
Shall soon with healthful spirit brace thy mind;
And fair exertion, for bright fame sustained,
For friends, for country, chase each spleen-fed fog
That blots the wide creation—
Now Heaven conduct thee with a Parent's love!

(1797)

(1799)

A Thought on Death

When life, as opening buds, is sweet,
And golden hopes the fancy greet,
And youth prepares his joys to meet,
 Alas! how hard it is to die!

When just is seiz'd some valu'd prize,
And duties press, and tender ties
Forbid the soul from earth to rise,
 How awful then it is to die!

When, one by one, those ties are torn,
And friend from friend is snatched forlorn,
And man is left alone to mourn,
 Ah! then, how easy 'tis to die!

When faith is firm, and conscience clear,
And words of peace the spirit cheer,
And vision'd glories half appear,
 'Tis joy, 'tis triumph, then to die!

When trembling limbs refuse their weight,
And films, slow gathering, dim the sight,
And clouds obscure the mental light,
 'Tis nature's precious boon to die!

(1821)

The Caterpillar

No, helpless thing, I cannot harm thee now;
Depart in peace, thy little life is safe,
For I have scanned thy form with curious eye,
Noted the silver line that streaks thy back,
The azure and the orange that divide
Thy velvet sides; thee, houseless wanderer,
My garment has enfolded, and my arm
Felt the light pressure of thy hairy feet;

Thou hast curled round my finger; from its tip,
Precipitous descent! with stretched out neck,
Bending thy head in airy vacancy,
This way and that, inquiring, thou hast seemed
To ask protection; now, I cannot kill thee.
Yet I have sworn perdition to thy race,
And recent from the slaughter am I come
Of tribes and embryo nations: I have sought
With sharpened eye and persecuting zeal,
Where, folded in their silken webs they lay
Thriving and happy; swept them from the tree
And crushed whole families beneath my foot;
Or, sudden, poured on their devoted heads
The vials of destruction. – This I've done
Nor felt the touch of pity: but when thou, –
A single wretch, escaped the general doom,
Making me feel and clearly recognise
Thine individual existence, life,
And fellowship of sense with all that breathes, –
Present'st thyself before me, I relent,
And cannot hurt thy weakness. – So the storm
Of horrid war, o'erwhelming cities, fields,
And peaceful villages, rolls dreadful on:
The victor shouts triumphant; he enjoys
The roar of cannon and the clang of arms,
And urges, by no soft relentings stopped,
The work of death and carnage. Yet should one,
A single sufferer from the field escaped,
Panting and pale, and bleeding at his feet,
Lift his imploring eyes, – the hero weeps;
He is grown human, and capricious Pity,
Which would not stir for thousands, melts for one
With sympathy spontaneous: – 'Tis not Virtue,
Yet 'tis the weakness of a virtuous mind.

(1825)

CHARLOTTE SMITH
(1749–1806)

Charlotte Turner Smith was born into a well-to-do family, and brought up in Southern England. At the early age of fourteen, she was married to Benjamin Smith. However, his wealth did not last and in 1783 he was imprisoned for debt. At that time she decided to publish some of her poems to support her ever-increasing family. Her first book published in 1784 with the bold title *Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Essays*, went through nine expanding editions in the following sixteen years. Charlotte put down her thoughts in the form of sonnets, helping to initiate a revival of the form, which had been out of fashion since the mid-1600s. Her poetry, famous for its melancholy and sadness, became highly popular in the following years. Major Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge were influenced by her poetical work. Coleridge in his 1796 introductory essay on the sonnet used Smith as a principle example and remarked that “those sonnets appear to me the most exquisite, in which moral Sentiments, Affections, or Feelings, are deduced from, and associated with, the scenery of Nature.” Thus Smith helped to originate one of the most distinctive genres of English literature that has been called “the greater Romantic lyric.” In the late 1780s Charlotte Smith began to write novels to earn money for her family. *Emmeline* was published in 1788, *Ethelinde* in 1789, then followed *Celestina* (1791), *Desmond* (1792) and *The Old Manor House* (1793). In 1806 Charlotte Turner Smith died at Tilford near Farnham in Surrey.

Written in the Church-yard at Middleton, in Sussex.

Press'd by the moon, mute arbitress of tides,
 While the loud equinox its power combines,
 The sea no more its swelling surge confines,
But o'er the shrinking land sublimely rides.
The wild blast, rising from the western cave,
 Drives the huge billows from their heaving bed;
 Tears from their grassy tombs the village dead,
And breaks the silent sabbath of the grave!

With shells and sea-weed mingled, on the shore,
 Lo! their bones whiten in the frequent wave;
 But vain to them the winds and waters rave;
They hear the warring elements no more:
While I am doom'd—by life's long storm opprest,
To gaze with envy on their gloomy rest.

(1789)

To The Shade Of Burns

Mute is thy wild harp, now, O bard sublime!
 Who, amid Scotia's mountain solitude,
Great Nature taught to "build the lofty rhyme,"
 And even beneath the daily pressure, rude,
 Of labouring poverty, thy generous blood,
 Fired with the love of freedom—Not subdued
Wert thou by thy low fortune: but a time
Like this we live in, when the abject chime
Of echoing parasite is best approved,
 Was not for thee—Indignantly is fled
Thy noble spirit; and no longer moved
 By all the ills o'er which thine heart has bled,
 Associate, worthy of the illustrious dead,
Enjoys with them "the liberty it loved."

(1796)

(1797)

Huge Vapours Brood above the Clifted Shore

Huge vapours brood above the clifted shore,
Night o'er the ocean settles, dark and mute,
Save where is heard the repercussive roar
Of drowsy billows, on the rugged foot
Of rocks remote; or still more distant tone
Of seamen, in the anchored bark, that tell
The watch relieved; or one deep voice alone,
Singing the hour, and bidding "strike the bell."



CHARLOTTE SMITH

All is black shadow, but the lucid line
Marked by the light surf on the level sand,
Or where afar, the ship-lights faintly shine
Like wandering fairy fires, that oft on land
Mislead the pilgrim; such the dubious ray
That wavering reason lends, in life's long darkling way.

(1797)



ROBERT BURNS
(1759–1796)

Burns was the son of a cottar, and educated by his father. He set to work as a farm labourer. He developed an inclination for literature early on. From 1784 to 1788 he farmed, and during this period wrote some of his best works (eg. *To a Mouse*). In 1786 he published the Kilmarnock edition of his early poems, which made him rather famous, and took him to Edinburgh, where he made the acquaintance of James Johnson, an engraver and music-seller, who was then engaged in preparing the *Scots Musical Museum*. Burns contributed two songs to this edition, and from the autumn of 1787 almost until his death, was largely literary and musical editor of the work. The second edition of his poems provided him with enough money to be able to settle down on a small farm at Ellisland, and to marry Jean Armour, one of his many loves. His inclination to convivial living gradually undermined his health, and he died in 1796. Burns is revered as a national poet by the Scottish nation. His talents were largely based on a native ballad tradition. Burns derived much of his inspiration from the past and old Scottish national music, in which he wrote new songs to old airs, thereby giving it a new, and artistically improved, expression. Through the use and refinement of his spoken Scottish dialect Burns strove to emulate the “glorious” revival of the Scottish bards of earlier times.

To A Mouse, On Turning Her Up In Her Nest With The Plough

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell-
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,
An'lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e.
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

(1786)

Green Grow the Rashes⁴³

Chor. – Green grow the rashes⁴⁴, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O.

1

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

2

The war'ly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.
Green grow, &c.

43 This is Burns's revision of a song long current in a number of versions, most of them bawdy.

44 Rashes

3

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O;
An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O!
Green grow, &c.

4

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this;
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O:
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

5

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:
Her prentice han' she try'd on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

(1787)

Holy Willie's Prayer

“And send the godly in a pet to pray.” – Pope.
Argument.

Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering, which ends in tipping orthodoxy, and for that spiritualised bawdiness which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline – a Mr. Gavin Hamilton – Holy Willie and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best; owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel; but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the county. On losing the process, the muse overheard him [Holy Willie] at his devotions, as follows: –

O Thou, who in the heavens does dwell,
Who, as it pleases best Thyself,
Sends ane to heaven an' ten to hell,
A' for Thy glory,
And no for ony gude or ill
They've done afore Thee!

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore Thy sight,
For gifts an' grace
A burning and a shining light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation,
I wha deserve most just damnation
For broken laws,
Five thousand years ere my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause?

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin lakes,
Where damned devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to their stakes.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar o' Thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, and example,
To a' Thy flock.

O Lord, Thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, an' swearers swear,
An' singin there, an' dancin here,
Wi' great and sma';
For I am keepit by Thy fear
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust:
An' sometimes, too, in wardly trust,
Vile self gets in:
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd wi' sin.

O Lord! yestreen, Thou kens, wi' Meg-
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
O! may't ne'er be a livin plague
To my dishonour,
An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun allow,
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times I trow-
But Lord, that Friday I was fou,
When I cam near her;
Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
Wad never steer her.

Maybe Thou lets this fleshly thorn
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre proud and high shou'd turn,
That he's sae gifted:
If sae, Thy han' maun e'en be borne,
Until Thou lift it.

Lord, bless Thy chosen in this place,
For here Thou hast a chosen race:
But God confound their stubborn face,
An' blast their name,
Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace
An' public shame.

Lord, mind Gaw'n Hamilton's deserts;
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin arts,
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain priest the people's hearts
He steals awa.

An' when we chasten'd him therefor,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
An' set the warld in a roar
O' laughing at us; –
Curse Thou his basket and his store,
Kail an' potatoes.

Lord, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
 Against that Presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
 Thy strong right hand, Lord, make it bare
 Upo' their heads;
 Lord visit them, an' dinna spare,
 For their misdeeds.

O Lord, my God! that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
 My vera heart and flesh are quakin,
 To think how we stood sweatin', shakin,
 An' p-'d wi' dread,
 While he, wi' hingin lip an' snakin,
 Held up his head.

Lord, in Thy day o' vengeance try him,
 Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
 And pass not in Thy mercy by 'em,
 Nor hear their pray'r,
 But for Thy people's sake, destroy 'em,
 An' dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me an' mine
 Wi' mercies temp'ral an' divine,
 That I for grace an' gear may shine,
 Excell'd by nane,
 And a' the glory shall be thine,
 Amen, Amen!

(1789)

John Anderson, My Jo

John Anderson, my jo, John,
 When we were first acquaint;
 Your locks were like the raven,
 Your bonie brow was Brent;
 But now your brow is beld, John,
 Your locks are like the snaw;
 But blessings on your frosty pow,

John Anderson, my jo.
John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

(1789)

(1790)

A Red, Red Rose

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luv am I;
And I will luv thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will luv thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare-thee-weel, my only Luve!
And fare-thee-weel, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' 'twere ten thousand mile!

(1796)



WILLIAM BLAKE
(1757–1827)

Blake's father was a London haberdasher. His only formal education was in art: at the age of ten he entered a drawing school and later studied for a time at the school of the Royal Academy of Arts. At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to a well-known engraver, James Basire, from whom he learned the technique of illuminated printing – a technique he further developed and used in his major works to emphasize the mythical quality of his writing. His earliest poems are contained in *Poetical Sketches* published in 1783. In 1789 he engraved and published his *Songs of Innocence*, in which he first showed the mystical cast of his mind. In 1790 he engraved his prose work, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. His other major work, the *Songs of Experience* (1794) is in contrast with the *Songs of Innocence*. The brightness of the earlier work gives place to a sense of gloom and mystery, and the power of evil. At the time of his death Blake was little known as an artist and almost entirely unknown as a poet. Blake's poems express ideas and feelings which are the result of an intense probing into the source of his own being and character. He uses symbols, startling forms and methods. Apart from his lyrics he wrote a number of prophetic books which are concerned with the spiritual and political history of man. His poems are vividly illuminating, and his symbols provide an expression of wisdom and spiritual health.

From *Songs of Innocence*

Introduction

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

‘Pipe a song about a Lamb!’
So I piped with merry cheer.
‘Piper, pipe that song again.’
So I piped: he wept to hear.

'Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

'Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read.'
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

(1789)

The Lamb

Little lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

(1789)

The Divine Image

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God our Father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity, a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

(1789)

Chimney Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry ‘weep! ‘weep! ‘weep! ‘weep!’
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl’d like a lamb’s back, was shav’d: so I said
‘Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head’s bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.’

And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight! –
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run
And wash in a river, and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

(1789)

Holy Thursday

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two and two, in red and blue and green,
Grey-headed beards walk'd before, with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames' waters flow.

O what a multitude they seem'd, these flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own.
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to Heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of Heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor;
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.

(1789)

From *Songs of Experience*

Introduction

Hear the voice of the Bard,
Who present, past, and future, sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word
That walked among the ancient trees;

Calling the lapsed soul,
And weeping in the evening dew;
That might control
The starry pole,
And fallen, fallen light renew!

'O Earth, O Earth, return!
Arise from out the dewy grass!
Night is worn,
And the morn
Rises from the slumbrous mass.

'Turn away no more;
Why wilt thou turn away?
The starry floor,
The watery shore,
Is given thee till the break of day.'

(1794)

The Sick Rose

O rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

(1794)

WILLIAM BLAKE

The Tyger

Tyger, tyger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

(1794)

*The Human Abstract*⁴⁵

Pity would be no more
 If we did not make somebody Poor;
 And Mercy no more could be
 If all were as happy as we.

And mutual fear brings peace,
 Till the selfish loves increase:
 Then Cruelty knits a snare,
 And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears,
 And waters the ground with tears;
 Then Humility takes its root
 Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade
 Of Mystery over his head;
 And the Catterpillar and Fly
 Feed on the Mystery.

And it bears the fruit of Deceit,
 Ruddy and sweet to eat;
 And the Raven his nest has made
 In its thickest shade.

The Gods of the earth and sea
 Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree;
 But their search was all in vain:
 There grows one in the Human Brain.

(1794)

45 The matched contrary to *The Divine Image* in *Songs of Innocence*. The virtues of the earlier poem, "Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love," are now represented as possible marks for exploitation, cruelty, conflict, and hypocritical humility.

Chimney Sweeper

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying! 'weep! weep!' in notes of woe!
'Where are thy father and mother? Say!' –
'They are both gone up to the church to pray.

'Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smiled among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

'And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and His priest and king,
Who made up a heaven of our misery.'

(1794)

Holy Thursday

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land, –
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are filled with thorns,
It is eternal winter there.

For where'er the sun does shine,
And where'er the rain does fall,
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appal.

(1794)

*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell**A Song of Liberty*

1. The Eternal Female groan'd! it was heard over all the Earth:
2. Albion's coast is sick, silent; the American meadows faint!
3. Shadows of Prophecy shiver along by the lakes and the rivers and mutter across the ocean: France, rend down thy dungeon;
4. Golden Spain, burst the barriers of old Rome;
5. Cast thy keys, O Rome, into the deep down falling, even to eternity down falling,
6. And weep!
7. In her trembling hands she took the new born terror howling;
8. On those infinite mountains of light, now barr'd out by the atlantic sea, the new born fire stood before the starry king!
9. Flag'd with grey brow'd snows and thunderous visages the jealous wings wav'd over the deep.
10. The speary hand burned aloft, unbuckled was the shield, forth went the hand of jealousy among the flaming hair, and hurl'd the new born wonder thro' the starry night.
11. The fire, the fire, is falling!
12. Look up! look up! O citizen of London, enlarge thy countenance: O Jew, leave counting gold! return to thy oil and wine. O African! black African! (go, winged thought widen his forehead.)
13. The fiery limbs, the flaming hair, shot like the sinking sun into the western sea.
14. Wak'd from his eternal sleep, the hoary element roaring fled away:
15. Down rush'd, beating his wings in vain, the jealous king; his grey brow'd councillors, thunderous warriors, curl'd veterans, among helms, and shields, and chariots horses, elephants: banners, castles, slings and rocks,
16. Falling, rushing, ruining! buried in the ruins, on Urthona's dens;
17. All night beneath the ruins, then, their sullen flames faded, emerge round the gloomy King.
18. With thunder and fire: leading his starry hosts thro' the waste wilderness, he promulgates his ten commands, glancing his beamy eyelids over the deep in dark dismay,

WILLIAM BLAKE

19. Where the son of fire in his eastern cloud, while the morning
plumes her golden breast.
20. Spurning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony law to
dust, loosing the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying:
Empire is no more! and now the lion & wolf shall cease.

Chorus.

Let the Priests of the Raven of dawn, no longer in deadly black, with
hoarse note curse the sons of joy. Nor his accepted brethren, whom,
tyrant, he calls free: lay the bound or build the roof. Nor pale religious
letchery call that virginity, that wishes but acts not!

For every thing that lives is Holy.

(1792-93)

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
(1770–1850)

Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth in West Cumberland. His mother died when he was only eight years old, and his relatives sent him to a school at Hawkshead near Esthwaite Lake, in the heart of the region that he and Coleridge were to transform into one of the poetic centres of England. He attended St. John's College, Cambridge and acquired his degree in 1791. In 1790 he went on a walking tour in France, the Alps, and Italy. He returned to France late in 1791, and spent a year there. The revolutionary movement was then at its height and this exercised a strong influence on his mind. But due to a lack of funds and the outbreak of war between England and France he was forced to return to England. In 1795 Wordsworth made the acquaintance of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which meant the beginning of a close and enduring friendship. The result of the joint efforts of the two poets was a small volume of poetry published anonymously in 1798 entitled *Lyrical Ballads*. This volume clearly announces a new literary departure. In 1799 Wordsworth, with his sister Dorothy, settled at Grasmere where he spent the remainder of his life. In 1813 an appointment as Stamp Distributor (revenue collector) for Westmorland was evidence of his recognition as a national poet. He was also awarded honorary degrees, and in 1843, was appointed Poet Laureate. He died in 1850 at the age of eighty. Wordsworth was very much a man of his time. As a "worshipper of nature" he had a sentimental interest in his characteristic subject – matter. Due to Wordsworth's conservative outlook, beside the rustic scenery in his poetry, his obvious intention was to instruct and draw a moral lesson.

*Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey,
on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798*

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress

In which the affections gently lead us on –
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul;
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft –
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart –
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led – more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. – I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. – That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear -both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more

Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee; and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance –
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence – wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream

We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service; rather say
With warmer love -oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

(1798)

(1798)

We are Seven

—————A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
– Her beauty made me glad.

“Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?”
“How many? Seven in all,” she said
And wondering looked at me.

“And where are they? I pray you tell.”
She answered, “Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

“Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! – I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.”

“You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five.”

“Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little Maid replied,
“Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
And they are side by side.

“My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

“And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

“The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.



“So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

“And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side.”

“How many are you, then,” said I,
“If they two are in heaven?”
Quick was the little Maid’s reply,
“O Master! we are seven.”

“But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!”
‘Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “Nay, we are seven!”

(1798)

(1800)

From *Sonnets*

*Composed Upon Westminster Bridge,
September 3, 1802*

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;

Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

(1802)

(1807)

It is a Beautiful Evening

It is a beautiful evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

(1802)

(1807)

London, 1802

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

(1802)

(1807)

The World is Too Much With Us

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. – Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

(1807)

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line

Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1804)

(1807)

*Ode
Intimations of Immortality from
Recollections of Early Childhood*

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; –
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday; –
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,

The fulness of your bliss, I feel – I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm: –
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
– But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, –
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest –
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast: –
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,

Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
 To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
 Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
 And let the young Lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

(1807)

The Solitary Reaper

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? –
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

(1805)

(1807)

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
(1772–1834)

Coleridge was born in Ottary St. Mary, in rural Devonshire, as the son of a vicar. After the death of his father he was sent to a school at Christ's Hospital in London. He was a dreamy, enthusiastic, and extraordinarily precocious schoolboy. He attended Jesus College in Cambridge, but found little intellectual stimulation, and fell into idleness and debt. He enlisted in the Light Dragoons, but was discharged after a few months. He was sent back to Cambridge, but he eventually left without taking a degree in 1794. He made the acquaintance of Robert Southey, and the two devoted themselves to 'Pantisocracy', a form of ideal democratic community, which signified an equal rule by all, but the Pantisocracy scheme collapsed. In 1795 Coleridge met Wordsworth and at once judged him to be "the best poet of the age". After their joint publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, Coleridge, Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy, spent a winter in Germany, where he attended the University of Göttingen and began his lifelong study of Kant and the post-Kantian German philosophers and critics that had a strong influence on him and helped to explore and develop his individual manner of thinking about philosophy, religion and aesthetics. By and by, Coleridge's life became ever more unsettled, also due to the fact that he had formed a habit of taking opium to ease the painful physical ailments from which he had suffered from an early age. The remaining years of his life, which he spent with Dr. and Mrs. Gillman, were quieter and happier than any he had known since the turn of the century. He died in 1834, and was buried in Highgate Church.

Frost at Midnight

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud, -and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange

And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, every where
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birthplace, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My playmate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,

Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

(1798)

Kubla Khan
Or, A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines

of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in Purchas's Pilgrimage: "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall." The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awakening he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! Without the after restoration of the latter!

Then all the charm
Is broken – all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each mis-shape the other. Stay awile,
Poor youth! Who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes –
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo, he stays,
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror.

[From Coleridge's *The Picture; or Lover's Resolution*, lines 91–100] 1816

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! That deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! As holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,

Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! Those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

(1797–98)

(1816)

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
IN SEVEN PARTS

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quae loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attingit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernae vitae minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus. – T. Burnet, *Archaeol. Phil.*, p. 68 (slightly edited by Coleridge).⁴⁶

46 I can easily believe, that there are more invisible than visible Beings in the universe. But who shall describe for us their families? and their ranks and relationships and distinguishing features and functions? What they do? where they live? The human mind has always circled around a knowledge of these things, never attaining it. I do not doubt, however, that it is sometimes beneficial to contemplate, in thought, as in a Picture, the image of a greater and better world; lest the intellect, habituated to the trivia of daily life, may contract itself too much, and wholly sink into trifles. But at the same time we must be vigilant for truth, and maintain proportion, that we may distinguish certain from uncertain, day from night. – T. Burnet, *Archaeol. Phil.* p. 68 (1692)

ARGUMENT

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

Part I

*An ancient Mariner
meeteth three Gallants
bidden to a
wedding-feast, and
detaineth one.*

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

*The Wedding-Guest is
spell-bound by the eye of
the old seafaring man,
and constrained to hear
his tale.*

He holds him with his glittering eye –
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

*The Mariner tells how
the ship sailed
southward with a good
wind and fair weather,
till it reached the Line.*

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon –
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

*The Wedding-Guest
heareth the bridal
music; but the Mariner
continueth his tale.*

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

*The ship driven by a
storm toward the south
pole.*

'And now the Storm-Blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
The southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

*The land of ice, and of
fearful sounds where no
living thing was to be
seen.*

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken –
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

*Till a great sea-bird,
called the Albatross,
came through the
snow-fog, and was
received with great joy
and hospitality.*

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

*And lo! the Albatross
proveth a bird of good
omen, and followeth the
ship as it returned
northward through fog
and floating ice.*

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

*The ancient Mariner
inhospitably killeth the
pious bird of good omen.*

‘God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus! –
Why look’st thou so?’ – With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

Part 2

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners’ hollo!

*His shipmates cry out
against the ancient
Mariner, for killing the
bird of good luck.*

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work ‘em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

*But when the fog
cleared off, they justify
the same, and thus
make themselves
accomplices in the
crime.*

Nor dim nor red, like God’s own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
‘Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

*The fair breeze
continues; the ship
enters the Pacific
Ocean, and sails
northward, even till it
reaches the Line.*

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.



*The ship hath been
suddenly becalmed.*

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

*And the Albatross
begins to be avenged.*

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

*A Spirit had followed
them; one of the
invisible inhabitants of
this planet, neither
departed souls nor
angels; concerning
whom the learned*

And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

*Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They
are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.*



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

*The shipmates, in their
sore distress, would fain
throw the whole guilt
on the ancient
Mariner: in sign
whereof they hang the
dead sea-bird round his
neck.*

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

Part 3

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

*The ancient Mariner
beholdeth a sign in the
element afar off.*

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

*At its nearer approach,
it seemeth him to be a
ship; and at a dear
ransom he fretteth his
speech from the bonds of
thirst.*

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!



A flash of joy;

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 Agape they heard me call:
 Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
 And all at once their breath drew in,
 As they were drinking all.

*And horror follows. For
 can it be a ship that
 comes onward without
 wind or tide?*

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
 Hither to work us weal;
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame.
 The day was well nigh done!
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad bright Sun;
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

*It seemeth him but the
 skeleton of a ship.*

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
 With broad and burning face.

*And its ribs are seen as
 bars on the face of the
 setting Sun. The
 Spectre-Woman and
 her Death-mate, and
 no other on board the
 skeleton ship.*

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears!
 Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
 Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
 Did peer, as through a grate?
 And is that Woman all her crew?
 Is that a Death? and are there two?
 Is Death that woman's mate?

Like vessel, like crew!

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
 Her locks were yellow as gold:
 Her skin was as white as leprosy,
 The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
 Who thicks man's blood with cold.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

*Death and
Life-in-Death have
diced for the ship's crew,
and she (the latter)
winneeth the ancient
Mariner.*

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

*No twilight within the
courts of the Sun.*

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

*At the rising of the
Moon,*

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steerman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip –
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after another,

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

*His shipmates drop
down dead.*

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

*But Life-in-Death
begins her work on the
ancient Mariner.*

The souls did from their bodies fly, –
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

Part 4

*The Wedding-Guest
feareth that a Spirit is
talking to him;*

‘I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.
I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.’ –
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

*But the ancient
Mariner assureth him
of his bodily life, and
proceedeth to relate his
horrible penance.*

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

*He despiseth the
creatures of the calm,*

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

*And envieth that they
should live, and so
many lie dead.*

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

*But the curse liveth for
him in the eye of the
dead men.*

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

*In his loneliness and
fixedness he yearneth
towards the journeying
Moon, and the stars
that still sojourn, yet
still move onward;*

*and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and
their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet
there is a silent joy at their arrival.*

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside –

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away
A still and awful red.

*By the light of the
Moon he beholdeth
God's creatures of the
great calm.*

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

*Their beauty and their
happiness.*

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

*He blesseth them in his
heart.*

*The spell begins to
break.*

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

Part 5

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

*By grace of the holy
Mother, the ancient
Mariner is refreshed
with rain.*

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light – almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

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*He heareth sounds and
seeth strange sights and
commotions in the sky
and the element.*

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

*The bodies of the ship's
crew are inspired, and
the ship moves on;*

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools –
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.

*But not by the souls of
the men, nor by daemons
of earth or middle air,
but by a blessed troop of
angelic spirits, sent
down by the invocation
of the guardian saint.*

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned – they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

*The lonesome Spirit
from the south-pole
carries on the ship as
far as the Line, in
obedience to the angelic
troop, but still requireth
vengeance.*

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion –
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

*The Polar Spirit's
fellow-demons, the
invisible inhabitants of
the element, take part
in his wrong; and two
of them relate, one to
the other, that penance
long and heavy for the
ancient Mariner hath
been accorded to the
Polar Spirit, who
returneth
southward.*

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

Part 6

FIRST VOICE

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing –
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

SECOND VOICE

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast –

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE

'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

SECOND VOICE

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

*The Mariner hath been
cast into a trance; for
the angelic power
causeth the vessel to
drive northward faster
than human life could
endure.*

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

*The supernatural
motion is retarded; the
Mariner awakes, and
his penance begins
anew.*

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

*The curse is finally
expiated.*

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen –

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring –
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze –
On me alone it blew.

*And the ancient
Mariner beholdeth his
native country.*

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray –
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep away.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

*The angelic spirits leave
the dead bodies,*

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

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*And appear in their
own forms of light.*

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck –
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart –
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third – I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

Part 7

*The Hermit of the
Wood,*

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with mariners
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve –
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
‘Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?’

*Approacheth the ship
with wonder.*

‘Strange, by my faith!’ the Hermit said –
‘And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf’s young.’

‘Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look –
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared’ – ‘Push on, push on!’
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

*The ship suddenly
sinketh.*

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

*The ancient Mariner is
saved in the Pilot's
boat.*

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips – the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

*The ancient Mariner
earnestly entreateth the
Hermit to shrieve him;
and the penance of life
falls on him.*

‘O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!’
The Hermit crossed his brow.
‘Say quick,’ quoth he, ‘I bid thee say –
What manner of man art thou?’

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

*And ever and anon
throughout his future
life an agony
constraineth him to
travel from land to
land;*

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely ‘twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
‘Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company! –

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

*And to teach, by his
own example, love and
reverence to all things
th at God made and
loveth.*

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

(1798)

(1817)

Dejection: an Ode

Late, late yestreen I saw the new moon,
With the old moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm.
(*Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence*)

I

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Aeolian lute,
Which better far were mute.
For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear –
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle wooed,

All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze -and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze forever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth –
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud –
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud –
We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what Nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man –
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream!
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty poet, e'en to frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about?
'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
With groans, of trampled men, with smarting wounds –
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!
But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings – all is over –
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
A tale of less affright,
And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay –
'Tis of a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddy of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayst thou ever, evermore rejoice.

(1802)

(1817)



GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON
(1788–1824)

He was born in London in 1788. His father, Captain John Byron, was a rake and fortune-hunter, who died when his son was only three years old. His mother, Catherine Gordon of Gight, was the last descendant of a line of lawless Scottish lairds. Byron came into the title when he was only ten years old. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. When he left the university he started to travel in Europe with a friend. In 1815 he married Anne Isabella Milbanke, an heiress, from whom he separated in 1816. He thereupon left England, with the intention of never returning, embittered by the strictures of what he regarded as a hypocritical society. Mostly in the company of the Shelleys he travelled to Switzerland and Venice which, with Ravenna, Pisa, and Genoa, became his headquarters. In 1822 Byron and Leigh Hunt (a poet and editor of political and literary periodicals for the reformist middle class) joined in the production of *The Liberal* magazine. A year later in 1823 Byron set out to join the Greek insurgents, and died of fever at Missolonghi in April 1824. Byron's poetry was immensely popular – a popularity which owed much to the novelty of his oriental scenery, to the romantic character of the Byronic hero and to the real beauty of his verse, and sealed his reputation as the foremost poet of liberty in Europe.

She Walks in Beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express

How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.
And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

(1815)

Prometheus

Titan! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoless.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refus'd thee even the boon to die:
The wretched gift Eternity
Was thine – and thou hast borne it well.

All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee,
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled,
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;
And Man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny;
His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence:
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself—and equal to all woes,
And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
Its own concenter'd recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory.

(1816)

(1817)

Darkness

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Morn came and went – and came, and brought no day,
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:
And they did live by watchfires – and the thrones,
The palaces of crowned kings – the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consum'd,
And men were gather'd round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire – but hour by hour
They fell and faded – and the crackling trunks
Extinguish'd with a crash – and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smil'd;
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past world; and then again
With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twin'd themselves among the multitude,

Hissing, but stingless – they were slain for food.
And War, which for a moment was no more,
Did glut himself again: a meal was bought
With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;
All earth was but one thought – and that was death
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails – men
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,
And he was faithful to a corpse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
Lur'd their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answer'd not with a caress – he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they rak'd up,
And shivering scrap'd with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects – saw, and shriek'd, and died –
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend.
The world was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless –
A lump of death – a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes and ocean all stood still,

And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge –
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The moon, their mistress, had expir'd before;
The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them – She was the Universe.

(1816)

(1817)

Don Juan

From *Canto 1*
(Excerpt)

1

I want a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one;
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan —
We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.

* * *

90

Young Juan wander'd by the glassy brooks,
Thinking unutterable things; he threw
Himself at length within the leafy nooks
Where the wild branch of the cork forest grew;
There poets find materials for their books,
And every now and then we read them through,
So that their plan and prosody are eligible,
Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unintelligible.

91

He, Juan (and not Wordsworth), so pursued
His self-communion with his own high soul,
Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
Had mitigated part, though not the whole
Of its disease; he did the best he could
With things not very subject to control,
And turn'd, without perceiving his condition,
Like Coleridge, into a metaphysician.

92

He thought about himself, and the whole earth
Of man the wonderful, and of the stars,
And how the deuce they ever could have birth;
And then he thought of earthquakes, and of wars,
How many miles the moon might have in girth,
Of air-balloons, and of the many bars
To perfect knowledge of the boundless skies; –
And then he thought of Donna Julia's eyes.

93

In thoughts like these true wisdom may discern
Longings sublime, and aspirations high,
Which some are born with, but the most part learn
To plague themselves withal, they know not why:
'T was strange that one so young should thus concern
His brain about the action of the sky;
If you think 't was philosophy that this did,
I can't help thinking puberty assisted.

94

He pored upon the leaves, and on the flowers,
And heard a voice in all the winds; and then
He thought of wood-nymphs and immortal bowers,
And how the goddesses came down to men:
He miss'd the pathway, he forgot the hours,
And when he look'd upon his watch again,
He found how much old Time had been a winner –
He also found that he had lost his dinner.

(1819)

On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year

Missolonghi, Jan. 22, 1824

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze -
A funeral pile!

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

But 'tis not thus -and 'tis not here -
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor now,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece – she is awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood! – unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, why live?
The land of honourable death
Is here: – up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out -less often sought than found –
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

(1824)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
(1792–1822)

Shelley was born in Field Place, Sussex, in 1792. He was a descendant of Sussex aristocrats from early in the seventeenth century. He was educated at Eton and University College, Oxford. Shelley was peremptorily expelled from Oxford after having written and circulating a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*. In the same year he married Harriet Westbrook from whom he separated after three years of a wandering life. He left England in 1814 with Mary Godwin, to whom he was married in 1816 after the unhappy Harriet drowned herself in the Serpentine. In the same year began Shelley's friendship with Byron. In 1818 Shelley left for Italy and spent the summer in Byron's villa near Este. At the end of 1819 the Shelleys moved to Pisa, where he wrote some of his finest lyrics. Shelley removed in 1821 to Lerici on the shores of the bay of Spezia. Shelley began working on *The Triumph of Life* in 1822, but was left unfinished due to his early death. The work was published in 1824. On July 8, 1822, Shelley and Edward Williams were sailing their open boat, when a violent squall swamped the boat. When several days later the bodies were washed ashore they were cremated, and Shelley's ashes were buried in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome. Shelley still enjoys an enormous popularity today. His poetry is often considered to be musical, and as Swinburne said: "He was alone the perfect singing-god; his thoughts, words, deeds all sang together...the master-singer of our modern race and age."

Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.

And on the pedestal these words appear:
`My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

(1817)

(1818)

England in 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king, –
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn, -mud from a muddy spring, –
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow, –
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field, –
An army, which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield, –
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless – a book sealed;
A Senate, – Time's worst statute unrepealed, –
Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

(1819)

(1839)

Ode to the West Wind

1

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O hear!

2

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning; there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height –
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: O hear!

3

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams,
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,



Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!

4

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip the skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision, I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
O, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves, to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

(1819)

(1820)

The Mask of Anarchy

Written on the occasion of the massacre carried out by the British
Government at Peterloo, Manchester 1819

As I lay asleep in Italy
There came a voice from over the Sea,
And with great power it forth led me
To walk in the visions of Poesy.

I met Murder on the way –
He had a mask like Castlereagh –
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;
Seven blood-hounds followed him:

All were fat; and well they might
Be in admirable plight,
For one by one, and two by two,
He tossed the human hearts to chew
Which from his wide cloak he drew.

Next came Fraud, and he had on,
Like Eldon, an ermined gown;
His big tears, for he wept well,
Turned to mill-stones as they fell.

And the little children, who
Round his feet played to and fro,
Thinking every tear a gem,
Had their brains knocked out by them.

Clothed with the Bible, as with light,
And the shadows of the night,
Like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy
On a crocodile rode by.

And many more Destructions played
In this ghastly masquerade,
All disguised, even to the eyes,
Like Bishops, lawyers, peers, or spies.

Last came Anarchy: he rode
On a white horse, splashed with blood;
He was pale even to the lips,
Like Death in the Apocalypse.

And he wore a kingly crown;
And in his grasp a sceptre shone;
On his brow this mark I saw –
'I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW!'

With a pace stately and fast,
Over English land he passed,
Trampling to a mire of blood
The adoring multitude.

And a mighty troop around,
With their trampling shook the ground,
Waving each a bloody sword,
For the service of their Lord.

And with glorious triumph, they
Rode through England proud and gay,
Drunk as with intoxication
Of the wine of desolation.

O'er fields and towns, from sea to sea,
Passed the Pageant swift and free,
Tearing up, and trampling down;
Till they came to London town.

And each dweller, panic-stricken,
Felt his heart with terror sicken
Hearing the tempestuous cry
Of the triumph of Anarchy.

For with pomp to meet him came,
Clothed in arms like blood and flame,
The hired murderers, who did sing
'Thou art God, and Law, and King.

'We have waited, weak and lone
For thy coming, Mighty One!
Our Purses are empty, our swords are cold,
Give us glory, and blood, and gold.'

Lawyers and priests, a motley crowd,
To the earth their pale brows bowed;
Like a bad prayer not over loud,
Whispering – 'Thou art Law and God.' –

Then all cried with one accord,
'Thou art King, and God and Lord;
Anarchy, to thee we bow,
Be thy name made holy now!'

And Anarchy, the skeleton,
Bowed and grinned to every one,
As well as if his education
Had cost ten millions to the nation.

For he knew the Palaces
Of our Kings were rightly his;
His the sceptre, crown and globe,
And the gold-inwoven robe.

So he sent his slaves before
To seize upon the Bank and Tower,
And was proceeding with intent
To meet his pensioned Parliament

When one fled past, a maniac maid,
And her name was Hope, she said:
But she looked more like Despair,
And she cried out in the air:

'My father Time is weak and gray
With waiting for a better day;
See how idiot-like he stands,
Fumbling with his palsied hands!

He has had child after child,
And the dust of death is piled
Over every one but me –
Misery, oh, Misery!'

Then she lay down in the street,
Right before the horses' feet,
Expecting, with a patient eye,
Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy.

When between her and her foes
A mist, a light, an image rose,
Small at first, and weak, and frail
Like the vapour of a vale:



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Till as clouds grow on the blast,
Like tower-crowned giants striding fast,
And glare with lightnings as they fly,
And speak in thunder to the sky,

It grew – a Shape arrayed in mail
Brighter than the viper's scale,
And upborne on wings whose grain
Was as the light of sunny rain.

On its helm, seen far away,
A planet, like the Morning's, lay;
And those plumes its light rained through
Like a shower of crimson dew.

With step as soft as wind it passed
O'er the heads of men – so fast
That they knew the presence there,
And looked, – but all was empty air.

As flowers beneath May's footstep waken,
As stars from Night's loose hair are shaken,
As waves arise when loud winds call,
Thoughts sprung where'er that step did fall.

And the prostrate multitude
Looked – and ankle-deep in blood,
Hope, that maiden most serene,
Was walking with a quiet mien:

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,
Lay dead earth upon the earth;
The Horse of Death tameless as wind
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind
To dust the murderers thronged behind.

A rushing light of clouds and splendour,
A sense awakening and yet tender
Was heard and felt – and at its close
These words of joy and fear arose



As if their own indignant Earth
Which gave the sons of England birth
Had felt their blood upon her brow,
And shuddering with a mother's throe

Had turned every drop of blood
By which her face had been bedewed
To an accent unwithstood, –
As if her heart had cried aloud:

'Men of England, heirs of Glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,
Hopes of her, and one another;

'Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you –
Ye are many – they are few.

'What is Freedom? – ye can tell
That which slavery is, too well –
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

'Tis to work and have such pay
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs, as in a cell
For the tyrants' use to dwell,

'So that ye for them are made
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade,
With or without your own will bent
To their defence and nourishment.

'Tis to see your children weak
With their mothers pine and peak,
When the winter winds are bleak, –
They are dying whilst I speak.

'Tis to hunger for such diet
As the rich man in his riot
Casts to the fat dogs that lie
Surfeiting beneath his eye;

'Tis to let the Ghost of Gold
Take from Toil a thousandfold
More than e'er its substance could
In the tyrannies of old.

'Paper coin – that forgery
Of the title-deeds, which ye
Hold to something of the worth
Of the inheritance of Earth.

'Tis to be a slave in soul
And to hold no strong control
Over your own wills, but be
All that others make of ye.

'And at length when ye complain
With a murmur weak and vain
'Tis to see the Tyrant's crew
Ride over your wives and you –
Blood is on the grass like dew.

'Then it is to feel revenge
Fiercely thirsting to exchange
Blood for blood – and wrong for wrong –
Do not thus when ye are strong.

'Birds find rest, in narrow nest
When weary of their wingèd quest
Beasts find fare, in woody lair
When storm and snow are in the air.

'Asses, swine, have litter spread
And with fitting food are fed;
All things have a home but one –
Thou, Oh, Englishman, hast none!

‘This is slavery – savage men
Or wild beasts within a den
Would endure not as ye do –
But such ills they never knew.

‘What art thou Freedom? O! could slaves
Answer from their living graves
This demand – tyrants would flee
Like a dream’s dim imagery:

‘Thou art not, as impostors say,
A shadow soon to pass away,
A superstition, and a name
Echoing from the cave of Fame.

‘For the labourer thou art bread,
And a comely table spread
From his daily labour come
In a neat and happy home.

‘Thou art clothes, and fire, and food
For the trampled multitude –
No - in countries that are free
Such starvation cannot be
As in England now we see.

‘To the rich thou art a check,
When his foot is on the neck
Of his victim, thou dost make
That he treads upon a snake.

‘Thou art Justice – ne’er for gold
May thy righteous laws be sold
As laws are in England – thou
Shield’st alike the high and low.

‘Thou art Wisdom – Freemen never
Dream that God will damn for ever
All who think those things untrue
Of which Priests make such ado.

'Thou art Peace – never by thee
Would blood and treasure wasted be
As tyrants wasted them, when all
Leagued to quench thy flame in Gaul.

'What if English toil and blood
Was poured forth, even as a flood?
It availed, Oh, Liberty,
To dim, but not extinguish thee.

'Thou art Love – the rich have kissed
Thy feet, and like him following Christ,
Give their substance to the free
And through the rough world follow thee,

'Or turn their wealth to arms, and make
War for thy beloved sake
On wealth, and war, and fraud – whence they
Drew the power which is their prey.

'Science, Poetry, and Thought
Are thy lamps; they make the lot
Of the dwellers in a cot
So serene, they curse it not.

'Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,
All that can adorn and bless
Art thou – let deeds, not words, express
Thine exceeding loveliness.

'Let a great Assembly be
Of the fearless and the free
On some spot of English ground
Where the plains stretch wide around.

'Let the blue sky overhead,
The green earth on which ye tread,
All that must eternal be
Witness the solemnity.

‘From the corners uttermost
Of the bounds of English coast;
From every hut, village, and town
Where those who live and suffer moan,

‘From the workhouse and the prison
Where pale as corpses newly risen,
Women, children, young and old
Groan for pain, and weep for cold –

‘From the haunts of daily life
Where is waged the daily strife
With common wants and common cares
Which sows the human heart with tares –

‘Lastly from the palaces
Where the murmur of distress
Echoes, like the distant sound
Of a wind alive around

‘Those prison halls of wealth and fashion,
Where some few feel such compassion
For those who groan, and toil, and wail
As must make their brethren pale –

‘Ye who suffer woes untold,
Or to feel, or to behold
Your lost country bought and sold
With a price of blood and gold –

‘Let a vast assembly be,
And with great solemnity
Declare with measured words that ye
Are, as God has made ye, free –

‘Be your strong and simple words
Keen to wound as sharpened swords,
And wide as targes let them be,
With their shade to cover ye.

‘Let the tyrants pour around
With a quick and startling sound,
Like the loosening of a sea,
Troops of armed emblazonry.

Let the charged artillery drive
Till the dead air seems alive
With the clash of clanging wheels,
And the tramp of horses’ heels.

‘Let the fixèd bayonet
Gleam with sharp desire to wet
Its bright point in English blood
Looking keen as one for food.

‘Let the horsemen’s scimitars
Wheel and flash, like sphereless stars
Thirsting to eclipse their burning
In a sea of death and mourning.

‘Stand ye calm and resolute,
Like a forest close and mute,
With folded arms and looks which are
Weapons of unvanquished war,

‘And let Panic, who outspeeds
The career of armèd steeds
Pass, a disregarded shade
Through your phalanx undismayed.

‘Let the laws of your own land,
Good or ill, between ye stand
Hand to hand, and foot to foot,
Arbiters of the dispute,

‘The old laws of England – they
Whose reverend heads with age are gray,
Children of a wiser day;
And whose solemn voice must be
Thine own echo – Liberty!

‘On those who first should violate
Such sacred heralds in their state
Rest the blood that must ensue,
And it will not rest on you.

‘And if then the tyrants dare
Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew, –
What they like, that let them do.

‘With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear, and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay
Till their rage has died away.

‘Then they will return with shame
To the place from which they came,
And the blood thus shed will speak
In hot blushes on their cheek.

‘Every woman in the land
Will point at them as they stand –
They will hardly dare to greet
Their acquaintance in the street.

‘And the bold, true warriors
Who have hugged Danger in wars
Will turn to those who would be free,
Ashamed of such base company.

‘And that slaughter to the Nation
Shall steam up like inspiration,
Eloquent, oracular;
A volcano heard afar.

‘And these words shall then become
Like Oppression’s thundered doom
Ringing through each heart and brain,
Heard again – again – again –

‘Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number –
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you –
Ye are many – they are few.’

(1819)

(1820)

The Cloud

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother’s breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night ’tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fretted the thunder,
 It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream

The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.

From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise, and unbuild it again. –

(1820)

(1820)

To a Sky-Lark

All to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see – we feel, that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was,
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance,
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest – but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet, if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then – as I am listening now.

(1820)

(1820)

The Triumph of Life
(Excerpt ll. 358–388)

In her right hand she bore a chrystal glass
Mantling with bright Nepenthe; – the fierce splendour
Fell from her as she moved under the mass

Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,
Glided along the river, and did bend her

Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream
That whispered with delight to be her pillow.

As one enamoured is upborne in dream
O'er lilly-paven lakes mid silver mist
To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

Partly to tread the waves with feet which kist
The dancing foam, partly to glide along
The airs that roughened the moist amethyst,

Or the slant morning beams that fell among
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees;
And her feet ever to the ceaseless song

Of leaves and winds and waves and birds and bees
And falling drops moved in a measure new
Yet sweet, as on summer evening breeze

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,
Dances i' the wind where eagle never flew. –

And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune
To which they moved, seemed as they moved, to blot
The thoughts of him who gazed on them, and soon

All that was seemed as if it had been not,
As if the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
Her feet like embers, and she, thought by thought

Trampled its fires into the dust of death.

(1822)

(1824)

JOHN CLARE
(1793–1864)

John Clare was the nearest thing to the “natural poet” for whom primitivists had been searching since the mid-eighteenth century. In his time he was commonly known as “the Northamptonshire Peasant Poet.” He was the son of a farm labourer born at Helpston near Peterborough. He obtained enough schooling to enable him to read and write. Clare had bought a copy of James Thomson’s (Scottish poet) *Seasons* out of his scanty earnings and had begun to write poems. Clare eventually befriended the author of *Seasons* and introduced his poems to John Taylor of the publishing firm of Taylor & Hessey, which issued the *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* in 1820. This book was highly praised, and in the next year his *Village Minstrel and other Poems* was published. He was greatly patronized, but his celebrity soon dimmed, and his three later books were failures. Under these and other disappointments his mind gave way in 1837, and he spent almost all the rest of his life in an asylum. In the asylum he was encouraged and helped to write. Here he wrote his most famous poem, *I Am*, but many others besides. He died on the 20th of May 1864, in his 71st year. His remains were returned to Helpston for burial in St Botolph’s churchyard.

I Am

I am: yet what I am none cares or knows,
My friends forsake me like a memory lost;
I am the self-consumer of my woes,
They rise and vanish in oblivious host,
Like shades in love and death’s oblivion lost;
And yet I am! and live with shadows tost

Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,
Into the living sea of waking dreams,
Where there is neither sense of life nor joys,
But the vast shipwreck of my life’s esteems;
And e’en the dearest – that I loved the best –
Are strange – nay, rather stranger than the rest.

I long for scenes where man has never trod;
A place where woman never smil'd or wept;
There to abide with my creator, God,
And sleep as I in childhood sweetly slept:
Untroubling and untroubled where I lie;
The grass below—above the vaulted sky.

(1842–46)

(1848)

Clock-O-Clay

In the cowslip pips I lie,
Hidden from the buzzing fly,
While green grass beneath me lies,
Pearled with dew like fishes' eyes,
Here I lie, a clock-o'-clay,
Waiting for the time o' day.

While the forest quakes surprise,
And the wild wind sobs and sighs,
My home rocks as like to fall,
On its pillar green and tall;
When the pattering rain drives by
Clock-o'-clay keeps warm and dry.

Day by day and night by night,
All the week I hide from sight;
In the cowslip pips I lie,
In the rain still warm and dry;
Day and night and night and day,
Red, black-spotted clock-o'-clay.

My home shakes in wind and showers,
Pale green pillar topped with flowers,
Bending at the wild wind's breath,
Till I touch the grass beneath;
Here I live, lone clock-o'-clay,
Watching for the time of day.

(1873)

A Vision

1

I lost the love of heaven above;
I spurn'd the lust of earth below;
I felt the sweets of fancied love, —
And hell itself my only foe.

2

I lost earth's joys but felt the glow
Of heaven's flame abound in me:
Till loveliness and I did grow
The bard of immortality.

3

I loved, but woman fell away;
I hid me from her faded fame:
I snatch'd the sun's eternal ray, —
And wrote till earth was but a name.

4

In every language upon earth,
On every shore, o'er every sea,
I gave my name immortal birth,
And kept my spirit with the free.

(1844)

(1924)

JOHN KEATS
(1795–1821)

Keats was born in London in 1795 as the son of a stable keeper. His parents both died before he was fifteen. His guardian sent him as an apprentice to a surgeon. Keats was quite skillful at his work, but he did not like it, and seven years later he decided to give up medicine and become a poet. In 1819 he published his first book of poems, which received cruel reviews, but he kept on working undauntedly. Keats' short life was not a happy one. His last three years, during which he wrote all his best-known works, among them lyrics, ballads, romances and epic sequences, was overshadowed by his oncoming illness. In the year 1818 Keats went on a walking tour of the English Lake District, Scotland and Ireland from which he returned with a chronically ulcerated throat. In the autumn of the same year he fell in love with Fanny Brawne. They became engaged, but Keats' dedication to his poetry, his poverty and his increasingly growing illness made marriage impossible and love a torment. Between January and September 1819 Keats achieved the culmination of his poetic career when virtually masterpiece followed masterpiece. In the fall of 1820 Keats went to Italy in order to seek a milder climate. He reached Rome in November 1820, and died there shortly after his arrival in February 1821. He was buried in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome with the following words engraved on his tomb: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water".

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
 Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

When a new planet swims into his ken;
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
 He star'd at the Pacific – and all his men
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise –
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

(1816)

(1816)

On Seeing the Elgin Marbles

My spirit is too weak; mortality
 Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
 And each imagined pinnacle and steep
 Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
 Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.
 Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep,
 That I have not the cloudy winds to keep
 Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
 Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
 Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;
 So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
 Wasting of old Time -with a billowy main,
 A sun, a shadow of a magnitude.

(1817)

(1817)

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

Oh what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering?
 The sedge has withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

Oh what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 So haggard and so woe-begone?
 The squirrel's granary is full,
 And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
 With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
 Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
 Full beautiful – a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
 And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
 And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
 And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
 And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
 A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
 And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said –
 'I love thee true'.

She took me to her elfin grot,
 And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
 With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep
 And there I dreamed – Ah! woe betide! –
The latest dream I ever dreamt
 On the cold hill side.
I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried – 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall!'

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
 With horrid warning gaped wide,
 And I awoke and found me here,
 On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

(1819)

(1820)

Ode to a Nightingale

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness, –
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
 But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
 Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain -
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music: – Do I wake or sleep?

(1819)

(1820)

Ode on a Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thou express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunt about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter: therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal – yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," – that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

(1819)

(1820)

Bright Star

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art –
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors –
No – yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever – or else swoon to death.

(1819)

(1838)

When I Have Fears

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in characterly,
Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love; – then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

(1818)

(1848)

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
(1806–1861)

She was born at Cohnadatia Hall near Durham, in 1806, the daughter of a Creole plantation owner Edward Barrett. Her mother was Mary Graham-Clarke of a wealthy Newcastle family. She was educated at home where she studied Latin and Greek, and read history, philosophy and literature avidly. But as her intellectual and literary powers matured, her personal life became increasingly circumscribed by both ill health and her tyrannically protective father, who had forbidden any of his eleven children to marry. She published her first poem, anonymously, at the age of fourteen. In 1826 she published, also anonymously, *An Essay on Mind and Other Poems*. The publishing of *The Cry of the Children* in 1841 gave her career a great impulse. By the age of thirty-nine she was a prominent woman of letters. Robert Browning began courting her, which led to their secret marriage and elopement. She accompanied her husband to Italy, which became her home almost continuously until her death. The Brownings settled in Florence, and there she wrote *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851) under the inspiration of the Tuscan struggle for liberty. *Aurora Leigh*, the largest of her longer poems, appeared in 1856. In 1850 *The Sonnets from the Portuguese* – the history of her own love-story, thinly disguised by its title – had appeared. In 1860 she issued a collected edition of her poems under the title, *Poems before Congress*. She was passionately admired by contemporaries for her moral and emotional ardour, and her energetic engagement with the issues of her day.

From *Sonnets from the Portuguese*

22

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point, – what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay

Rather on earth, Belovèd, – where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

36

When we met first and loved, I did not build
Upon the event with marble. Could it mean
To last, a love set pendulous between
Sorrow and sorrow? Nay, I rather thrilled,
Distrusting every light that seemed to gild
The onward path, and feared to overlean
A finger even. And, though I have grown serene
And strong since then, I think that God has willed
A still renewable fear ... O love, O troth
Lest these enclaspèd hands should never hold,
This mutual kiss drop down between us both
As an unowned thing, once the lips being cold.
And Love, be false! if he, to keep one oath,
Must lose one joy, by his life's star foretold,

43

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints! – I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! – and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

(1845–47)

(1850)

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
(1809–1892)

Tennyson was born in the rectory of Somersby in Lincolnshire as the fourth son in a family of twelve children. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was acquainted with A. H. Hallam. In 1830 he published *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, which were cruelly and severely criticised. In 1832, he travelled with Hallam on the Continent. Hallam's sudden death, in 1833, seemed an overwhelming calamity to his friend. Not only the long elegy *In Memoriam* but also many of Tennyson's other poems are tributes to this early friendship. His early volumes of poetry (1831 and 1832) were attacked as "obscure" or "affected" by some of the reviewers. Tennyson suffered acutely under hostile criticism, but also profited from it. His volume published in 1842 demonstrated a remarkable advance in taste and technical merit, and brought him fame and recognition. In 1850 Tennyson was appointed Poet Laureate and in the same year he married Emily Sellwood, whom he had loved for thirteen years, but whom his poverty had prevented from marrying. He died in 1892 and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Queen Victoria was an ardent admirer of Tennyson's work, and in 1884 created him Baron Tennyson, of Blackdown in the County of Sussex and of Freshwater in the Isle of Wight. He was the first English writer raised to the Peerage.

*The Kraken*⁴⁷

Below the thunders of the upper deep,
Far far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides: above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumbered and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant fins the slumbering green.

⁴⁷ A mythical sea beast of gigantic size.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battering upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by men and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

(1830)

Lady of Shalott

Part I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?

Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to towered Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,

And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse,
Like some bold seer in a trance
Seeing all his own mischance,
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right –
The leaves upon her falling light –
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,

Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

(1831–32)

(1832, 1842)

Break, Break, Break

Break, break, break
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

(1834)

(1842)

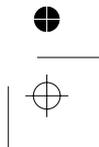
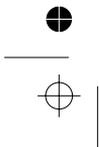
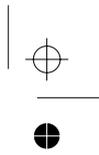
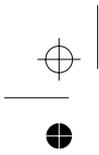
ROBERT BROWNING
(1812–1889)

Browning was born in Camberwell in 1812. His father's mother was a Creole and his mother's father a German who had settled in Scotland. He was educated mainly by his father and private tutors. Until the time of his marriage, at the age of thirty-four, he was rarely absent from his parents' home. He married Elizabeth Barrett, the best-known literary woman of England whose fame was for many years greater than Browning's. For fifteen years they lived an ideally happy life in Pisa and Florence. In 1861 Elizabeth died, and Browning left with his son for England. The rest of his life he lived in London and Venice. The majority of his works was published in the last twenty-five years of his life. From these he received recognition and came to be ranked with Tennyson. The characteristics of his poems were a strong psychological interest in the form of the dramatic monologue, and a tendency to obscure or to deliberately use language that is not straightforward.

*My Last Duchess*⁴⁸
Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fr Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fr Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,

⁴⁸ The poem is based on incidents in the life of Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara in Italy, whose first wife, Lucrezia, a young woman died in 1561 after three years of marriage. Following her death, the Duke negotiated through an agent to marry a niece of the count of Tyrol. Browning represents the Duke as addressing this agent.



Is ample warrant that no just pretence
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

(1842)

Meeting At Night

I.

The grey sea and the long black land;
 And the yellow half-moon large and low;
 And the startled little waves that leap
 In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
 As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
 And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

II.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
 Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
 A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
 And blue spurt of a lighted match,
 And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
 Than the two hearts beating each to each!

(1845)

Parting At Morning

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
 And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
 And straight was a path of gold for him,
 And the need of a world of men for me.

(1845)

Love in a Life

I.

Room after room,
I hunt the house through
We inhabit together.
Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt find her –
Next time, herself! – not the trouble behind her
Left in the curtain, the couch's perfume!
As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath blossomed anew:
Yon looking-glass gleaned at the wave of her feather.

II.

Yet the day wears,
And door succeeds door;
I try the fresh fortune –
Range the wide house from the wing to the centre.
Still the same chance! She goes out as I enter.
Spend my whole day in the quest, – who cares?
But 'tis twilight, you see, – with such suites to explore,
Such closets to search, such alcoves to importune!

(1855)



EMILY BRONTË
(1818–1848)

Emily Brontë was born at Thornton in Yorkshire to Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell. She was the younger sister of Charlotte Brontë and the fifth of six children. In 1820, the family moved to Haworth, West Yorkshire, where Emily's father was perpetual curate, and it was in these surroundings the sisters' literary talent flourished. In childhood, after the death of their mother, the three sisters and their brother Branwell created imaginary lands (Angria, Gondal, Gaaldine), which featured in stories they wrote. Mr. Brontë educated his children himself and discussed poetry, history and politics with them as well. In 1838, Emily commenced work as a governess at Miss Patchett's Ladies Academy at Law Hill Hall, near Halifax. Later, with her sister Charlotte, she attended a private school in Brussels. It was the discovery of Emily's poetic talent by her family that led her and her sisters, Charlotte and Anne, to publish a joint collection of their poetry in 1846. To evade contemporary prejudice against female writers, all three used male pseudonyms, Emily's being "Ellis Bell". She subsequently published her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, in 1847. She died on December 19, 1848 of tuberculosis, and was interred in family vault at the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Haworth. Her poems share a drive to break through the constrictions of ordinary life, either by the transfigurative power of the imagination, by union with another, or by death itself. Her concern with a visionary world links her to the Romantic poets, but her hymnlike stanzas have a haunting quality that distinguishes her individual voice.

Spellbound

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.
And the storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.

(1846)

The Night-Wind

In summer's mellow midnight,
A cloudless moon shone through
Our open parlour window,
And rose-trees wet with dew.

I sat in silent musing;
The soft wind waved my hair;
It told me heaven was glorious,
And sleeping earth was fair.

I needed not its breathing
To bring such thoughts to me;
But still it whispered lowly,
How dark the woods will be!

"The thick leaves in my murmur
Are rustling like a dream,
And all their myriad voices
Instinct with spirit seem."

I said, "Go, gentle singer,
Thy wooing voice is kind:
But do not think its music
Has power to reach my mind.

"Play with the scented flower,
The young tree's supple bough,
And leave my human feelings
In their own course to flow."

The wanderer would not heed me;
Its kiss grew warmer still.
"O come!" it sighed so sweetly;
"I'll win thee 'gainst thy will."

"Were we not friends from childhood?
Have I not loved thee long?
As long as thou, the solemn night,
Whose silence wakes my song."

"And when thy heart is resting
Beneath the church-aisle stone,
I shall have time for mourning,
And Thou for being alone."

(1840)

(1850)

No Coward Soul Is Mine

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life – that in me has rest,
As I – undying Life – have power in thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

EMILY BRONTË

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The stedfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.
Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Since thou art Being and Breath,
And what thou art may never be destroyed

(1850)

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
(1830–1894)

Christina Georgina Rossetti was the sister of artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as well as of William Michael Rossetti and Maria Francesca Rossetti. Their father, Gabriele Rossetti, was an Italian poet and a political asylum seeker from Naples, and their mother, Frances Polidori, was the sister of Lord Byron's friend and physician, John William Polidori. In the 1840's her family was stricken with severe financial difficulties due to the deterioration of her father's physical and mental health, and when she was 14, Rossetti herself suffered a nervous breakdown. At this point, she, her mother and her sister became intensely involved with the Anglo-Catholic movement within the Church of England. For the rest of her life, Rossetti governed herself by strict religious principles. She cancelled plans for marriage on two occasions due to religious scruples. She lived a quiet life, occupying herself with charitable work, with her family and with writing poetry. Her poetry did not gain notice until the publication of *Goblin Market and Other Poems* in 1862. Some readers have noted its likeness to Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* given both poems' religious themes of temptation and sin, and of redemption by vicarious suffering. She was ambivalent about women's suffrage, but many scholars have identified feminist themes in her poetry. In 1893 Rossetti contracted cancer and died the following year, in 1894.

A Birthday

My heart is like a singing bird
 Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
 Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
 That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
 Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
 Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
 And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
 In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
 Is come, my love is come to me.

(1862)

Sweet Death

The sweetest blossoms die.
 And so it was that, going day by day
 Unto the Church to praise and pray,
And crossing the green churchyard thoughtfully,
 I saw how on the graves the flowers
 Shed their fresh leaves in showers,
And how their perfume rose up to the sky
 Before it passed away.

The youngest blossoms die.
 They die and fall and nourish the rich earth
 From which they lately had their birth;
Sweet life, but sweeter death that passeth by
 And is as though it had not been: –
 All colours turn to green;
The bright hues vanish and the odours fly,
 The grass hath lasting worth.

And youth and beauty die.
 So be it, O my God, Thou God of truth:
 Better than beauty and than youth
Are Saints and Angels, a glad company;
 And Thou, O Lord, our Rest and Ease,
 Art better far than these.
Why should we shrink from our full harvest? why
 Prefer to glean with Ruth?

(1862)

When I am Dead, My Dearest

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

(1862)

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
(1844–1889)

Hopkins was born near London into a large and cultivated family in comfortable circumstances. After an outstanding career at Highgate School, he entered Oxford in 1863, where he was exposed to a variety of Victorian ways of thinking, both secular and religious. He was attracted to the High Church movement represented by Edward Pusey, and then to Roman Catholicism. Hopkins became a Roman Catholic in 1866, and then entered the Jesuit noviciate in 1868. His decision to become a priest and, in particular, a Jesuit priest, heightened his alienation, for in the eyes of many Victorian Protestants, the Jesuit order was regarded with distrust. In 1884 he was appointed to the chair of Greek at Dublin University. He was a poet of intense originality and a skilful innovator of rhythm. His poems, none of which was published in his lifetime, were collected by Robert Bridges, who published a small selection in *Poets and Poetry of the Century*. From the beginning of the 20th century he was increasingly recognised as a major writer. His impact was seen as giving a renewal of energy, seriousness and originality to poetry.

The Starlight Night

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare! –
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

Buy then! bid then! – What? – Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow shallows!
These are indeed the barn; withindoors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

(1918)

The Windhover
To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom
of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing,
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! And the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O, my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-beak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

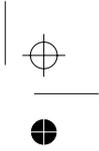
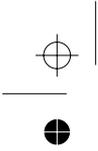
(1918)

The Sea and the Skylark

On ear and ear two noises too old to end
Trench – right, the tide that ramps against the shore;
With a flood or a fall, low lull-off or all roar,
Frequenting there while moon shall wear and wend.

Left hand, off land, I hear the lark ascend,
His rash-fresh re-winded new-skeinèd score
In crisps of curl off wild winch whirl, and pour
And pelt music, till none 's to spill nor spend.

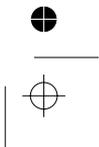
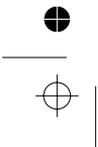
How these two shame this shallow and frail town!
How ring right out our sordid turbid time,
Being pure! We, life's pride and cared-for crown,



GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime:
Our make and making break, are breaking, down
 To man's last dust, drain fast towards man's first slime.

(1918)



THOMAS HARDY
(1840–1928)

Thomas Hardy was a novelist, short story writer, and poet of the naturalist movement, who delineated characters struggling against their passions and circumstances. He was born at Higher Bockhampton near Dorchester in Dorset. His father was a stonemason. His mother was ambitious and well-read and supplemented his formal education. Hardy trained as an architect in Dorchester before moving to London. While he was completing his general education he was becoming more and more interested both in fiction and poetry. He decided to concentrate on fiction and his first real success was launched with *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872). In 1898 Hardy published his first volume of poetry, *Wessex Poems*, a collection of poems written over 30 years. Hardy claimed poetry was his first love, and published collections until his death in 1928. Hardy was a confirmed atheist. Some attributed the bleak outlook of many of his novels as reflecting his view of the absence of God, but his sense of the waste and frustration involved in human life, his insistent irony when faced with moral or metaphysical questions is part of the late Victorian mood. His poetry was not as well received by his contemporaries as his novels had been. The poems deal with themes of disappointment in love and life, and mankind's long struggle against indifference to human suffering. A vein of regret tinges his often seemingly banal themes. His poems range in style from the epic closet drama *Dynasts* to smaller poems which are often hopeful or even cheerful.

I Look Into My Glass

I look into my glass,
And view my wasting skin,
And say, "Would God it came to pass
My heart had shrunk as thin!"

For then, I, undistrest
By hearts grown cold to me,
Could lonely wait my endless rest
With equanimity.



THOMAS HARDY

But Time, to make me grieve,
Part steals, lets part abide;
And shakes this fragile frame at eve
With throbbings of noontide.

(1898)

Neutral Tones

We stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
– They had fallen from an ash, and were gray.

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles of years ago;
And some words played between us to and fro
On which lost the more by our love.

The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing
Alive enough to have strength to die;
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing....

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

(1867)

(1898)



The Darkling Thrush

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When Frost was spectre-gray,
 And Winter's dregs made desolate
 The weakening eye of day
 The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
 Like strings of broken lyres,
 And all mankind that haunted nigh
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
 The Century's corpse outleant,
 His crypt the cloudy canopy,
 The wind his death-lament.
 The ancient pulse of germ and birth
 Was shrunken hard and dry,
 And every spirit upon earth
 Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
 The bleak twigs overhead
 In a full-hearted evensong
 Of joy illimited;
 An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
 In blast-beruffled plume,
 Had chosen thus to fling his soul
 Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
 Of such ecstatic sound
 Was written on terrestrial things
 Afar or nigh around,
 That I could think there trembled through
 His happy good-night air
 Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
 And I was unaware.

*(Dec. 31, 1900)**(1902)*

ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN
(1859–1936)

A. E. Housman was born in Fockbury, Worcestershire. He was educated first in King Edward's School, then in Bromsgrove School where he won prizes for his poetry. In 1877 he won a scholarship to St John's College, Oxford, where he studied classics. In 1881, however, he failed his final examinations and pursued classical studies independently and published scholarly articles on authors such as Horace, Propertius, Ovid, Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles. He gradually built up a high reputation due to which he was offered the professorship of Latin at University College London in 1892, which he accepted. In 1911 he took the Kennedy Professorship of Latin at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he remained for the rest of his life. During his lifetime only two volumes of his poetry appeared in print: *A Shropshire Lad* (1922) and *Last Poems* (1922). After his death his brother Laurence Housman had another two volumes published, *More Poems* (1936) and *Complete Poems* (1939). In these poems, Housman appears more open and candid about his homosexuality and atheism than in his lifetime. Housman always found his true vocation in classical studies and treated poetry as a secondary activity. In 1933 he gave a lecture, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, in which he argued that poetry should appeal to the emotions rather than the intellect. He died in Cambridge in 1936. His ashes are buried near St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, in Shropshire. The melancholic and wryly ironic tone pervades throughout his poetry, which was mainly influenced by Greek and Latin poetry, the traditional ballad and the lyrics of the German poet Heinrich Heine.

Epitaph On An Army of Mercenaries

These, in the day when heaven was falling,
The hour when earth's foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling
And took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended;
They stood, and earth's foundations stay;
What God abandoned, these defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay.

(1922)

The Day of Battle

“Far I hear the bugle blow
To call me where I would not go,
And the guns begin the song,
‘Soldier, fly or stay for long.’

Comrade, if to turn and fly
Made a soldier never die,
Fly I would, for who would not?
‘Tis sure no pleasure to be shot.

But since the man that runs away
Lives to die another day,
And cowards' funerals, when they come,
Are not wept so well at home,

Therefore, though the best is bad,
Stand and do the best, my lad;
Stand and fight and see your slain,
And take the bullet in your brain.”

(1922)

The Street Sounds to the Soldiers' Tread

The street sounds to the soldiers' tread,
And out we troop to see:
A single redcoat turns his head,
He turns and looks at me.

ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN

My man, from sky to sky's so far,
We never crossed before;
Such leagues apart the world's ends are,
We're like to meet no more;

What thoughts at heart have you and I
We cannot stop to tell;
But dead or living, drunk or dry,
Soldier, I wish you well.

(1922)

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS
(1865–1939)

Yeats was born in Dublin. His father's family, of English stock, had been in Ireland for at least two hundred years; his mother's family, originally from Devon, had been for some generations at Sligo, in the west of Ireland. He studied art, but soon gave it up in order to concentrate on poetry. He developed an interest in mystic religion and the supernatural. Being a nationalist, Yeats applied himself to creating an Irish national theatre with the help of Lady Gregory (an Irish woman, who influenced Yeats to become involved in Irish nationalism) and others. In 1898 Yeats, Edward Martyn, George Moore and Lady Gregory founded the Irish Literary Theatre. The following year they staged their first performance with Yeats' *The Countess Cathleen*. In 1904 a wealthy English Quaker bought the Mechanics' Institute in Dublin, which was converted into the Abbey Theatre. With each succeeding collection of poems Yeats moved further from the elaborate Pre-Raphaelite style of the 1890s. Many of Yeats' poems in his second period reflect his desperate love of Maud Gonne, a beautiful actress and violent Irish nationalist. In his poems and plays written after 1916 he achieved a spare, colloquial lyricism wholly unlike his earlier manner. He served as a senator of the Irish Free State from 1922 to 1928. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923. Yeats also published collections of essays and edited many books, the most important being *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936). When he died in January 1939, he left a large body of verse behind.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the mourning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

(1892)

The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

(1919)

(1920, 1921)



Leda and the Swan

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By his dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
How can anybody, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins, engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

(1923)

(1924, 1928)

Sailing to Byzantium

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
– Those dying generations – at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,



Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

(1926)

(1927)

Among School Children

I
I walk through the long schoolroom questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and histories,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way – the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man.

II

I dream of a Ledaean body, bent
Above a sinking fire. a tale that she
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to tragedy –
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
Into the yolk and white of the one shell.

III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age –
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler's heritage –
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.

IV

Her present image floats into the mind –
Did Quattrocento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?
And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once – enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow.

V

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her Son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?

VI

Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
Soldier Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But those the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts – O presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolise –
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise;

VIII

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul.
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

(1926)

(1927)

Byzantium

The unpurged images of day recede;
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed;
Night resonance recedes, night walkers' song
After great cathedral gong;
A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains
All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and the mire of human veins.

Before me floats an image, man or shade,
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
May unwind the winding path;
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
Breathless mouths may summon;
I hail the superhuman;
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
In glory of changeless metal
Common bird or petal
And all complexities of mire or blood.

At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come
And all complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood,
Spirit after Spirit! The smithies break the flood.
The golden smithies of the Emperor!
Marbles of the dancing floor
Break bitter furies of complexity,
Those images that yet
Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.

(1930)

(1932)

EDWARD THOMAS
(1878–1917)

Thomas was born in London to Welsh parents. He was educated in London and then in 1898 he received a history scholarship to Lincoln College, Oxford. He produced over thirty books between 1897 and 1917, and also edited sixteen anthologies and editions. Overwork and the constant anxiety over his meager income finally led to a severe depression and his breakdown in 1911. During his time spent working as a literary critic he had also reviewed poetry, but never made a serious attempt to write poems himself. In 1913 he met Robert Frost (American poet), who encouraged him to write poems. From the autumn of 1914 he gradually found that poems began to pour out of him. His poetic output surged within a space of two years. He enlisted in 1915 attracted by a salary that would help to support his growing family. While on duty at an observation post on 9th April 1917 he was killed by the blast of a shell. His *Collected Poems* was published in 1920 after his death. Thomas' poetry differs from that of other famous 'war poets' such as Wilfred Owen in the mere fact that he did not concentrate directly on the experience of war in his poetry. The love of the English countryside, which pervades much of his work in prose, is expressed with great lyrical beauty and subtlety in his poems.

February Afternoon

Men heard this roar of parleying starlings, saw,
A thousand years ago even as now,
Black rooks with white gulls following the plough
So that the first are last until a caw
Commands that last are first again, - a law
Which was of old when one, like me, dreamed how
A thousand years might dust lie on his brow
Yet thus would birds do between hedge and shaw.

Time swims before me, making as a day
A thousand years, while the broad ploughland oak
Roars mill-like and men strike and bear the stroke
Of war as ever, audacious or resigned,
And God still sits aloft in the array
That we have wrought him, stone-deaf and stone-blind.

(1915)

(1917)

The Owl

Downhill I came, hungry, and yet not starved;
Cold, yet had heat within me that was proof
Against the North wind; tired, yet so that rest
Had seemed the sweetest thing under a roof.

Then at the inn I had food, fire, and rest,
Knowing how hungry, cold, and tired was I.
All of the night was quite barred out except
An owl's cry, a most melancholy cry

Shaken out long and clear upon the hill,
No merry note, nor cause of merriment,
But one telling me plain what I escaped
And others could not, that night, as in I went.

And salted was my food, and my repose,
Salted and sobered, too, by the bird's voice
Speaking for all who lay under the stars,
Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice

(1915)

(1917)

Rain

Rain, midnight rain, nothing but the wild rain
On this bleak hut, and solitude, and me
Remembering again that I shall die
And neither hear the rain nor give it thanks
For washing me cleaner than I have been
Since I was born into this solitude.
Blessed are the dead that the rain rains upon:
But here I pray that none whom once I loved
Is dying tonight or lying still awake
Solitary, listening to the rain,
Either in pain or thus in sympathy
Helpless among the living and the dead,
Like a cold water among broken reeds,
Myriads of broken reeds all still and stiff,
Like me who have no love which this wild rain
Has not dissolved except the love of death,
If love it be towards what is perfect and
Cannot, the tempest tells me, disappoint.

*(1916)**(1917)*

D. H. LAWRENCE
(1885–1930)

David Herbert Lawrence was born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire in 1885. His father was a miner and his mother a former schoolmistress. The young Lawrence attended Beauvale Board School from 1891 until 1898, becoming the first local pupil to win a County Council scholarship to Nottingham High School in nearby Nottingham. He went on to become a full-time student and received a teaching certificate from University College Nottingham in 1908. During these early years he was working on his first poems, some short stories, and a draft of a novel, *Laetitia*, that was eventually to become *The White Peacock*. At the end of 1907 he won a short story competition in the Nottingham Guardian, which provided him with a wider recognition for his literary talents. He worked as a schoolmaster before turning to writing as a full profession. Apart from the years in England during the First World War, he lived mostly abroad, in Italy, Australia and New Mexico. Among his best-known novels are *The White Peacock* (1911), *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* (1920), *Aaron's Rod* (1922), *Kangaroo* (1923), *The Plumed Servant* (1926), and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). Beside his novels he also wrote many short stories, essays and poems. Lawrence wrote almost eight hundred poems, most of them relatively short. His first poems were written in 1904 at the age of nineteen and two of his poems, *Dreams Old and Dreams Nascent*, were among his earliest published works in *The English Review*. Many of his later works, however, took the idea of free verse to the extremes of lacking all rhyme and metre so that they are little different from short ideas or memos, which could well have been written in prose.

Piano

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
to the old Sunday evenings at home, with the winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

(1918)

Baby Tortoise

You know what it is to be born alone,
Baby tortoise!
The first day to heave your feet little by little from the shell,
Not yet awake,
And remain lapsed on earth,
Not quite alive.

A tiny, fragile, half-animate bean.

To open your tiny beak-mouth, that looks as if it would never open,

Like some iron door;
To lift the upper hawk-beak from the lower base
And reach your skinny little neck
And take your first bite at some dim bit of herbage,
Alone, small insect,
Tiny bright-eye,
Slow one.
To take your first solitary bite
And move on your slow, solitary hunt.
Your bright, dark little eye,
Your eye of a dark disturbed night,
Under its slow lid, tiny baby tortoise,
So indomitable.
No one ever heard you complain.

You draw your head forward, slowly, from your little wimple

And set forward, slow-dragging, on your four-pinned toes, Rowing
slowly forward.

Whither away, small bird?

Rather like a baby working its limbs,
Except that you make slow, ageless progress
And a baby makes none.

The touch of sun excites you,
And the long ages, and the lingering chill
Make you pause to yawn,
Opening your impervious mouth,
Suddenly beak-shaped, and very wide, like some suddenly gaping
pincers;

Soft red tongue, and hard thin gums,
Then close the wedge of your little mountain front,
Your face, baby tortoise.

Do you wonder at the world, as slowly you turn your head in its
wimple

And look with laconic, black eyes?
Or is sleep coming over you again,
The non-life?

You are so hard to wake.

Are you able to wonder?
Or is it just your indomitable will and pride of the first life
Looking round
And slowly pitching itself against the inertia
Which had seemed invincible?

The vast inanimate,
And the fine brilliance of your so tiny eye,
Challenger.

Nay, tiny shell-bird,
What a huge vast inanimate it is, that you must row against,
What an incalculable inertia.

Challenger,
Little Ulysses, fore-runner,
No bigger than my thumb-nail,
Buon viaggio.

All animate creation on your shoulder,
Set forth, little Titan, under your battle-shield.

The ponderous, preponderate,
Inanimate universe;
And you are slowly moving, pioneer, you alone.

How vivid your travelling seems now, in the troubled sunshine,
Stoic, Ulyssean atom;
Suddenly hasty, reckless, on high toes.

Voiceless little bird,
Resting your head half out of your wimple
In the slow dignity of your eternal pause.
Alone, with no sense of being alone,
And hence six times more solitary;
Fulfilled of the slow passion of pitching through immemorial ages
Your little round house in the midst of chaos.

Over the garden earth,
Small bird,
Over the edge of all things.
Traveller,
With your tail tucked a little on one side
Like a gentleman in a long-skirted coat.

All life carried on your shoulder,
Invincible fore-runner.

(1921)

How Beastly the Bourgeois Is

How beastly the bourgeois is
especially the male of the species –

Presentable, eminently presentable –
shall I make you a present of him?

Isn't he handsome? Isn't he healthy? Isn't he a fine specimen?
Doesn't he look the fresh clean Englishman, outside?
Isn't it God's own image? tramping his thirty miles a day
after partridges, or a little rubber ball?
wouldn't you like to be like that, well off, and quite the
thing

Oh, but wait!
Let him meet a new emotion, let him be faced with another
man's need,
let him come home to a bit of moral difficulty, let life
face him with a new demand on his understanding
and then watch him go soggy, like a wet meringue.
Watch him turn into a mess, either a fool or a bully.
Just watch the display of him, confronted with a new
demand on his intelligence,
a new life-demand.

How beastly the bourgeois is
especially the male of the species –

Nicely groomed, like a mushroom
standing there so sleek and erect and eyeable –
and like a fungus, living on the remains of a bygone life
sucking his life out of the dead leaves of greater life
than his own.

And even so, he's stale, he's been there too long.
Touch him, and you'll find he's all gone inside
just like an old mushroom, all wormy inside, and hollow
under a smooth skin and an upright appearance.



D. H. LAWRENCE

Full of seething, wormy, hollow feelings
rather nasty—
How beastly the bourgeois is!

Standing in their thousands, these appearances, in damp
England
what a pity they can't all be kicked over
like sickening toadstools, and left to melt back, swiftly
into the soil of England.

(1929)

RUPERT BROOKE
(1887–1915)

Rupert Brooke was born in Rugby, Warwickshire. He was educated there and at King's College, Cambridge, which he left with a degree in 1909. His first book of verse, *Poems*, was published in 1911. During 1913-14 he travelled extensively in Europe, the United States, Canada, and the South Seas writing poems and essays. When the war broke out he took part in the unsuccessful defence of Antwerp. He started writing his "war sonnets" in December 1914 that would make him famous. His five famous war sonnets appeared in *New Numbers* in early 1915. They sold in such great quantity that the journal exhausted its war supply of paper and closed down. Five months later, he died of dysentery and blood poisoning at sea near Scyros on April 23, 1915, and was buried there. His book, *1914 and Other Poems*, was published posthumously in 1915. His *Collected Poems* (1918), including the 1914 group of sonnets (published in 1915), caught the mood of romantic patriotism of the early war years. His *Letters from America* appeared in 1916 with an introduction by Henry James.

Peace

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,
Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
And all the little emptiness of love!

Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

(1915)

The Soldier

I should die, think only this of me:
 That there's some corner of a foreign field
 That is for ever England. There shall be
 In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
 A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
 Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;
 A body of England's, breathing English air,
 Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
 And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
 A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
 Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
 And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

(1915)

Heaven

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,
 Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
 Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
 Each secret fishy hope or fear.
 Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;
 But is there anything Beyond?
 This life cannot be All, they swear,
 For how unpleasant, if it were!
 One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
 Shall come of Water and of Mud;
 And, sure, the reverent eye must see
 A Purpose in Liquidity.
 We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
 The future is not Wholly Dry.
 Mud unto mud! – Death eddies near –
 Not here the appointed End, not here!
 But somewhere, beyond Space and Time.



RUPERT BROOKE

Is wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
And under that Almighty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in.
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

(1915)

ISAAC ROSENBERG
(1890–1918)

Rosenberg was born in Bristol of an Anglo-Jewish family that moved to the East End of London in 1897. Due to his family's poor financial circumstances he left school when he was fourteen, and became apprenticed as an engraver in a company of art publishers. In 1911 Rosenberg was provided with the opportunity to study at the Slade School of Art. By this time his interest in poetry had gradually increased and through the encouragement of his family he began circulating his poems. Despite his training, neither painting nor writing earned him any great monetary reward. In 1912 he published a pamphlet of poetry at his own expense, *Night and Day*. Rosenberg went to South Africa for health reasons in 1914. He was unable to make a career as a portrait artist as he had hoped. Due to financial reasons, Rosenberg returned to England in 1915 and joined the Bantam Battallion of the 12th Suffolk Regiment. Before Rosenberg entered the war, he published a volume of poems entitled *Youth* (1915), which was admired by both Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. He was killed at dawn on April 1, 1918, while on patrol. His work was experimental in character, probably influenced by his Jewish background. His best-known poems deal with his experiences and fierce apprehension of physical reality in the trenches. His collected works were published in 1937.

Break of Day in the Trenches

The darkness crumbles away
It is the same old druid Time as ever,
Only a live thing leaps my hand,
A queer sardonic rat,
As I pull the parapet's poppy
To stick behind my ear.
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew
Your cosmopolitan sympathies,
Now you have touched this English hand
You will do the same to a German
Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure
To cross the sleeping green between.

It seems you inwardly grin as you pass
Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes,
Less chanced than you for life,
Bonds to the whims of murder,
Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,
The torn fields of France.
What do you see in our eyes
At the shrieking iron and flame
Hurled through still heavens?
What quaver – what heart aghast?
Poppies whose roots are in men's veins
Drop, and are ever dropping;
But mine in my ear is safe,
Just a little white with the dust.

(1916)

(1922)

Dead Man's Dump

The plunging limbers over the shattered track
Racketed with their rusty freight,
Stuck out like many crowns of thorns,
And the rusty stakes like sceptres old
To stay the flood of brutish men
Upon our brothers dear.
The wheels lurched over sprawled dead
But pained them not, though their bones crunched,
Their shut mouths made no moan,
They lie there huddled, friend and foeman,
Man born of man, and born of woman,
And shells go crying over them
From night till night and now.

Earth has waited for them
All the time of their growth
Fretting for their decay:
Now she has them at last!
In the strength of their strength
Suspended – stopped and held.

What fierce imaginings their dark souls lit
Earth! have they gone into you?
Somewhere they must have gone,
And flung on your hard back
Is their souls' sack,
Emptied of God-ancestral essences.
Who hurled them out? Who hurled?

None saw their spirits' shadow shake the grass,
Or stood aside for the half used life to pass
Out of those doomed nostrils and the doomed mouth,
When the swift iron burning bee
Drained the wild honey of their youth.

What of us, who flung on the shrieking pyre,
Walk, our usual thoughts untouched,
Our lucky limbs as on ichor fed,
Immortal seeming ever?
Perhaps when the flames beat loud on us,
A fear may choke in our veins
And the startled blood may stop.

The air is loud with death,
The dark air spurts with fire
The explosions ceaseless are.
Timelessly now, some minutes past,
These dead strode time with vigorous life,
Till the shrapnel called 'an end!'
But not to all. In bleeding pangs
Some borne on stretchers dreamed of home,
Dear things, war-blotted from their hearts.

A man's brains splattered on
A stretcher-bearer's face;
His shook shoulders slipped their load,
But when they bent to look again
The drowning soul was sunk too deep
For human tenderness.

They left this dead with the older dead,
Stretched at the cross roads.
Burnt black by strange decay,
Their sinister faces lie
The lid over each eye,
The grass and coloured clay
More motion have than they,
Joined to the great sunk silences.

Here is one not long dead;
His dark hearing caught our far wheels,
And the choked soul stretched weak hands
To reach the living word the far wheels said,
The blood-dazed intelligence beating for light,
Crying through the suspense of the far torturing wheels
Swift for the end to break,
Or the wheels to break,
Cried as the tide of the world broke over his sight.

Will they come? Will they ever come?
Even as the mixed hoofs of the mules,
The quivering-bellied mules,
And the rushing wheels all mixed
With his tortured upturned sight,
So we crashed round the bend,
We heard his weak scream,
We heard his very last sound,
And our wheels grazed his dead face.

(1917)

(1922)

Louse Hunting

Nudes – stark and glistening,
Yelling in lurid glee. Grinning faces
And raging limbs
Whirl over the floor one fire.
For a shirt verminously busy
Yon soldier tore from his throat, with oaths
Godhead might shrink at, but not the lice.
And soon the shirt was aflame
Over the candle he'd lit while we lay.

Then we all sprang up and stript
To hunt the verminous brood.
Soon like a demons' pantomime
The place was raging.
See the silhouettes agape,
See the glibbering shadows
Mixed with the battled arms on the wall.
See gargantuan hooked fingers
Pluck in supreme flesh
To smutch supreme littleness.
See the merry limbs in hot Highland fling
Because some wizard vermin
Charmed from the quiet this revel
When our ears were half lulled
By the dark music
Blown from Sleep's trumpet.

*(1917)**(1922)*



WILFRED OWEN
(1893–1918)

Owen was born in Oswestry, Shropshire in 1893. He was the eldest of four children and brought up in the Anglican religion of the evangelical school. After leaving school he worked as lay assistant to a country vicar. He moved to Bordeaux (France) in 1913, as a teacher of English in the Berlitz School of Languages, and one year later he was a private teacher in a prosperous family in the Pyrenees. He enlisted in the Artists' Rifles in October 1915, which was followed by 14 months of training in England. He was drafted to France in 1917, the worst war winter. His total war experience was rather short: four months, from which only five weeks in the line. He was invalided out of the Front Line with shell shock. On this is based all his war poetry, which exposed the horrors of life in the trenches. Many of his descriptions of the frightening world of the trenches looks back to Virgil's Underworld and Dante's Inferno, with a distinctly personal combination of beauty and terror recalling Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry. After battle experience, thoroughly shocked by the horrors of war, he went to Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh. It is here that he began writing poetry and he soon fashioned his own style and approach to the war. His most mature works were all created in the very short space between August 1917 and September 1918. In August 1918, Owen returned to France. He was killed one week before the war ended. Characteristic of his poetry is the use of pararhyme, alliteration and assonance. In this he may be considered a precursor of the generation of W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender.

Anthem for Doomed Youth

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
 – Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
 Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
 Can patter out their hasty orisons.
 No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
 Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, –
 The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
 And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
 Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
 Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
 The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
 Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
 And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

(1917)

(1920)

On Seeing a Piece of Our Artillery Brought into Action

Be slowly lifted up, thou long black arm,
 Great gun towering towards Heaven, about to curse;
 Sway steep against them, and for years rehearse
 Huge imprecations like a blasting charm!
 Reach at that Arrogance which needs thy harm,
 And beat it down before its sins grow worse;
 Spend our resentment, cannon, – yea, disburse
 Our gold in shapes of flame, our breaths in storm.

Yet, for men's sakes whom thy vast malison
 Must wither innocent of enmity,
 Be not withdrawn, dark arm, thy spoilure done,
 Safe to the bosom of our prosperity.
 But when thy spell be cast complete and whole,
 May God curse thee, and cut thee from our soul!

(1917)

(1920)

The End

After the blast of lightning from the east,
The flourish of loud clouds, the Chariot Throne;
After the drums of time have rolled and ceased,
And by the bronze west long retreat is blown,

Shall Life renew these bodies? Of a truth
All death will he annul, all tears assuage?-
Or fill these void veins full again with youth,
And wash, with an immortal water, Age?

When I do ask white Age he saith not so:
'My head hangs weighed with snow.'
And when I hearken to the Earth, she saith:
'My fiery heart shrinks, aching. It is death.
Mine ancient scars shall not be glorified,
Nor my titanic tears, the seas, be dried.'

(1917)

(1920)

*Dulce Et Decorum Est*⁴⁹

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,

49 A famous Latin tag from Horace, *Odes* 3.2.13, according to which *It is sweet and meet to die for one's country. Sweet! And decorous!*

And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, –
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

(Oct. 1917-Mar. 1918)

(1920)

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