

“Sic transit gloria mundi,”  
 “How doth the busy bee,”  
 “Dum vivimus vivamus,”  
 I stay mine enemy!

Oh “veni, vidi, vici”  
 Oh caput cap-a-pie!  
 And oh “memento mori”  
 When I am far from thee!

Hurrah for Peter Parley!  
 Hurrah for Daniel Boone!  
 Three cheers, Sir, for the gentleman  
 Who first observed the moon!

Peter, put up the sunshine;  
 Patti, arrange the stars,  
 Tell Luna, tea is waiting,  
 And call your brother Mars!

Put down the apple, Adam,  
 And come away with me,  
 So shalt thou have a pippin  
 From off my father’s tree!

I climb the “Hill of Science,”  
 I “view the landscape o’er;”  
 Such transcendental prospect,  
 I ne’er beheld before!

Unto the Legislature  
 My country bids me go;  
 I’ll take my india rubbers,  
 In case the wind should blow!

During my education,  
 It was announced to me  
 That gravitation, stumbling,  
 Fell from an apple tree!

The earth upon an axis  
 Was once supposed to turn,  
 By way of a gymnastic  
 In honor of the sun!

It was the brave Columbus,  
A sailing o'er the tide,  
Who notified the nations  
Of where I would reside!

Mortality is fatal—  
Gentility is fine,  
Rascality, heroic;  
Insolvency, sublime!

Our Fathers being weary,  
Laid down on Bunker Hill;  
And tho' full many a morning,  
Yet they are sleeping still.

The trumpet, Sir, shall wake them,  
In dreams I see them rise,  
Each with a solemn musket  
A marching to the skies!

A coward will remain, Sir,  
Until the fight is done,  
But an immortal hero  
Will take his hat, and run!

Good bye, Sir, I am going;  
My country calleth me;  
Allow me, Sir, at parting,  
To wipe my weeping e'e.

In token of our friendship  
Accept this "Bonnie Doon,"  
And when the hand that plucked it  
Hath passed beyond the moon,

The memory of my ashes  
Will consolation be,  
Then, farewell, Tuscarora,  
And farewell, Sir, to thee!

St. Valentine—'52

Snow flakes.

I counted till they danced so  
Their slippers leaped the town,  
And then I took a pencil  
To note the rebels down.

And then they grew so jolly  
I did resign the prig,  
And ten of my once stately toes  
Are marshalled for a jig!

I robbed the Woods—  
The trusting Woods.  
The unsuspecting Trees  
Brought out their Burs and mosses—  
My fantasy to please.  
I scanned their trinkets curious—  
I grasped— I bore away—  
What will the solemn Hemlock—  
What will the Oak tree say?

Will there really be a “Morning”?  
Is there such a thing as “Day”?  
Could I see it from the mountains  
If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like Water lilies?  
Has It feathers like a Bird?  
Is it brought from famous countries  
Of which I have never heard?

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!  
Oh some Wise Man from the skies!  
Please to tell a little Pilgrim  
Where the place called “Morning” lies!

'Tis so much joy! 'Tis so much joy!  
If I should fail, what poverty!  
And yet, as poor as I,  
Have ventured all upon a throw!  
Have gained! Yes! Hesitated so—  
This side the Victory!

Life is but Life! And Death, but Death!  
Bliss is, but Bliss, and Breath but Breath!  
And if indeed I fail,  
At least, to know the worst, is sweet!  
Defeat means nothing but Defeat,  
No drearier, can befall!

And if I gain— Oh Gun at Sea!  
Oh Bells, that in the Steeples be!  
At first, repeat it slow!  
For Heaven is a different thing—  
Conjectured, and waked sudden in—  
And might extinguish me!

185

“Faith” is a fine invention  
When Gentlemen can see—  
But Microscopes are prudent  
In an Emergency.

I taste a liquor never brewed–  
From Tankards scooped in Pearl–  
Not all the Vats upon the Rhine  
Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of Air– am I–  
And Debauchee of Dew–  
Reeling– thro’ endless summer days–  
From inns of Molten Blue–

When “Landlords” turn the drunken Bee  
Out of the Foxglove’s door–  
When Butterflies– renounce their “drams”–  
I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats–  
And Saints– to windows run–  
To see the little Tippler  
Leaning against the– Sun–



It can't be "Summer"!  
That- got through!  
It's early- yet- for "Spring"!  
There's that long town of White- to cross-  
Before the Blackbirds sing!

It can't be "Dying"!  
It's too Rouge-  
The Dead shall go in White-  
So Sunset shuts my question down-  
With Cuffs of Chrysolite!

A Burdock- clawed my Gown-  
Not Burdock's- blame-  
But mine-  
Who went too near  
The Burdock's Den-

A Bog- affronts my shoe-  
What else have Bogs- to do-  
The only Trade they know-  
The splashing Men!  
Ah, pity- then!  
'Tis Minnows can despise!  
The Elephant's- calm eyes-  
Look further on!

We– Bee and I– live by the quaffing–  
'Tisn't all Hock– with us–  
Life has its Ale–  
But it's many a lay of the Dim Burgundy–  
We chant– for cheer– when the Wines– fail–

Do we “get drunk”?  
Ask the jolly Clovers!  
Do we “beat” our “Wife”?  
I– never wed–  
Bee– pledges his– in minutes– flagons–  
Dainty– as the tress– on her deft Head–

While runs the Rhine–  
He and I– revel–  
First– at the vat– and latest at the Vine–  
Noon– our last Cup–  
“Found dead”– “of Nectar”–  
By a humming Coroner–  
In a By-Thyme!

Wild Nights– Wild Nights!  
Were I with thee  
Wild Nights should be  
Our luxury!

Futile– the Winds  
To a Heart in Port–  
Done with the Compass  
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden  
Ah, the Sea!  
Might I but moor– Tonight–  
In Thee!

I shall keep singing!  
Birds will pass me  
On their way to Yellower Climes—  
Each— with a Robin's expectation—  
I— with my Redbreast—  
And my Rhymes—  
  
Late— when I take my place in summer—  
But— I shall bring a fuller tune—  
  
Vespers— are sweeter than Matins— Signor—  
Morning— only the seed of Noon—

I'm Nobody! Who are you?  
Are you– Nobody– Too?  
Then there's a pair of us?  
Don't tell! they'd advertise– you know!

How dreary– to be– Somebody!  
How public– like a Frog–  
To tell one's name– the livelong June  
To an admiring Bog!

Answer July—  
Where is the Bee—  
Where is the Blush—  
Where is the Hay?

Ah, said July—  
Where is the Seed—  
Where is the Bud—  
Where is the May—  
Answer Thee— Me—

Nay— said the May—  
Show me the Snow—  
Show me the Bells—  
Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay—  
Where be the Maize—  
Where be the Haze—  
Where be the Bur?

Here— said the Year—

Good Morning– Midnight–  
I'm coming Home–  
Day– got tired of Me–  
How could I– of Him?

Sunshine was a sweet place–  
I liked to stay–  
But Morn– didn't want me– now–  
So– Goodnight– Day!

I can look– can't I–  
When the East is Red?  
The Hills– have a way– then–  
That puts the Heart– abroad–

You– are not so fair– Midnight–  
I chose– Day–  
But– please take a little Girl–  
He turned away!



'Tis little I- could care for Pearls-  
Who own the ample sea-  
Or Brooches- when the Emperor-  
With Rubles- pelteth me-

Or Gold- who am the Prince of Mines-  
Or Diamonds- when have I  
A Diadem to fit a Dome-  
Continual upon me-

651

So much Summer  
Me for showing  
Illegitimate—  
Would a Smile's minute bestow  
Too exorbitant

To the Lady  
With the Guinea  
Look— If She should know  
Crumb of Mine  
A Robin's Larder  
Would suffice to stow

The name- of it- is “Autumn”-  
The hue- of it- is Blood-  
An Artery- upon the Hill-  
A Vein- along the Road-

Great Globules- in the Alleys-  
And Oh, the Shower of Stain-  
When Winds- upset the Basin-  
And spill the Scarlet Rain-

It sprinkles Bonnets- far below-  
It gathers ruddy Pools-  
Then- eddies like a Rose- away-  
Upon Vermilion Wheels-

Could I but ride indefinite  
As doth the Meadow Bee  
And visit only where I liked  
And No one visit me

And sport all Day with Buttercups  
And marry whom I may  
And dwell a little everywhere  
Or better, run away

With no Police to follow  
Or chase Him if He do  
Till He should jump Peninsulas  
To get away from me—

I said “But just to be a Bee”  
Upon a Raft of Air  
And row in Nowhere all Day long  
And anchor “off the Bar”

What Liberty! So Captives deem  
Who tight in Dungeons are.

Would you like summer? Taste of ours—  
Spices? Buy here!

Ill! We have berries, for the parching!  
Weary! Furloughs of down!

Perplexed! Estates of violet trouble ne'er looked on!  
Captive! We bring reprieve of roses!  
Fainting! Flasks of air!

Even for Death, a fairy medicine.  
But, which is it, sir?

Out of sight? What of that?  
See the Bird— reach it!  
Curve by Curve— Sweep by Sweep—  
Round the Steep Air—  
Danger! What is that to Her?  
Better 'tis to fall— there—  
Than debate— here—

Blue is Blue— the World through—  
Amber— Amber— Dew— Dew—  
Seek— Friend— and see—  
Heaven IS shy of Earth— that's all—  
Bashful Heaven— thy Lover's small—  
Hide— too— from thee—

748

Autumn– overlooked my Knitting–  
Dyes– said He– have I–  
Could disparage a Flamingo–  
Show Me them– said I–

Cochineal– I chose– for deeming  
It resemble Thee–  
And the little Border– Dusker–  
For resembling Me–

862

Light is sufficient to itself–

If Others want to see  
It can be had on Window Panes  
Some Hours in the Day.

But not for Compensation–  
It holds as large a Glow  
To Squirrel in the Himalay–  
Precisely– as to you.



Drab Habitation of Whom?

Tabernacle or Tomb—

Or Dome of Worm—

Or Porch of Gnome—

Or some Elf's Catacomb?

1003

Dying at my music!

Bubble! Bubble!

Hold me till the Octave's run!

Quick! Burst the Windows!

Ritardando!

Phials left, and the Sun!

1008

How still the Bells in Steeples stand  
Till swollen with the Sky—  
They leap upon their silver Feet—  
In frantic Melody!

1016

The Hills in Purple syllables–

The Day's Adventures tell–

To little Groups of Continents–

Just going Home from School.

1032

Who is the East?

The Yellow Man

Who may be Purple If He can

That carries in the Sun.

Who is the West?

The Purple Man

Who may be Yellow If He can

That lets Him out again.

1101

Between the form of Life and Life  
The difference is as big  
As Liquor at the Lip between  
And Liquor in the Jug

The latter– excellent to keep–  
But for ecstatic need–  
The corkless is superior–  
I know for I have tried–