I. A Volume of Stitched Lays

The Human Seasons

John Keats (31 Oct 1795 - 23 Feb 1821)

FOUR SEASONS fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honied cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

Rhapsodies

I. Spring

A Poet! He Hath Put His Heart to School!

William Wordsworth

A POET!—He hath put his heart to school,
Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
Which art hath lodged within his hand—must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its own divine vitality.

(Spring 1) **if everything happens that can't be done**

e e cummings (14 Oct 1894 - 3 Sep 1962)

IF EVERYTHING happens that can't be done
(and anything's righter
than books
could plan)
the stupidest teacher will almost guess
(with a run
skip
around we go yes)
there's nothing as something as one

ONE HASN'T a why or because or although
(and buds know better
than books
don't grow)
one's anything old being everything new
(with a what
which
around we come who)
one's everyanything so

SO WORLD is a leaf so a tree is a bough
(and birds sing sweeter
than books
tell how)
so here is away and so your is a my
(with a down
up
around again fly)
forever was never till now

*

NOW I love you and you love me
(and books are shuter
than books
can be)
and deep in the high that does nothing but fall
(with a shout
each
around we go all)
there's somebody calling who's we

WE'RE ANYTHING brighter than even the sun
(we're everything greater
than books
might mean)
we're everyanything more than believe
(with a spin
leap
alive we're alive)
we're wonderful one times one

(Spring 2) **The Lover: A Ballad**

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (15 May 1689 - 21 Aug 1762)

At length, by so much importunity press'd,
Take, C——, at once, the inside of my breast;
This stupid indiff'rence so often you blame,
Is not owing to nature, to fear, or to shame:
I am not as cold as a virgin in lead,
Nor is Sunday's sermon so strong in my head:
I know but too well how time flies along,
That we live but few years, and yet fewer are young.

But I hate to be cheated, and never will buy
Long years of repentance for moments of joy,
Oh! was there a man (but where shall I find
Good sense and good nature so equally join'd?)
Would value his pleasure, contribute to mine;
Not meanly would boast, nor would lewdly design;
Not over severe, yet not stupidly vain,
For I would have the power, tho' not give the pain.

No pedant, yet learned; no rake-helly gay,
Or laughing, because he has nothing to say;
To all my whole sex obliging and free,
Yet never be fond of any but me;
In public preserve the decorum that's just,
And shew in his eyes he is true to his trust;
Then rarely approach, and respectfully bow,
But not fulsomely pert, nor yet foppishly low.

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But when the long hours of public are past,
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,
May ev'ry fond pleasure that moment endear;
Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the airs of the crowd,
He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud.
Till lost in the joy, we confess that we live,
And he may be rude, and yet I may forgive.

And that my delight may be solidly fix'd,
Let the friend and the lover be handsomely mix'd;
In whose tender bosom my soul may confide,
Whose kindness can soothe me, whose counsel can guide.
From such a dear lover as here I describe,
No danger should fright me, no millions should bribe;
But till this astonishing creature I know,
As I long have liv'd chaste, I will keep myself so.

I never will share with the wanton coquette,
Or be caught by a vain affectation of wit.
The toasters and songsters may try all their art,
But never shall enter the pass of my heart.
I loath the lewd rake, the dress'd fopling despise:
Before such pursuers the nice virgin flies:
And as Ovid has sweetly in parable told,
We harden like trees, and like rivers grow cold.

(Spring 3) **The Sun Rising**

John Donne (22 Jan 1572 - 31 Mar 1631)

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
Late school boys and sour prentices,
Go tell court huntsmen that the king will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices,
Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams, so reverend and strong
Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long;
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and tomorrow late, tell me,
Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She's all states, and all princes, I,
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compared to this,
All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,
In that the world's contracted thus.
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere.

(Spring 4) **Heart and Service**

Sir Thomas Wyatt (?? ?? 1503 - 11 Oct 1542)

The heart and service to you proffer'd
With right good will full honestly,
Refuse it not, since it is offer'd,
But take it to you gentlely.

And though it be a small present,
Yet good, consider graciously
The thought, the mind, and the intent
Of him that loves you faithfully.

It were a thing of small effect
To work my woe thus cruelly,
For my good will to be abject:
Therefore accept it lovingly.

Pain or travel, to run or ride,
I undertake it pleasantly;
Bid ye me go, and straight I glide
At your commandement humbly.

Pain or pleasure, now may you plant
Even which it please you steadfastly;
Do which you list, I shall not want
To be your servant secretly.

And since so much I do desire
To be your own assuredly,
For all my service and my hire
Reward your servant liberally.

(Spring 5) **Desiderata**

Max Ehrmann (26 Sep 1872 - 9 Sep 1945)

GO PLACIDLY amid the noise and the haste,
and remember what peace there may be
in silence.
As far as possible, without surrender,
be on good terms with all persons.

SPEAK YOUR truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others,
even to the dull and the ignorant;
they too have their story.

AVOID LOUD and aggressive persons;
they are vexatious to the spirit.
If you compare yourself with others,
you may become vain or bitter,
for always there will be
greater and lesser
persons than yourself.

ENJOY YOUR achievements as well as your plans.
Keep interested in your own career, however humble;
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

EXERCISE CAUTION in your business affairs,
for the world is full of trickery.
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is;
many persons strive for high ideals,
and everywhere life is full of heroism.

BE YOURSELF.
Especially do not feign affection.
Neither be cynical about love;
for in the face of all aridity
and disenchantment,
it is as perennial as the grass.

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10

Take kindly the counsel of the years,
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you
in sudden misfortune.
But do not distress yourself
with dark imaginings.
Many fears are born of fatigue
and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.
You are a child of the universe
no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you,
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.
Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be.
And whatever your labors and aspirations,
in the noisy confusion of life,
keep peace in your soul.
With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.
Be cheerful.

Strive to be happy.

(Spring 6) ***I Met a Fool***

Jaques, As You Like It by William Shakespeare (?? Apr 1564 - 23 Apr 1616)

A FOOL, a fool! I met a fool i' the forest,
A motley fool; a miserable world!
As I do live by food, I met a fool
Who laid him down and bask'd him in the sun,
And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms,
In good set terms and yet a motley fool.
'Good morrow, fool,' quoth I. 'No, sir,' quoth he,
'Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me fortune:'
And then he drew a dial from his poke,
And, looking on it with lack-lustre eye,
Says very wisely, 'It is ten o'clock:
Thus we may see,' quoth he, 'how the world wags:
'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine,
And after one hour more 'twill be eleven;
And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
And thereby hangs a tale.' When I did hear
The motley fool thus moral on the time,
My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,
That fools should be so deep-contemplative,
And I did laugh sans intermission
An hour by his dial. O noble fool!
A worthy fool! Motley's the only wear.

*

O WORTHY fool! One that hath been a courtier,
And says, if ladies be but young and fair,
They have the gift to know it: and in his brain,
Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
After a voyage, he hath strange places cramm'd
With observation, the which he vents
In mangled forms. O that I were a fool!
I am ambitious for a motley coat.

IT IS my only suit;
Provided that you weed your better judgments
Of all opinion that grows rank in them
That I am wise. I must have liberty
Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom I please; for so fools have;
And they that are most galled with my folly,
They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?
The 'why' is plain as way to parish church:
He that a fool doth very wisely hit
Doth very foolishly, although he smart,
Not to seem senseless of the bob: if not,
The wise man's folly is anatomized
Even by the squandering glances of the fool.
Invest me in my motley; give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine.

II. Summer

A Drinking Song

William Butler Yeats

Wine comes in at the mouth
And love comes in at the eye;
That's all we shall know for truth
Before we grow old and die.
I lift the glass to my mouth,
I look at you, and I sigh.

(Summer 1) ***All Delights Are Vain***

Berowne, Love's Labors Lost by William Shakespeare (?? Apr 1564 - 23 Apr 1616)

WHY, ALL delights are vain, and that most vain
Which with pain purchased doth inherit pain:
As painfully to pore upon a book
    To seek the light of truth, while truth the while
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look.
    Light seeking light doth light of light beguile.
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
Study me how to please the eye indeed
    By fixing it upon a fairer eye,
Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed
    And give him light that it was blinded by.
Study is like the heaven's glorious sun,
    That will not be deep-searched with saucy looks.
Small have continual plodders ever won,
    Save base authority from others' books.
These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,
    That give a name to every fixèd star,
Have no more profit of their shining nights
    Than those that walk and wot not what they are.
Too much to know is to know naught but fame,
And every godfather can give a name.

(Summer 2) **When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer**

Walt Whitman (31 May 1819 - 26 Mar 1892)

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs,
the figures,
were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams,
to add, divide,
and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer
where he lectured
with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became
tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out
I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air,
and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

(Summer 3) **Love's Growth**

John Donne (22 Jan 1572 - 31 Mar 1631)

I SCARCE believe my love to be so pure
    As I had thought it was,
    Because it doth endure
Vicissitude, and season, as the grass;
Methinks I lied all winter, when I swore
My love was infinite, if spring make' it more.

BUT IF medicine, love, which cures all sorrow
With more, not only be no quintessence,
But mixed of all stuffs paining soul or sense,
And of the sun his working vigor borrow,
Love's not so pure, and abstract, as they use
To say, which have no mistress but their muse,
But as all else, being elemented too,
Love sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do.

AND YET no greater, but more eminent,
    Love by the spring is grown;
    As, in the firmament,
Stars by the sun are not enlarged, but shown,
Gentle love deeds, as blossoms on a bough,
From love's awakened root do bud out now.

IF, AS water stirred more circles be
Produced by one, love such additions take,
Those, like so many spheres, but one heaven make,
For they are all concentric unto thee;
And though each spring do add to love new heat,
As princes do in time of action get
New taxes, and remit them not in peace,
No winter shall abate the spring's increase.

(Summer 4) **The Time I've Lost In Wooing**

Thomas Moore (28 May 1779 - 25 Feb 1852)

The time I've lost in wooing,
In watching and pursuing
The light, that lies
In woman's eyes,
Has been my heart's undoing.
Though Wisdom oft has sought me,
I scorn'd the lore she brought me,
My only books
Were woman's looks,
And folly's all they've taught me.

Her smile when Beauty granted,
I hung with gaze enchanted,
Like him the Sprite,
Whom maids by night
Oft meet in glen that's haunted.
Like him, too, Beauty won me,
But while her eyes were on me,
If once their ray
Was turn'd away,
Oh! winds could not outrun me.

And are those follies going?
And is my proud heart growing
Too cold or wise
For brilliant eyes
Again to set it glowing?
No, vain, alas! th' endeavour
From bonds so sweet to sever;
Poor Wisdom's chance
Against a glance
Is now as weak as ever.

(Summer 5) **Forget Not Yet The Tried Intent**

Sir Thomas Wyatt (?? ?? 1503 - 11 Oct 1542)

Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant;
My great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet.

Forget not yet when first began
The weary life ye know, since whan
The suit, the service, none tell can;
Forget not yet.

Forget not yet the great assays,
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways;
The painful patience in denays,
Forget not yet.

Forget not yet, forget not this,
How long ago hath been and is
The mind that never meant amiss;
Forget not yet.

Forget not then thine own approved,
The which so long hath thee so loved,
Whose steadfast faith yet never moved;
Forget not this.

(Summer 6) **I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud**

William Wordsworth (7 Apr 1770 - 23 Apr 1850)

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.

III. Autumn

The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost (26 Mar 1874 - 29 Jan 1963)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

(Autumn 1) ***All The World's a Stage***

Jaques, As You Like It by William Shakespeare (?? Apr 1564 - 23 Apr 1616)

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion;
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

(Autumn 2) **It Is Later Than You Think**

Robert Service (16 Jan 1874 - 11 Sep 1958)

LONE AMID the café's cheer,
Sad of heart am I to-night;
Dolefully I drink my beer,
But no single line I write.
There's the wretched rent to pay,
Yet I glower at pen and ink:
Oh, inspire me, Muse, I pray,
It is later than you think!

HELLO! THERE'S a pregnant phrase.
Bravo! let me write it down;
Hold it with a hopeful gaze,
Gauge it with a fretful frown;
Tune it to my lyric lyre ...
Ah! upon starvation's brink,
How the words are dark and dire:
It is later than you think.

WEIGH THEM well .... Behold yon band,
Students drinking by the door,
Madly merry, bock in hand,
Saucers stacked to mark their score.
Get you gone, you jolly scamps;
Let your parting glasses clink;
Seek your long neglected lamps:
It is later than you think.

LOOK AGAIN: yon dainty blonde,
All allure and golden grace,
Oh so willing to respond
Should you turn a smiling face.
Play your part, poor pretty doll;
Feast and frolic, pose and prink;
There's the Morgue to end it all,
And it's later than you think.

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Yon's a playwright — mark his face,
Puffed and purple, tense and tired;
Pasha-like he holds his place,
Hated, envied and admired.
How you gobble life, my friend;
Wine, and woman soft and pink!
Well, each tether has its end:
Sir, it's later than you think.

See yon living scarecrow pass
With a wild and wolfish stare
At each empty absinthe glass,
As if he saw Heaven there.
Poor damned wretch, to end your pain
There is still the Greater Drink.
Yonder waits the sanguine Seine ...
It is later than you think.

Lastly, you who read; aye, you
Who this very line may scan:
Think of all you planned to do ...
Have you done the best you can?
See! the tavern lights are low;
Black's the night, and how you shrink!
God! and is it time to go?
Ah! the clock is always slow;
It is later than you think;
Sadly later than you think;
Far, far later than you think.

(Autumn 3) **A Lecture Upon the Shadow**

John Donne (22 Jan 1572 - 31 Mar 1631)

Stand still, and I will read to thee
A lecture, love, in love's philosophy.
These three hours that we have spent,
Walking here, two shadows went
Along with us, which we ourselves produc'd.
But, now the sun is just above our head,
We do those shadows tread,
And to brave clearness all things are reduc'd.
So whilst our infant loves did grow,
Disguises did, and shadows, flow
From us, and our cares; but now 'tis not so.
That love has not attain'd the high'st degree,
Which is still diligent lest others see.

Except our loves at this noon stay,
We shall new shadows make the other way.
As the first were made to blind
Others, these which come behind
Will work upon ourselves, and blind our eyes.
If our loves faint, and westwardly decline,
To me thou, falsely, thine,
And I to thee mine actions shall disguise.
The morning shadows wear away,
But these grow longer all the day;
But oh, love's day is short, if love decay.
Love is a growing, or full constant light,
And his first minute, after noon, is night.

(Autumn 4) **Sailing to Byzantium**

William Butler Yeats (13 Jun 1865 - 28 Jan 1939)

I.

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.

II.

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.

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III.

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.

IV.

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.

(Autumn 5) **A Dream Within a Dream**

Edgar Allan Poe (19 Jan 1809 - 7 Oct 1849)

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow —
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand —
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep — while I weep!
O God! Can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

(Autumn 6) **Byzantium**

William Butler Yeats (13 Jun 1865 - 28 Jan 1939)

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 starlit 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.

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.

IV. Winter

Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley (4 Aug 1792 - 8 Jul 1822)

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."

(Winter 1) **Lines Written in Early Spring**

William Wordsworth (7 Apr 1770 - 23 Apr 1850)

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

(Winter 2) **Time to Come**

Walt Whitman (31 May 1819 - 26 Mar 1892)

O, Death! a black and pierceless pall
Hangs round thee, and the future state;
No eye may see, no mind may grasp
That mystery of fate.

This brain, which now alternate throbs
With swelling hope and gloomy fear;
This heart, with all the changing hues,
That mortal passions bear—

This curious frame of human mould,
Where unrequited cravings play,
This brain, and heart, and wondrous form
Must all alike decay.

The leaping blood will stop its flow;
The hoarse death-struggle pass; the cheek
Lay bloomless, and the liquid tongue
Will then forget to speak.

The grave will take me; earth will close
O'er cold dull limbs and ashy face;
But where, O, Nature, where shall be
The soul's abiding place?

Will it e'en live? For though its light
Must shine till from the body torn;
Then, when the oil of life is spent,
Still shall the taper burn?

O, powerless is this struggling brain
To rend the mighty mystery;
In dark, uncertain awe it waits
The common doom, to die.

(Winter 3) **I am A Little World Cunningly Made**

John Donne (22 Jan 1572 - 31 Mar 1631)

I am a little world made cunningly
Of elements and an angelic sprite,
But black sin hath betray'd to endless night
My world's both parts, and oh both parts must die.
You which beyond that heaven which was most high
Have found new spheres, and of new lands can write,
Pour new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
Drown my world with my weeping earnestly,
Or wash it, if it must be drown'd no more.
But oh it must be burnt; alas the fire
Of lust and envy have burnt it heretofore,
And made it fouler; let their flames retire,
And burn me O Lord, with a fiery zeal
Of thee and thy house, which doth in eating heal.

(Winter 4) **The Conqueror Worm**

Edgar Allan Poe (19 Jan 1809 - 7 Oct 1849)

Lo! 't is a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly—
Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings
Invisible Wo!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

*

But see, amid the mimic rout,
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

(Winter 5) **Do Not Go Gentle**

Dylan Thomas (27 October 1914 – 9 November 1953)

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

(Winter 6) ***To Be or Not To Be***

Prince Hamlet, Hamlet
by William Shakespeare (?? Apr 1564 - 23 Apr 1616)

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovere'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

V. A Season Out Of Time

Death, Be Not Proud

Walt Whitman (31 May 1819 - 26 Mar 1892)

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

(Epilogue 1) **O Captain! My Captain!**

Walt Whitman (31 May 1819 - 26 Mar 1892)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

(Epilogue 2) **The Ballad of God-Makers**

G.K. Chesterton (29 May 1874 – 14 Jun 1936)

A bird flew out at the break of day
From the nest where it had curled,
And ere the eve the bird had set
Fear on the kings of the world.

The first tree it lit upon
Was green with leaves unshed;
The second tree it lit upon
Was red with apples red;

The third tree it lit upon
Was barren and was brown,
Save for a dead man nailed thereon
On a hill above a town.

That night the kings of the earth were gay
And filled the cup and can;
Last night the kings of the earth were chill
For dread of a naked man.

'If he speak two more words,' they said,
'The slave is more than the free;
If he speak three more words,' they said,
'The stars are under the sea.'

Said the King of the East to the King of the West,
I wot his frown was set,
'Lo, let us slay him and make him as dung,
It is well that the world forget.'

Said the King of the West to the King of the East,
I wot his smile was dread,
'Nay, let us slay him and make him a god,
It is well that our god be dead.'

*

They set the young man on a hill,
They nailed him to a rod;
And there in darkness and in blood
They made themselves a god.

And the mightiest word was left unsaid,
And the world had never a mark,
And the strongest man of the sons of men
Went dumb into the dark.

Then hymns and harps of praise they brought,
Incense and gold and myrrh,
And they thronged above the seraphim,
The poor dead carpenter.

'Thou art the prince of all,' they sang,
'Ocean and earth and air.'
Then the bird flew on to the cruel cross,
And hid in the dead man's hair.

'Thou art the son of the world.' they cried, '
'Speak if our prayers be heard.'
And the brown bird stirred in the dead man's hair
And it seemed that the dead man stirred.

Then a shriek went up like the world's last cry
From all nations under heaven,
And a master fell before a slave
And begged to be forgiven.

They cowered, for dread in his wakened eyes
The ancient wrath to see;
And a bird flew out of the dead Christ's hair,
And lit on a lemon tree.

(Epilogue 3) **The Dead Man Walking**

Thomas Hardy (2 Jun 1840 - 11 Jan 1928)

They hail me as one living,
But don't they know
That I have died of late years,
Untombed although?

I am but a shape that stands here,
A pulseless mould,
A pale past picture, screening
Ashes gone cold.

Not at a minute's warning,
Not in a loud hour,
For me ceased Time's enchantments
In hall and bower.

There was no tragic transit,
No catch of breath,
When silent seasons inched me
On to this death ....

— A Troubadour-youth I rambled
With Life for lyre,
The beats of being raging
In me like fire.

*

But when I practised eyeing
The goal of men,
It iced me, and I perished
A little then.

When passed my friend, my kinsfolk,
Through the Last Door,
And left me standing bleakly,
I died yet more;

And when my Love's heart kindled
In hate of me,
Wherefore I knew not, died I
One more degree.

And if when I died fully
I cannot say,
And changed into the corpse-thing
I am to-day,

Yet is it that, though whiling
The time somehow
In walking, talking, smiling,
I live not now.

(Epilogue 4) **Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Night**

Robert Frost (26 Mar 1874 - 29 Jan 1963)

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

(Epilogue 5) **The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**

T.S. Eliot (26 Sep 1888 - 4 Jan 1965)

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma percioche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question ...
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

*

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair —
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin —
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

*

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
    And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
    And should I then presume?
    And how should I begin?

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? ...

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald)
    brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet — and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat,
    and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

*

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it towards some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head
    Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
    That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups,
    after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns
    on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
    "That is not it at all,
    That is not what I meant, at all."

*

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old ... I grow old ...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.
We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

(Epilogue 6) **The Triple Fool**

John Donne (22 Jan 1572 - 31 Mar 1631)

I AM two fools, I know,
For loving, and for saying so
In whining poetry;
But where's that wiseman, that would not be I,
If she would not deny?
Then as th' earth's inward narrow crooked lanes
Do purge sea water's fretful salt away,
I thought, if I could draw my pains
Through rhyme's vexation, I should them allay.
Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,
For he tames it, that fetters it in verse.

BUT WHEN I have done so,
Some man, his art and voice to show,
Doth set and sing my pain;
And, by delighting many, frees again
Grief, which verse did restrain.
To love and grief tribute of verse belongs,
But not of such as pleases when 'tis read.
Both are increased by such songs,
For both their triumphs so are published,
And I, which was two fools, do so grow three;
Who are a little wise, the best fools be.

Fin...?

Dies Irae

I.
Day of wrath and doom impending!
David's word with Sybil's blending,
Heaven and earth in ashes ending!

II.
Oh, what fear man's bosom rendeth,
When from heaven the Judge descendeth,
On whose sentence all dependeth.

III.
Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth;
Through earth's sepulchres it ringeth;
All before the throne it bringeth.

IV.
Death is struck. and nature quaking.
All creation is awaking,
To its Judge an answer making.

V.
Lo, the book, exactly worded,
Wherein all hath been recorded,
Thence shall judgement be awarded.

VI.
When the Judge his seat attaineth,
And each hidden deed arraigneth,
Nothing unavenged remaineth.

VII.
What shall I, frail man, be pleading?
Who for me be interceding,
When the just are mercy needing?

VIII.
King of Majesty tremendous,
Who dost free salvation send us,
Fount of pity, then befriend us!

IX.
Think, kind Jesu!—my salvation
Caused Thy wondrous Incarnation;
Leave me not to reprobation.

X.
Faint and weary, Thou hast sought me,
On the Cross of suffering bought me.
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?

XI.
Righteous Judge, for sin's pollution
Grant Thy gift of absolution,
Ere the day of retribution.

XII.
Guilty, now I pour my moaning,
All my shame with anguish owning;
Spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning!

XIII.
Through the sinful woman shriven,
Through the dying thief forgiven,
Thou to me a hope hast given.

*

XIV.

WORTHLESS ARE my prayers and sighing,
Yet, good Lord, in grace complying,
Rescue me from fires undying.

XV.

WITH THY sheep a place provide me,
From the goats afar divide me,
To Thy right hand do Thou guide me.

XVI.

WHEN THE wicked are confounded,
Doomed to flames of woe unbounded,
Call me with Thy saints surrounded.

XVII.

LOW I kneel, with heart's submission,
See, like ashes, my contrition,
Help me in my last condition.

XVIII.

AH! THAT day of tears and mourning,
From the dust of earth returning
Man for judgement must prepare him,
Spare, O God, in mercy spare him.

XIX.

LORD, ALL-PITYING, Jesus blest,
Grant them Thine eternal rest. Amen.