

Hosker's Almanack (First Proof)

HOSKER'S ALMANACK

SELECTED FROM THE BEST SONGS AND
LYRICAL POEMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

First Proof

Selected and arranged by
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Revised and expanded by
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*And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide
the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for
days, and years.*

In winter, when the fields are white,
I sing this song for your delight.

In spring, when woods are getting green,
I'll try and tell you what I mean.

In summer, when the days are long,
Perhaps you'll understand the song.

In autumn, when the leaves are brown,
Take pen & ink, and write it down.

To **Ian Howard** RFA, my training officer on RFA *Lyme Bay* Aug to Dec 2015, whose encouragement of this project meant more to me than he is ever likely to know, and whose knowledge of celestial navigation I have never ceased to envy.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

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Notes for the Perplexed

- This book is a **canon of English poetry**, structured such that poems and proverbs are assigned to each day of the calendar.
- The calendar used is not the Gregorian calendar, but a **lunisolar calendar** in which each month is a lunar month and is given the name traditionally assigned to its new moon.
- A **longer poem** (§), a **shorter poem** (†) and a **proverb** (*) are assigned to each day of the year.
- See the notes at the back of this book for the rules used in selecting poems and proverbs.

Part I

The *Almanack* Proper

MONTH I

Sore Eyes

I

1‡

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts 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 endeared,
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 enjoyed,

1‡ · “Ode on a Grecian Urn” · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

For ever panting, and for ever young;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
 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.

†

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
 And I will pledge with mine;
 Or leave a kiss but in the cup
 And I'll not look for wine.
 The thirst that from the soul doth rise
 Doth ask a drink divine;
 But might I of *Jove's* nectar sup,
 I would not change for thine.

†* Let the dead bury their dead.

† · “To Celia” · Ben Jonson (1572 – 1637) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ Much of this poem is said to be drawn from antiquity, specifically a love letter by the sophist Philostratus. There is a second verse, but the Almanacker finds it much inferior to the first.

†* · Matthew 8.22 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

2

2‡

Now is the winter of our discontent
 Made glorious summer by this sun of *York*;
 And all the clouds that loured upon our house
 In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
 Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
 Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
 Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
 Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front;
 And now, instead of mounting barded steeds
 To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
 He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
 But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
 Nor made to court an amorous looking glass;
 I, that am rudely stamped, and want love's majesty
 To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
 I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
 Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
 Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
 And that so lamely & unfashionable
 That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
 Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
 Have no delight to pass away the time,
 Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
 And descant on mine own deformity:
 And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
 To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
 I am determined to prove a villain
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
 Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
 By drunken prophecies, libels & dreams,
 To set my brother *Clarence* and the King
 In deadly hate the one against the other:
 And if King *Edward* be as true & just

‡ · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These are the opening lines of *Richard III*, spoken by the eponymous villain, who at this time is Duke of Gloucester. ℓ2: The sun in splendour was, with the white rose, one of the symbols of the House of York. There is also a pun here, since Edward IV, the man being praised, was the eldest surviving son of Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York.

As I am subtle, false & treacherous,
 This day should *Clarence* closely be mewed up,
 About a prophecy, which says that *G*
 Of *Edward's* heirs the murderer shall be.
 Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here *Clarence* comes.

2†

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states & 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-browed *Homer* ruled as his demesne,
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard *Chapman* speak out loud & 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 stared at the Pacific – and all his men
 Looked at each other with a wild surmise –
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

2* Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

2† · “On First Looking into Chapman’s *Homer*” · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ Dr Gogarty wrote a rather good parody of this, entitled “On First Looking through Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*”.

2* · Matthew 6.21 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

3

3‡

It little profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
 Matched with an aged wife, I mete & dole
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard & sleep & feed, and know not me.
 I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
 Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
 Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when
 Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
 Vexed the dim sea: I am become a name;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known; cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honoured of them all;
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy TROY.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
 Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades
 For ever & forever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
 As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains: but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store & hoard myself,
 And this grey spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own *Telemachus*,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle –
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild

3‡ · “Ulysses” · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The last line of this poem is inscribed on the cross on Observation Hill in the Antarctic, which serves as a memorial to Captain Robert Scott.

A rugged people, and through soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful & the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
 There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toiled & wrought & thought with me –
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder & the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads – you & I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great *Achilles*, whom we knew.
 Though much is taken, much abides; and though
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth & heaven, that which we are, we are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

3†

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,
 But as for me, alas, I may no more:
 The vain travail hath wearied me so sore.

3† · Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 – 1542) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem is based on Petrarch's *Rime* 190. The 'hind' is often said to stand for Anne Boleyn and 'Caesar' for Henry VIII. 'Noli me tangere', meaning 'Don't touch me', a phrase from the Vulgate (John 20.17).

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.

3* The tree is known by his fruit.

4

4†

Come live with me and be my love,
 And we will all the pleasures prove
 That hills & valleys, dale & field,
 And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks
 And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
 By shallow rivers, to whose falls
 Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses
 And a thousand fragrant posies,
 A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
 Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool
 Which from our pretty lambs we pull,
 Fair lined slippers for the cold,
 With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy buds
 With coral clasps & amber studs:
 And if these pleasures may thee move,
 Come live with me and be my love.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat
 As precious as the gods do eat,
 Shall on an ivory table be
 Prepared each day for thee & me.

The shepherd swains shall dance & sing
 For thy delight each may-morning:
 If these delights thy mind may move,
 Then live with me and be my love.

4†

4† · “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” · Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ Sir Walter Raleigh wrote a poem in which the beloved replies.

4† · “To —” · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ Shelley, ever the prophet of the new secular post-Christian morality, wrote this poem as a means of propositioning his best friend's wife.

One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love;
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the heavens reject not:
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

4* Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

5

5†

She walks in beauty, like the night
 Of cloudless climes & starry skies,
 And all that's best of dark & bright
 Meets in her aspect & 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 & 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.

5†

She wore a new terracotta dress,
 And we stayed, because of the pelting storm,
 Within the hansom's dry recess,
 Though the horse had stopped; yea, motionless
 We sat on, snug & warm.

Then the downpour ceased, to my sharp sad pain
 And the glass that had screened our forms before
 Flew up, and out she sprang to her door:
 I should have kissed her if the rain
 Had lasted a minute moor.

5† · “She Walks in Beauty” · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ This poem was inspired by a woman who was born Anne Horton, but whose name was Anne Wilmot – following her marriage to one Robert Wilmot, a cousin of the poet – when Lord Byron met her at a party in June 1814. Later, having inherited an estate from his father-in-law, Robert would take Horton as an additional surname, and thus, having climbed through the ranks of the civil service and having inherited his father's baronetcy, he died in 1841 with the much more impressive style of The Rt Hon Sir Robert Wilmot-Horton, 3rd Baronet; and thus Mrs Wilmot became Lady Wilmot-Horton.

5† · “A Thunderstorm in Town” · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ Hardy's subtitle indicates that the poem is based on a memory of his from 1893.

5* Neither cast ye your pearls before swine.

6

6‡

Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of death
 Rode the 600.
 'Forward, the Light Brigade!
 Charge for the guns!' he said:
 Into the valley of death
 Rode the 600.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
 Was there a man dismayed?
 Not though the soldier knew
 Someone had blundered.
 Theirs not to make reply;
 Theirs not to reason why;
 Theirs but to do & die:
 Into the valley of death
 Rode the 600.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volleyed & thundered;
 Stormed at with shot & shell,
 Boldly they rode and well;
 Into the jaws of death,
 Into the mouth of hell
 Rode the 600.

Flashed all their sabres bare;
 Flashed as they turned in air,
 Sabring the gunners there,
 Charging an army, while
 All the world wondered:
 Plunged in the battery-smoke
 Right through the line they broke;
 Cossack & russian

6‡ · "The Charge of the Light Brigade" · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The poem relates the famous and, as Lord Tennyson does his best to gloss over, clearly idiotic British cavalry charge at the Battle of Balaclava in 1854.

Reeled from the sabre stroke
 Shattered & sundered.
 Then they rode back, but not
 Not the 600.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon behind them
 Volleyed & thundered;
 Stormed at with shot & shell,
 While horse & hero fell,
 They that had fought so well
 Came through the jaws of death
 Back from the mouth of hell,
 All that was left of them,
 Left of 600.

When can their glory fade?
 O the wild charge they made!
 All the world wondered.
 Honour the charge they made,
 Honour the Light Brigade,
 Noble 600.

6†

The fountains mingle with the river
 And the rivers with the ocean,
 The winds of heaven mix for ever
 With a sweet emotion;
 Nothing in the world is single;
 All things by a law divine
 In one spirit meet & mingle.
 Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven
 And the waves clasp one another;
 No sister-flower would be forgiven
 If it disdained its brother;
 And the sunlight clasps the earth
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
 What is all this sweet work worth
 If thou kiss not me?

6† · "Love's Philosophy" · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

6* Now is the accepted time.

7

7‡

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 & 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 O that deep romantic chasm which slanted
 Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
 A savage place, as holy & 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 & ever
 It flung up momently the sacred river.
 Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
 Through wood & 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.

7‡ · “Kubla Khan” · Samuel Coleridge (1772 – 1834) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ Coleridge wrote a lengthy prose introduction to this poem, wherein he describes how he was inspired by laudanum and *Purchas's Pilgrimes*, and how he was prevented from perfecting it by ‘a person on business from Purlock’. Xanadu = Shangdu, summer capital of the Yuan dynasty. Kubla Khan = Kublai Khan, fifth Khagan of the Mongol Empire and first Yuan Emperor of China.

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 & song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud & 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.

7†

TAGUS, farewell, that westward, with thy streams,
Turns up the grains of gold already tried,
For I, with spur & sail, go seek the THAMES,
Gainward the sun that show'th her wealthy pride,
And to the town which *Brutus* sought by dreams,
Like bended moon that leans her lusty side.
My king, my country, I seek for whom I live;
O mighty *Jove*, the winds for this me give.

7* Where there is no vision, the people perish.

7† · R "On His Returne from Spaine" · Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 – 1542) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.
¶ This poem appears in other sources with most of the lines changed subtly; but the Almanacker finds this alternative version much inferior. ℓ5: According to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Brutus of Troy was inspired to found the city of London in a dream.

7* · Proverbs 39.18 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

8

8†

You meaner beauties of the night,
 Which poorly satisfy our eyes
 More by your number than your light,
 You common people of the skies –
 What are you, when the moon shall rise?

Ye violets that first appear,
 By your pure purple mantles known
 Like the proud virgins of the year,
 As if the spring were all your own –
 What are you, when the rose is blown?

Ye curious chanters of the wood
 That warble forth dame nature's lays,
 Thinking your passions understood
 By your weak accents – what's your praise
 When *Philomel* her voice doth raise?

So when my mistress shall be seen
 In sweetness of her looks & mind,
 By virtue first, then choice, a queen,
 Tell me, if she were not designed
 Th' eclipse & glory of her kind?

8†

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old time is still a-flying;
 And this same flower that smiles today,
 Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heav'n, the sun,
 The higher he's a-getting

8† · “Elizabeth of Bohemia” · Sir Henry Wotton (1568 – 1639) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ The poem would seem to be dedicated to Elizabeth, Queen (consort) of Bohemia, wife of Frederick, King of Bohemia, and daughter of James I & VI. ℓ5: Where Palgrave reads ‘Moon’, the best texts consulted read ‘Sun’; but the Almanacker finds ‘Moon’ more pleasing. ℓ15: *Philomel* or *Philomela* is a poetical term for a nightingale. According to Greek and Roman mythology (see *Ὀφισσεία* XIX.518–23 and many others) *Philomela* was transformed into a nightingale.

8† · “Counsel to Girls” · Robert Herrick (1591 – 1674) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ “Counsel to Girls” seems to be Palgrave’s bowdlerisation; the original title was “To the Virgins, to make much of Time” – the premise of a joke in *Dead Poets Society* (1989).

The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth & blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, & worst
Times, still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, go marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

8* Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.

9

9†

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

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

9†

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom 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 & gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

9† · "The Tyger" · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

9† · "The Windhover" · Fr Gerard Hopkins (1844 – 1889) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

Brute beauty & valour & act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
 Buckle! And the fire that breaks from thee then, a 1,000,000,000
 Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!
 No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
 Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
 Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

9* Strike while the iron is hot.

9* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* lists this saying under 'Proverbs'. Dryden provides an interesting variation in the dedication to his translation of the *Aeneid*: 'We must beat the iron while it is hot, but we may polish it at leisure.'

IO

IO†

The time you won your town the race
 We chaired you through the market-place;
 Man & boy stood cheering by,
 And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
 Shoulder-high we bring you home,
 And set you at your threshold down,
 Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
 From fields where glory does not stay,
 And early though the laurel grows
 It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
 Cannot see the record cut,
 And silence sounds no worse than cheers
 After earth has stopped the ears.

Now you will not swell the rout
 Of lads that wore their honours out,
 Runners whom renown outran
 And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
 The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
 And hold to the low lintel up
 The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laurelled head
 Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
 And find unwithered on its curls
 The garland briefer than a girl's.

IO†

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind
 That from the nunnery

IO† · "To an Athlete Dying Young" · Prof Alfred Housman (1859 – 1936) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

IO† · "To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars" · Col Richard Lovelace (1617 – 1657) · *The Golden Treasury*.

Of thy chaste breast & quiet mind,
To war & arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.

10* Catching's before hanging.

II

II†

I am not as cold as a virgin in lead,
 Nor are sunday's sermons 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.
 O I was there a man (but where shall I find
 Good sense & good nature so equally joined?)
 Would value his pleasure, contribute to mine;
 Not meanly would boast, nor lewdly design;
 Not over severe, yet not stupidly vain,
 For I would have the power, though 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 & free,
 Yet never be fond of any but me;
 In public preserve the decorum that's just,
 And show in his eyes he is true to his trust.
 Then rarely approach, and respectfully bow,
 But not fulsomely pert, nor yet foppishly low.
 But when the long hours of public are past,
 And we meet with champagne & a chicken at last,
 May every fond pleasure that moment endear;
 Be banished afar both discretion & 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 fixed,
 Let the friend & the lover be handsomely mixed;
 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 lived chaste, I will keep myself so.
 I never will share with the wanton coquette.

II† · "The Lover" · Lady Mary Montagu (1689 – 1762) · *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised the first four lines from the original, which indicate that the poem is addressed to William Congreve.

Or be caught by a vain affectation of wit.
 The toasters & songsters may try all their art,
 But never shall enter the pass of my heart.
 I loathe the lewd rake, the dressed 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.

II†

Satan, no woman, yet a wandering spirit,
 When he saw ships sail two ways with one wind,
 Of sailors' trade he hell did disinherit:
 The devil himself loves not a half-fast mind.

The satyr when he saw the shepherd blow
 To warm his hands, and make his pottage cool,
 Manhood forswears, and half a beast did know:
 Nature with double breath is put to school.

Cupid doth head his shafts in women's faces,
 Where smiles & tears dwell ever near together,
 Where all the arts of change him passion graces:
 While these clouds threaten, who fears not the weather?
 Sailors & satyrs, *Cupid's* knights, and I,
 Fear women that swear, Nay; and know they lie.

II* Better to wear out than rust out.

II† · Fulke Greville, 1st Baron Brooke (1554 – 1628) · 101 Sonnets. ¶ This sonnet is section XXI of *Caelica*.

II* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

12

12‡

Follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow;
 Though thou be black as night,
 And she made all of light,
 Yet follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow.

Follow her whose light thy light depriveth;
 Though here thou liv'st disgraced,
 And she in heaven is placed,
 Yet follow her who light the world reviveth.

Follow those pure beams whose beauty burneth,
 That so have scorched thee,
 That thou still black must be,
 Till her kind beams thy black to brightness turneth.

Follow her while yet her glory shineth;
 There comes a luckless night,
 That will dim all her light;
 And this the black unhappy shade divineth.

Follow still since so thy fates ordained;
 The sun must have his shade,
 Till both at once do fade:
 The sun still proved, the shadow still disdained.

12‡

And thus she sung, all naked as she sat,
 Laying the happy lute upon her thigh,
 Not thinking any near to wonder at
 The bliss of her sweet breasts' divinity.

12* A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

12‡ · Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Prof Auden's 'O lurcher-loving collier, black as night' was clearly written in response to this poem. One can imagine P W Botha approving of these lines, but that – it hardly needs saying – is not what Dr Campion is getting at.

12‡ · R George Chapman (1559 – 1634) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These four lines are taken from Chapman's poem "Ovid's Banquet of Sense", in which the English poet imagines the Roman slipping into one of Augustus' palace gardens and watching Julia the Elder take a bath. Chapman identifies this Julia with Corinna, the heroine of Ovid's *Amores*.

12* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

13

13‡

Friends, romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
 I come to bury *Caesar*, not to praise him.
 The evil that men do lives after them;
 The good is oft interrèd with their bones;
 So let it be with *Caesar*. The noble *Brutus*
 Hath told you *Caesar* was ambitious:
 If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
 And grievously hath *Caesar* answered it.
 Here, under leave of *Brutus* & the rest –
 For *Brutus* is an honourable man,
 So are they all, all honourable men –
 Come I to speak in *Caesar*'s funeral.
 He was my friend, faithful & just to me:
 But *Brutus* says he was ambitious;
 And *Brutus* is an honourable man.
 He hath brought many captives home to ROME
 Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
 Did this in *Caesar* seem ambitious?
 When that the poor have cried, *Caesar* hath wept:
 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
 Yet *Brutus* says he was ambitious;
 And *Brutus* is an honourable man.
 You all did see that on the Lupercal
 I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
 Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
 Yet *Brutus* says he was ambitious;
 And, sure, he is an honourable man.
 I speak not to disprove what *Brutus* spoke,
 But here I am to speak what I do know.
 You all did love him once, not without cause:
 What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
 O judgment! Thou art fled to brutish beasts,
 And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
 My heart is in the coffin there with *Caesar*,
 And I must pause till it come back to me.

13‡ · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are spoken by Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* III.2.

13†

When night stirred at sea
And the fire brought a crowd in,
They say that her beauty
Was music in mouth
And few in the candlelight
Thought her too proud,
For the house of the planter
Is known by the trees.

Men that had seen her
Drank deep and were silent;
The women were speaking
Wherever she went –
As a bell that is rung
Or a wonder told shyly,
And O she was the sunday
In every week.

13* A blind man's wife needs no paint.

13† · "The Planter's Daughter" · Austin Clarke (1896 – 1974) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

13* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

14

14†

I, with whose colours *Myra* dressed her head,
 I, that ware posies of her own hand-making,
 I, that mine own name in the chimneys read
 By *Myra* finely wrought ere I was waking:
 Must I look on, in hope time coming may
 With change bring back my turn again to play?

I, that on sunday at the church-stile found
 A garland sweet, with true-love knots in flowers,
 Which I to wear about mine arm was bound,
 That each of us might know that all was ours:
 Must I now lead an idle life in wishes,
 And follow *Cupid* for his loaves & fishes?

I, that did wear the ring her mother left,
 I, for whose love she gloried to be blamed,
 I, with whose eyes her eyes committed theft,
 I, who did make her blush when I was named:
 Must I lose ring, flowers, blush, theft, and go naked,
 Watching with sighs till dead love be awakèd?

I, that, when drowsy *Argus* fell asleep,
 Like jealousy o'erwatchèd with desire,
 Was even warnèd modesty to keep,
 While her breath, speaking, kindled nature's fire:
 Must I look on a-cold, while others warm them?
 Do *Vulcan*'s brothers in such fine nets arm them?

Was it for this that I might *Myra* see
 Washing the water with her beauties white?
 Yet would she never write her love to me.
 Thinks wit of change, while thoughts are in delight?
 Mad girls must safely love as they may leave;
 No man can print a kiss: lines may deceive.

14† · Fulke Greville, 1st Baron Brooke (1554 – 1628) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ℓ3: There was an ancient practice of divining the entrance of an unexpected guest by the patterns made by burnt material fluttering up a chimney (which Coleridge also alludes to in 'Frost at Midnight'). ℓ19: Argus is a giant from Greek mythology who, having dozens of eyes, is proverbially wakeful and vigilant; however, he was lulled asleep and murdered by Mercury in order to facilitate Jupiter's illicit liaisons with Io. Vulcan, to the best of the Almanacker's knowledge, was said to have had only one full brother, Mars; the allusion here is perhaps to the trap sprung by Vulcan to catch Mars and Venus *in flagrante delicto*.

14†

Thine elder that I am, thou must not cling
 To me, nor mournful for my love entreat:
 And yet, *Alcaeus*, as the sudden spring
 Is love, yea, and to veiled *Demeter* sweet.

Sweeter than tone of harp, more gold than gold
 Is thy young voice to me; yet ah the pain
 To learn I am beloved now I am old,
 Who, in my youth, loved, as thou must, in vain.

14* A change is as good as a rest.

14† · “Sweeter Far than the Harp, More Gold than Gold” · Michael Field (1846 – 1914) · *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. ¶ The epigraph usually attached to this poem – ‘Πόλυ πάκτιδος ἀδυμειλεστέρα, χρύσω χρυσότερα’ – is taken from Sappho 156. The title is a translation of the epigraph. ℓ3: Alcaeus = Alcaeus of Mytilene, Sappho’s contemporary and fellow poet.

14* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

15

15†

Go, my songs, to the lonely and the unsatisfied;
 Go also to the nerve-racked; go to the enslaved-by-convention.
 Bear to them my contempt for their oppressors.
 Go as a great wave of cool water;
 Bear my contempt of oppressors.

Speak against unconscious oppression;
 Speak against the tyranny of the unimaginative;
 Speak against bonds.
 Go to the **bourgeoise** who is dying of her **ennuis**;
 Go to the women in suburbs.
 Go to the hideously wedded;
 Go to them whose failure is concealed;
 Go to the unluckily mated;
 Go to the bought wife;
 Go to the woman entailed.

Go to those who have delicate lust;
 Go to those whose delicate desires are thwarted;
 Go like a blight upon the dulness of the world;
 Go with your edge against this;
 Strengthen the subtle cords;
 Bring confidence upon the algae & the tentacles of the soul.
 Go in a friendly manner;
 Go with an open speech.
 Be eager to find new evils & new good;
 Be against all forms of oppression.
 Go to those who are thickened with middle age,
 To those who have lost their interest.

Go to the adolescent who are smothered in family –
 O how hideous it is
 To see three generations of one house gathered together!
 It is like an old tree with shoots,
 And with some branches rotted & falling.

Go out and defy opinion;
 Go against this vegetable bondage of the blood.
 Be against all sorts of mortmain.

15†

Love in her eyes sits playing,
And sheds delicious death;
Love on her lips is straying,
And warbling in her breath.
Love on her breast sits panting
And swells with soft desire;
No grace, no charm is wanting,
To set the heart on fire.

15* Actions speak louder than words.

15† · John Gay (1685 – 1732) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ Handel set these words to music in his operetta *Acis and Galatea*.

15* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

16

16‡

I did not live until this time
 Crowned my felicity,
 When I could say without a crime,
 I was not thine, but thee.

This carcass breathed, and walked, and slept,
 So that the world believed
 There was a soul the motions kept;
 But they were all deceived.

For as a watch by art is wound
 To motion, such was mine:
 But never had *Orinda* found
 A soul till she found thine;

Which now inspires, cures and supplies,
 And guides my darkened breast:
 For thou art all that I can prize,
 My joy, my life, my rest.

No bridegroom's nor crown-conqueror's mirth
 To mine compared can be:
 They have but pieces of the earth;
 I've all the world in thee.

Then let our flames still light & shine,
 And no false fear control,
 As innocent as our design,
 Immortal as our soul.

16†

I so liked spring last year
 Because you were here –
 The thrushes too –
 Because it was these you so liked to hear –
 I so liked you.

16‡ · “To my excellent Lucasia, on Our Friendship” · Mrs Katherine Philips (1632 – 1664) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The Lucasia in question was a certain Anne Owens. Orinda seems to have been the poetess's name for herself.

16† · Miss Charlotte Mew (1869 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

This year's a different thing;
I'll not think of you.
But I'll like the spring because it is simply spring
As the thrushes do.

16* All's fair in love and war.

17

17†

Hark, all you ladies that do sleep;
 The fairy queen *Proserpina*
 Bids you awake and pity them that weep.
 You may do in the dark
 What the day doth forbid;
 Fear not the dogs that bark;
 Night will have all hid.

But if you let your lovers moan,
 The fairy queen *Proserpina*
 Will send abroad her fairies ev'ry one,
 That shall pinch black & blue
 Your white hands & fair arms
 That did not kindly rue
 Your paramour's harms.

In myrtle arbours on the downs
 The fairy queen *Proserpina*,
 This night by moonshine leading merry rounds
 Holds a watch with sweet love,
 Down the dale, up the hill;
 No plaints or groans may move
 Their holy vigil.

All you that will hold watch with love,
 The fairy queen *Proserpina*
 Will make you fairer than *Dione's* dove;
 Roses red, lilies white,
 And the clear damask hue,
 Shall on your cheeks alight:
 Love will adorn you.

All you that love, or loved before,
 The fairy queen *Proserpina*
 Bids you increase that loving humour more:

17† · R Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ℓ24: Dione's oracle at Dodona was said to have been founded at the command of a black dove. ℓ35: Avernus is a volcanic crater in Campania, believed by the Romans to be an entrance into Hades; an obscure proverb states that women who die unwed will have to lead some sort of procession of primates through this netherworld; for instance, one reads in *The London Prodigal* (a Jacobean play of uncertain authorship) that, 'Tis an old proverb, and you know it well,/ That women dying maids lead apes in hell.'

They that yet have not fed
 On delight amorous,
 She vows that they shall lead
 Apes in AVERNUS.

17†

Go and ask *Robin* to bring the girls over
 To SWEETWATER, said my aunt; and that was why
 It was like a dream of ladies sweeping by
 The willows, clouds, deep meadowgrass, & the river.

Robin's sisters and my aunt's lily daughter
 Laughed and talked, and tinkled light as wrens
 If there were a little colony all hens
 To go walking by the steep turn of SWEETWATER.

Let them alone, dear aunt, just for one minute
 Till I go fishing in the dark of my mind:
 Where have I seen before, against the wind,
 These bright virgins, robed & bare of bonnet,

Flowing with music of their strange quick tongue
 And adventuring with delicate paces by the stream –
 Myself a child, old suddenly at the scream
 From one of the white throats which it hid among?

17* Appetite comes with eating.

17† · “Vision by Sweetwater” · John Ransom (1888 – 1974) · *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*.
 17* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

18

18‡

I will enjoy thee now, my *Celia*, come,
 And fly with me to love's elysium.
 The giant, honour, that keeps cowards out,
 Is but a masquer, and the servile rout
 Of baser subjects only bend in vain
 To the vast idol; whilst the nobler train
 Of valiant lovers daily sail between
 The huge colossus' legs, and pass unseen
 Unto the blissful shore. Be bold & wise,
 And we shall enter: the grim swiss denies
 Only to tame fools a passage, that not know
 He is but form and only frights in show
 The duller eyes that look from far; draw near
 And thou shalt scorn what we were wont to fear.
 We shall see how the stalking pageant goes
 With borrowed legs, a heavy load to those
 That made and bear him; nor, as we once thought,
 The seed of gods, but a weak model wrought
 By greedy men, that seek to enclose the common,
 And within private arms empale free woman.

Come, then, and, mounted on the wings of love,
 We'll cut the flitting air and soar above
 The monster's head, and in the noblest seats
 Of those blessed shades quench and renew our heats.
 There shall the queens of love & innocence,
 Beauty & nature, banish all offence
 From our close ivy-twines; there I'll behold
 Thy barèd snow & thy unbraidèd gold;
 There my enfranchisèd hand on every side
 Shall o'er thy naked polish'd ivory slide.
 No curtain there, though of transparent lawn,
 Shall be before thy virgin treasure drawn;
 But the rich mine, to the enquiring eye
 Exposed, shall ready still for mintage lie,
 And we will coin young cupids. There a bed

18‡ · ℞ Thomas Carew (1595 – 1640) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is the first half of “A Rapture”. ℓ76: Where the Almanack has put ‘chymick’ (following Dr Johnson), Aldington puts ‘chemic’. But the 1640 edition of Carew’s works gives ‘chimmique’ (and ‘alimbique’ for that matter), and thus the Almanacker is justified, in this case, in altering the spelling of a word so as to alter its sound.

Of roses & fresh myrtles shall be spread,
Under the cooler shade of cypress groves;
Our pillows of the down of *Venus*' doves,
Whereon our panting limbs we'll gently lay,
In the faint respites of our active play:
That so our slumbers may in dreams have leisure
To tell the nimble fancy our past pleasure,
And so our souls, that cannot be embraced,
Shall the embraces of our bodies taste.
Meanwhile the bubbling stream shall court the shore,
Th' enamour'd chirping wood choir shall adore
In varied tunes the deity of love;
The gentle blasts of western winds shall move
The trembling leaves, and through their close boughs breathe
Still music, whilst we rest ourselves beneath
Their dancing shade; till a soft murmur, sent
From souls entranced in amorous languishment,
Rouse us, and shoot into our veins fresh fire,
Till we in their sweet ecstasy expire.

Then, as the empty bee that lately bore
Into the common treasure all her store,
Flies 'bout the painted field with nimble wing,
Deflow'ring the fresh virgins of the spring,
So will I rifle all the sweets that dwell
In my delicious paradise, and swell
My bag with honey, drawn forth by the power
Of fervent kisses from each spicy flower.
I'll seize the rose-buds in their perfumed bed,
The violet knots, like curious mazes spread
O'er all the garden, taste the ripen'd cherry,
The warm firm apple, tipp'd with coral berry:
Then will I visit with a wand'ring kiss
The vale of lilies & the bower of bliss;
And where the beauteous region both divide
Into two milky ways, my lips shall slide
Down those smooth alleys, wearing as they go
A tract for lovers on the printed snow;
Thence climbing o'er the swelling Apennine,
Retire into thy grove of eglantine,
Where I will all those ravished sweets distil
Through love's alembick, and with chymick skill

From the mixed mass one sovereign balm derive,
Then bring that great elixir to thy hive.

18†

Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter & rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter & rough weather.

18* As you sow, so you reap.

18† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ This song is sung by Amiens in *As You Like It* II.5.

18* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

19

19†

The wind blew out from BERGEN from the dawning to the day,
 There was a wreck of trees & fall of towers a score of miles away,
 And drifted like a livid leaf I go before its tide,
 Spewed out of house & stable, beggared of flag & bride.
 The heavens are bowed about my head, shouting like seraph wars,
 With rains that might put out the sun and clean the sky of stars,
 Rains like the fall of ruined seas from secret worlds above,
 The roaring of the rains of God none but the lonely love.
 Feast in my hall, O foemen, and eat and drink and drain:
 You never loved the sun in heaven as I have loved the rain.

The chance of battle changes – so may all battle be;
 I stole my lady bride from them; they stole her back from me.
 I rent her from her red-roofed hall; I rode and saw arise,
 More lovely than the living flowers the hatred in her eyes.
 She never loved me, never bent, never was less divine;
 The sunset never loved me, the wind was never mine.
 Was it all nothing that she stood imperial in duress,
 Silence itself made softer with the sweeping of her dress?
 O you who drain the cup of life, O you who wear the crown,
 You never loved a woman's smile as I have loved her frown.

The wind blew out from BERGEN to the dawning of the day;
 They ride and run with 50 spears to break and bar my way;
 I shall not die alone, alone, but kin to all the powers,
 As merry as the ancient sun and fighting like the flowers.
 How white their steel, how bright their eyes. I love each laughing knave;
 Cry high and bid him welcome to the banquet of the brave.
 Yea, I will bless them as they bend and love them where they lie,
 When on their skulls the sword I swing falls shattering from the sky.
 The hour when death is like a light and blood is like a rose:
 You never loved your friends, my friends, as I shall love my foes.

Know you what earth shall lose tonight, what rich uncounted loans,
 What heavy gold of tales untold you bury with my bones.
 My loves in deep dim meadows, my ships that rode at ease,
 Ruffling the purple plumage of strange & secret seas?
 To see this fair earth as it is to me alone was given;
 The blow that breaks my brow tonight shall break the dome of heaven.

The skies I saw, the trees I saw after no eyes shall see;
 Tonight I die the death of God; the stars shall die with me;
 One sound shall sunder all the spears and break the trumpet's breath:
 You never laughed in all your life as I shall laugh in death.

19†

The sweet season, that bud & bloom forth brings,
 With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale;
 The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
 The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.
 Summer is come, for every spray now springs;
 The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
 The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
 The fishes float with new-repaired scale;
 The adder all her slough away she slings;
 The swift swallows pursueth the flies small;
 The busy bee her honey now she mings.
 Winter is worn, that was the flowers' bale.
 And thus I see among these pleasant things,
 Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

19* Ask no questions and hear no lies.

19† · Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517 – 1547) · *The Golden Treasury*. ℓ1: Where the Almanacker has put 'sweet', the original reads 'soote', which means the same thing. ℓ4: The word 'turtle' in this context means "turtledove". Where the Almanacker has put 'mate', the original reads 'make', which means the same thing.

19* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

20

20†

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 & 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 & strong
 Why shouldst thou think?
 I could eclipse & 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 & 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 honour'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 centre is, these walls thy sphere.

20†

Go, lovely rose!
 Tell her that wastes her time & me
 That now she knows,

20† · "The Sun Rising" · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

20† · Edmund Waller (1606 – 1687) · *The Golden Treasury*.

When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet & fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee:
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet & fair!

20* Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

21

21†

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 glistening,
 But a far fairer world encompassing.
 Unpin that spangled breastplate that you wear,
 That th'eyes of busy fools may be stopped 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 that wiry coronet and show
 The hairy diadem which on you doth grow:
 Now off with those shoes, and then safely tread
 In this love's hallowed temple, this soft bed.
 In such white robes, heaven's angels used to be
 Received by 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.

License my roving hands, and let them go
 Before, behind, between, above, below.
 O my America, my new-found land,
 My kingdom, safest when with one man manned,
 My mine of precious stones, my empery,
 How blessed am I in this discovering thee!
 To enter in these bonds is to be free;
 Then where my hand is set, my seal shall be.

21† · “To His Mistress Going to Bed” · Elegy XIX · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ℓ17: Other sources put ‘softly’ instead of ‘safely’. ℓ20: Other sources put ‘revealed to’ instead of ‘received by’. ℓ24: Be sure not to miss the rather crude, though rather good, joke for which, one presumes, this poem was censored from the 1633 *Poems*. ℓ38: Other sources put ‘court’ instead of covet. ℓ41: Other sources put ‘bodies’ instead of ‘books’. ℓ46: Other sources put ‘Here is no penance much less innocence’ instead of ‘There is no penance due to innocence’.

Full nakedness, all joys are due to thee;
 As souls unbodied, bodies unclothed must be
 To taste whole joys. Gems which you women use
 Are like *Atlanta's* balls, cast in men's views,
 That when a fool's eye lighteth on a gem,
 His earthly soul may covet theirs, not them:
 Like pictures, or like books' gay coverings made
 For laymen, are all women thus arrayed.
 Themselves are mystic books, which only we
 (Whom their imputed grace will dignify)
 Must see revealed. Then, since that I may know,
 As liberally as to a 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 than
 What needst thou have more covering than a man?

21†

With what sense is it that the chicken shuns the ravenous hawk?
 With what sense does the tame pigeon measure out the expanse?
 With what sense does the bee form cells? Have not the mouse & frog
 Eyes & ears & sense of touch? Yet are their habitations
 And their pursuits as different as their forms & as their joy.
 Ask the wild ass why he refuses burdens, and the meek camel
 Why he loves man: is it because of eye, ear, mouth or skin,
 Or breathing nostrils? No: for these the wolf & tyger have.
 Ask the blind worm the secrets of the grave and why her spires
 Love to curl around the bones of death: and ask the ravenous snake
 Where she gets poison; and the winged eagle why he loves the sun;
 And then tell me the thoughts of man, that have been hid of old.

21* Better be envied than pitied.

21† · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This poem constitutes one of the middle sections of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*.

21* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

22

22†

Whilst *Alexis* lay pressed
 In her arms he loved best,
 With his hands round her neck, and his head on her breast,
 He found the fierce pleasure too hasty to stay,
 And his soul in the tempest just flying away.

When *Celia* saw this,
 With a sigh, and a kiss,
 She cried, O my dear, I am robbed of my bliss;
 'Tis unkind to your love, and unfaithfully done,
 To leave me behind you, and die all alone.

The youth, though in haste,
 And breathing his last,
 In pity died slowly, while she died more fast;
 Till at length she cried, Now, my dear, now let us go;
 Now die, my *Alexis*, and I will die too.

Thus entranced they did lie,
 Till *Alexis* did try
 To recover new breath, that again he might die:
 Then often they died; but the more they did so,
 The nymph died more quick, & the shepherd more slow.

22†

Thrice toss these oaken ashes in the air,
 Thrice sit thou mute in this enchanted chair,
 Then thrice three times tie up this true love's knot,
 And murmur soft, She will, or she will not.

Go burn these pois'nous weeds in yon blue fire,
 These screech-owl's feathers & this prickling briar,
 This cypress gathered at a dead man's grave,
 That all my fears & cares an end may have.

Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round;
 Melt her hard heart with your melodious sound.

22† · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ These lines are sung in *Marriage à la Mode* IV.2.

22† · Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *The London Book of English Verse*.

In vain are all the charms I can devise:
She hath an art to break them with her eyes.

22* Better the devil you know.

23

23[‡]

The dragon that our seas did raise his crest,
 And brought back heaps of gold vnto his nest,
 Unto his foes more terrible then thunder,
 Glory of his age, after-ages' wonder,
 Excelling all those that excelled before;
 It's feared we shall have none such any more;
 Effecting all he sole did undertake,
 Valiant, just, wise, mild, honest, godly *Drake*.
 This man when I was little, I did meet,
 As he was walking up TOTNES' long street.
 He asked me whose I was? I answered him.
 He asked me if his good friend were within?
 A fair red orange in his hand he had;
 He gave it me whereof I was right glad,
 Takes and kissed me, and prays, God bless my boy:
 Which I record with comfort to this day.
 Could he on me have breathèd with his breath,
 His gifts *Elias*-like, after his death,
 Then had I been enabled for to do
 Many brave things I have a heart unto.
 I have as great desire, as e'er had he
 To joy, annoy, friends, foes; but 'twill not be.

23[†]

Muses that sing love's sensual empery,
 And lovers kindling your enraged fires
 At *Cupid*'s bonfires burning in the eye,
 Blown with the empty breath of vain desires;
 You that prefer the painted cabinet
 Before the wealthy jewels it doth store ye,
 That all your joys in dying figures set,
 And stain the living substance of your glory;
 Abjure those joys, abhor their memory,
 And let my love the honoured subject be
 Of love, and honour's complete history.
 Your eyes were never yet let in to see

23[‡] · ℞ "Sir Francis Drake" · Robert Hayman (1575 – 1629) · *The Poet's Tongue*.

23[†] · George Chapman (1559 – 1634) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is the first part of "A Coronet for His Mistress Philosophy".

The majesty & riches of the mind,
But dwell in darkness; for your god is blind.

23* Councils of war never fight.

24

24[‡]

Who says that fictions only & false hair
 Become a verse? Is there in truth no beauty?
 Is all good structure in a winding stair?
 May no lines pass, except they do their duty,
 Not to a true, but painted chair?

Is it no verse, except enchanted groves
 And sudden arbours shadow coarse-spun lines?
 Must purling streams refresh a lover's loves?
 Must all be veiled while he that reads, divines,
 Catching the sense at two removes?

Shepherds are honest people; let them sing:
 Riddle who list, for me, and pull the prime:
 I envy no man's nightingale or spring;
 Nor let them punish me with loss of rhyme,
 Who plainly say, My God, my King.

24[†]

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
 And so do I;
 When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
 And nestlings fly;
 And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
 And they sit outside at the TRAVELLER'S REST,
 And maids come forth sprig muslin-dressed,
 And citizens dream of the south & west,
 And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
 And so do I;
 When beeches drip in browns & duns,
 And thresh & ply;
 And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
 And meadow rivulets overflow,
 And drops on gate bars hang in a row,

24[‡] · "Jordan (I)" · The Rev George Herbert (1593 – 1633) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

24[†] · "Weathers" · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ℓ7: '[S]prig muslin' is said to be a type of muslin in which embroidered depictions of plants are incorporated into the fabric. Georgette Heyer wrote a reputedly silly-but-fun romance novel, *Sprig Muslin*, published in 1956 but set in 1813; presumably the material evokes the daft splendour of Regency England.

And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

24* Dead men tell no tales.

25

25‡

I speak for each no-tongued tree
 That, spring by spring, doth nobler be,
 And dumbly & most wistfully
 His mighty prayerful arms outspreads
 Above men's oft-unheeding heads,
 And his big blessing downward sheds.
 I speak for all-shaped blooms & leaves,
 Lichens on stones & moss on eaves,
 Grasses & grains in ranks & sheaves;
 Broad-fronded ferns & keen-leaved canes,
 And briery mazes bounding lanes,
 And marsh-plants, thirsty-cupped for rains,
 And milky stems & sugary veins;
 For every long-armed woman-vine
 That round a piteous tree doth twine;
 For passionate odors, & divine
 Pistils, & petals crystalline;
 All purities of shady springs,
 All shynesses of film-winged things
 That fly from tree-trunks & bark-rings;
 All modesties of mountain fawns
 That leap to covert from wild lawns,
 And tremble if the day but dawns;
 All sparklings of small beady eyes
 Of birds, & sidelong glances wise
 Wherewith the jay hints tragedies;
 All piquancies of prickly burs,
 And smoothnesses of downs & furs
 Of eiders & of minevers;
 All limpid honeys that do lie
 At stamen bases, nor deny
 The humming-birds' fine roguery,
 Bee thighs, nor any butterfly;
 All gracious curves of slender wings,
 Bark mottlings, fibre spiralings,
 Fern wavings & leaf flickerings;
 Each dial-marked leaf & flower-bell

25‡ · Sidney Lanier (1842 – 1881) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These lines are from the poet's longer poem *The Symphony*.

Wherewith in every lonesome dell
 Time to himself his hours doth tell;
 All tree sounds, rustlings of pine-cones,
 Wind sighings, doves' melodious moans,
 And night's unearthly under-tones;
 All placid lakes & waveless deeps,
 All cool reposing mountain steeps,
 Vale calms & tranquil lotos sleeps;
 Yea, all fair forms, & sounds, & lights,
 And warmths, & mysteries, & mights,
 Of nature's utmost depths & heights,
 These doth my timid tongue present,
 Their mouthpiece & leal instrument
 And servant, all love-eloquent.

25†

Like the idalian queen,
 Her hair about her eyne,
 With neck & breasts ripe apples to be seen,
 At first glance of the morn
 In Cyprus' gardens gathering those fair flowers
 Which of her blood were born,
 I saw, but fainting saw, my paramours.
 The Graces naked danced about the place;
 The winds & trees amazed
 With silence on her gazed;
 The flowers did smile, like those upon her face;
 And as their aspen stalks those fingers band,
 That she might read my case,
 A hyacinth I wished me in her hand.

25* Don't cry before you're hurt.

25† · R William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585 – 1649) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ℓ1: The word 'idalian' refers to the city of Idalium, located near the more famous city of Nicosia, the former of which was the site a major shrine to Aphrodite. ℓ6: In one telling of the ancient and intriguing myth of Venus and Adonis, Venus creates the red rose by shedding her blood on the petals of a white one. The earliest written source for this version is the Προγυμνάσματα of Aphthonius.

25* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

26

26‡

The owl & the pussy-cat went to sea
 In a beautiful pea-green boat;
 They took some honey, and plenty of money,
 Wrapped up in a £5 note.
 The owl looked up to the stars above,
 And sang to a small guitar,
 O lovely pussy! O pussy, my love,
 What a beautiful pussy you are,
 You are,
 You are!
 What a beautiful pussy you are!

Pussy said to the owl, You elegant fowl!
 How charmingly sweet you sing!
 O let us be married! Too long we have tarried:
 But what shall we do for a ring?
 They sailed away, for a year & a day,
 To the land where the bong tree grows
 And there in a wood a piggy-wig stood
 With a ring at the end of his nose,
 His nose,
 His nose,
 With a ring at the end of his nose.

Dear pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
 Your ring? Said the piggy: I will.
 So they took it away, and were married next day
 By the turkey who lives on the hill.
 They dined on mince, & slices of quince,
 Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
 And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
 They danced by the light of the moon,
 The moon,
 The moon,
 They danced by the light of the moon.

26‡ · “The Owl and the Pussy-Cat” · Edward Lear (1812 – 1888) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The Almanacker’s (maternal) grandfather had a picture of ‘The owl and the pussy-cat’, and, while pointing out the said image, used to sing the poem to his grandson.

26†

Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, ϕ vaulty, voluminous... stupen-
 dous
 Evening strains to be time's vást, ϕ womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-
 of-all night.
 Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, ϕ her wild hollow
 hoarlight hung to the height
 Waste; her earliest stars, earl-stars, ϕ stárs principal, overbend us,
 Fíre-féaturing heaven. For earth ϕ her being as unbound, her dapple
 is at an end, as-
 tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; ϕ self in self steepéd
 and páshed – quite
 Disremembering, dísmémbering, ϕ áll now. Heart, you round me
 right
 With: óur évening is over us; óur night ϕ whélms, whélms, ánd will
 end us.
 Only the beak-leaved boughs dragonish ϕ damask the tool-smooth
 bleak light; black,
 Ever so black on it. Óur tale, O óur oracle! ϕ Lét life, wáned, ah lét
 life wind
 Off hér once skéined stained véined variety ϕ upon áll on twó spools;
 párt, pen, páck
 Now her áll in twó flocks, twó folds – black, white; ϕ right, wrong;
 reckon but, reck but, mind
 But thése two; wáre of a wórlđ where búť these ϕ twó tell, each off
 the óther; of a rack
 Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe- & shelterless, ϕ thóughts
 agáinst thoughts ín groans grínd.

26* Dip him in the river who loves water.

26† · “Spelt from Sibyl’s Leaves” · Fr Gerard Hopkins (1844 – 1889) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

¶ The title is probably an allusion to the Sibylline Books of ancient Rome.

26* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake’s ‘Proverbs of Hell’ from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

27

27[‡]

If women could be fair, and yet not fond,
 Or that their love were firm, not fickle still,
 I would not marvel that they make men bond
 By service long to purchase their good will;
 But when I see how frail those creatures are,
 I muse that men forget themselves so far.

To mark the choice they make, & how they change,
 How oft from *Phoebus* they do flee to *Pan*;
 Unsettled still, like haggards wild they range,
 These gentle birds that fly from man to man;
 Who would not scorn & shake them from the fist,
 And let them fly, fair fools, which way they list?

Yet for disport we fawn & flatter both,
 To pass the time when nothing else can please,
 And train them to our lure with subtle oath,
 Till, weary of their wiles, ourselves we ease;
 And then we say when we their fancy try,
 To play with fools, 'O what a fool was I!'

27[†]

Cupid & my *Campaspe* played
 At cards for kisses; *Cupid* paid:
 He stakes his quiver, bow & arrows,
 His mother's doves & team of sparrows;
 Loses them too; then down he throws
 The coral of his lip, the rose
 Growing on 's cheek (but none knows how);
 With these, the crystal of his brow,
 And then the dimple on his chin;
 All these did my *Campaspe* win:
 And last he set her both his eyes –
 She won, and *Cupid* blind did rise.
 O love! has she done this to thee?
 What shall, alas! become of me?

27[‡] · "A Renunciation" · Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550 – 1604) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ The attribution of this poem to Lord Oxford is uncertain.

27[†] · John Lyly (1553 – 1606) · *The Golden Treasury*.

27* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

27* No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.

28

28†

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
 But the valley sheep are fatter;
 We therefore deemed it meeter
 To carry off the latter.
 We made an expedition;
 We met a host and quelled it;
 We forced a strong position,
 And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
 Where herds of kine were browsing,
 We made a mighty sally,
 To furnish our carousing.
 Fierce warriors rushed to meet us;
 We met them, and o'erthrew them:
 They struggled hard to beat us;
 But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
 The king marched forth to catch us:
 His rage surpassed all measure,
 But his people could not match us.
 He fled to his hall-pillars;
 And, ere our force we led off,
 Some sacked his house & cellars,
 While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewildering,
 Spilt blood enough to swim in:
 We orphaned many children,
 And widowed many women.
 The eagles & the ravens
 We glutted with our foemen:
 The heroes & the cravens,
 The spearmen & the bowmen.

28† · “The War Song of Dinas Vawr” · Thomas Peacock (1785 – 1866) · *The Golden Treasury [together with one hundred additional poems]*. ¶ This rollicking song appears in *The Misfortune of Elphin*, one of the poet’s comic novels. Dinas Vawr is a place – probably fictional – a fortress which, when the song is sung, King Melvas and his men have just captured.

We brought away from battle,
 And much their land bemoaned them,
 Two thousand head of cattle,
 And the head of him who owned them:
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
 His head was borne before us;
 His wine & beasts supplied our feasts,
 And his overthrow, our chorus.

28†

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
 That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
 But as the riper 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,
 Thyself 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 buduriest 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 & thee.

28* Words easy to be understood do often hit the mark; where high and learned ones do only pierce the air.

28† · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

28* · John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) · *Pilgrim's Progress*. ¶ These words are taken from Bunyan's introduction to *The Holy City*, his commentary on the closing chapters of Revelation.

29

29‡

Hail 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 & 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 & 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 & 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 & 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 aerial hue
Among the flowers & 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 those heavy-wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, & clear, & 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 & deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before & 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, & pride, & 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.

29†

Farewell, love, and all thy laws forever.
 Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more.
Senec and *Plato* call me from thy lore
 To perfect wealth, my wit for to endeavour.
 In blind error when I did persevere,
 Thy sharp repulse, that pricketh ay so sore,
 Hath taught me to set in trifles no store
 And scape forth, since liberty is lever.
 Therefore, farewell; go trouble younger hearts
 And in me claim no more authority.
 With idle youth go use thy property
 And thereon spend thy many brittle darts,
 For hitherto though I have lost all my time,
 Me list no longer rotten boughs to climb.

29* I call a spade a spade.

29† · R “A Renouncing of Love” · Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 – 1542) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.
 ℓ14: Other sources give: ‘Me lusteth no lenger rotten boughs to climb.’

29* · The Rev Robert Burton (1577 – 1640) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ The ultimate source of this idiom seems to be a passage from Plutarch’s *Hēthaiá*, specifically the section containing the ‘Sayings of the Spartans’.

30

30‡

Come into the garden, *Maud*,
 For the black bat, night, has flown;
 Come into the garden, *Maud*;
 I am here at the gate alone;
 And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
 And the musk of the roses blown.

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon;
 All night has the casement jessamine stirred
 To the dangers dancing in tune;
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her alone?
 She is weary of dance & play.'
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,
 And half to the rising day;
 Low on the sand & loud on the stone
 The last wheel echoes away.

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
 In babble & revel & wine.
 Young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
 For one that will never be thine?
 But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,
 'For ever & ever, mine.'

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
 As the music clashed in the hall;

30‡ · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

¶ These are the closing lines of Part I of Lord Tennyson's long poem *Maud*.

And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a march wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk bloom on the tree;
The white lake blossom fell into the lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies & roses were all awake.
They sighed for the dawn & thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither; the dances are done,
In gloss of satin & glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily & rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, She is near, she is near;
And the white rose weeps, She is late;
The larkspur listens, I hear, I hear;
And the lily whispers, I wait.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread.
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead,

Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple & red.

30†

I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate;
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is KILTARTAN CROSS,
My countrymen KILTARTAN'S poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public man, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

30*

Spring flowers shall come in dews of sorrow
For the maiden goes down to her grave tomorrow.

30† · "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" · William Yeats (1865 – 1939) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

30* · John Clare (1793 – 1864) · *The Golden Treasury [with a fifth book selected by John Press]*. † This is a couplet from the poet's "Death".

MONTH II

Egg

I

1‡

We have bathed, where none have seen us,
In the lake & in the fountain,
Underneath the charmèd statue
Of the timid, bending *Venus*,
When the water nymphs were counting
In the waves the stars of night,
And those maidens started at you,
Your limbs shone through so soft & bright.
But no secrets dare we tell,
For thy slaves unlace thee,
And he, who shall embrace thee,
Waits to try thy beauty's spell.

'We have crowned thee queen of women,
Since love's love, the rose, hath kept her
Court within thy lips & blushes,
And thine eye, in beauty swimming,
Kissing, we rendered up the sceptre,
At whose touch the startled soul
Like an ocean bounds & gushes,
And spirits bend at thy control.
But no secrets dare we tell,
For thy slaves unlace thee,
And he, who shall embrace thee,
Is at hand, and so farewell.'

1‡ · R Dr Thomas Beddoes (1803 – 1849) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ The first verse is to be sung 'By female voices', and the second by male.

1†

The look of love alarms
Because 'tis filled with fire,
But the look of soft deceit
Shall win the lover's hire.

Soft deceit & idleness,
These are beauty's sweetest dress.

1* He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils.

1† · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ These lines are taken from “Several Questions Answered”.

1* · Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (1561 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

2

2‡

O to be in England
 Now that april's there,
 And whoever wakes in England
 Sees, some morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs & the brushwood sheaf
 Round the elm tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
 In England – now!

And after april, when may follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
 Blossoms and dewdrops – at the bent spray's edge –
 That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
 Lest you should think he never could recapture
 The first fine careless rapture!
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower –
 Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

2†

Why cannot the ear be closed to its own destruction?
 Or the glistening eye to the poison of a smile?
 Why are eyelids stored with arrows ready drawn,
 Where a thousand fighting men in ambush lie?
 Or an eye of gifts & graces, showering fruits & coined gold?
 Why a tongue impressed with honey from every wind?
 Why an ear, a whirlpool fierce to draw creations in?
 Why a nostril wide inhaling terror, trembling, and affright?
 Why a tender curb upon the youthful burning boy?
 Why a little curtain of flesh on the bed of our desire?

2* Where no law is, there is no transgression.

2‡ · “Home Thoughts, from Abroad” · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

2† · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are one couplet away from closing Blake's “The Book of Thel”.

2* · Romans 4.15 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

3

3‡

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 gleamed at the wave of her feather.

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!

3†

The nurse-life wheat within his green husk growing,
 Flatters our hope, and tickles our desire,
 Nature's true riches in sweet beauties showing,
 Which set all hearts, with labour's love, on fire.

No less fair is the wheat when golden ear
 Shows unto hope the joys of near enjoying:
 Fair & sweet is the bud, more sweet & fair
 The rose, which proves that time is not destroying.

Caelica, your youth, the morning of delight,
 Enamelled o'er with beauties white & red,
 All sense and thoughts did to belief invite,
 That love & glory there are brought to bed:
 And your ripe year's love-noon; he goes no higher,
 Turns all the spirits of man into desire.

3* Hope is a good breakfast, but it is a bad supper.

3‡ · "Love in a Life" · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

3† · Fulke Greville, 1st Baron Brooke (1554 – 1628) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

3* · Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (1561 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

4

4‡

He carved besides a soft and fruitful field,
 Broad & thrice new-tilled in that heavenly shield,
 Where many ploughmen turned up here & there
 The earth in furrows, and their sovereign near
 They strived to work; and every furrow ended
 A bowl of sweetest wine he still extended
 To him that first had done, then turned they hand,
 Desirous to dispatch that piece of land,
 Deep & new-eared; black grew the plough with mould
 Which looked like blackish earth though forged of gold.
 And this he did with miracle adorn.
 Then made he grow a field of high-sprung corn,
 In which did reapers sharpened sickles ply;
 Others, their handles fall'n confusedly,
 Laid on the ridge together; others bound
 Their gathered handfuls to sheaves hard & round.
 Their binders were appointed for the place,
 And at their heels did children glean apace,
 Whole armfuls to the binders ministering.
 Amongst all these all silent stood their king.
 Upon a balk, his sceptre in his hand,
 Glad at his heart to see his yieldy land.
 The heralds then the harvest feast prepare,
 Beneath an oak far off, and for their fare,
 A mighty ox was slain, and women dressed
 Store of white cakes, and mixed the labourers' feast
 In it besides a vine ye might behold
 Loaded with grapes, the leaves were all of gold.
 The bunches black & thick did through it grow
 And silver props sustained them from below:
 About the vine an azure dyke was wrought
 And about it a hedge of tin he brought.
 One path went through it, through the which did pass
 The vintagers, when ripe their vintage was.
 The virgins then, & youths, childishly wise,
 For the sweet fruit did painted cups devise,
 And in a circle bore them dancing round,

‡ · R George Chapman (1559 – 1634) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are based on Homer's *Ἰλιάς* XVIII.541-592. Prof Auden wrote his own poem ("The Shield of Achilles") concerning the same portion of Book XVIII.

In midst whereof a boy did sweetly sound
 His silver harp, and with a piercing voice,
 Sung a sweet song; when each youth with his choice
 Triumphant over earth, quick dances treads.
 A herd of oxen thrusting out their heads
 And bellowing, from their stalls rushing to feed
 Near a swift flood, raging and crowned with reed,
 In gold and tin he carved next the vine
 Four golden herdsmen following: herd-dogs nine
 Waiting on them; in head of all the herd,
 Two lions shook a bull, that bellowing, reared
 In desperate horror, and was dragged away:
 The dogs & youths pursued; but their slain prey,
 The lions rent out of his spacious hide,
 And in their entrails did his flesh divide,
 Lapping his sable blood; the men to fight
 Set on their dogs in vain that durst not bite,
 But barked & backwards flew: he forged beside
 In a fair vale, a pasture sweet & wide
 Of white-fleeced sheep, in which he did impress
 Sheepcots, sheepfolds & covered cottages.
 In this rare shield the famous *Vulcan* cast
 A dancing mace; like that in ages past,
 Which in broad *Knossos* *Daedalus* did dress
 For *Ariadne* with the golden tress.

4†

Lucetta's charms our hearts surprise
 At once with joy & wonder;
 She bears *Jove's* lightning in her eyes
 But in her voice his thunder.

4* A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.

4† · R "To a Lady Who had a Fine Pair of Eyes but a Discordant Voice" · The Rev Richard Burnett (1772 – 1860) · *Parnassian Molehill*. ¶ It is not entirely clear that Burnett came up with these lines himself; they appear in a book of Latin exercises, *Various English and Latin Poems* (1808), which he put together.

4* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

5

5†

I ne'er was struck before that hour
 With love so sudden & so sweet,
 Her face it bloomed like a sweet flower
 And stole my heart away complete.
 My face turned pale as deadly pale,
 My legs refused to walk away,
 And when she looked, what could I ail?
 My life & all seemed turned to clay.

And then my blood rushed to my face
 And took my eyesight quite away,
 The trees & bushes round the place
 Seemed midnight at noonday.
 I could not see a single thing,
 Words from my eyes did start –
 They spoke as chords do from the string,
 And blood burnt round my heart.

Are flowers the winter's choice?
 Is love's bed always snow?
 She seemed to hear my silent voice,
 Not love's appeals to know.
 I never saw so sweet a face
 As that I stood before.
 My heart has left its dwelling-place
 And can return no more.

5†

And *David* underneath a tree
 Sought when a shepherd SALEM's springs,

 Where moss did into cushions spring,
 Forming a seat of velvet hue,
 A small unnoticed trifling thing
 To all but heaven's hailing dew.
 And *David's* crown hath passed away,
 Yet poesy breathes his shepherd skill,

5† · "First Love" · John Clare (1793 – 1864) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem describes Clare's first meeting with Mary Joyce, the local beauty he could never possess.

5† · John Clare (1793 – 1864) · *The Psalms in English*. ¶ These lines are taken from "The Fitting".

His palace lost – and to this day
The little moss is blossoming still.

5* He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.

5* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

6

6‡

Somewhere beneath the sun,
 These quivering heart strings prove it,
 Somewhere there must be one
 Made for this soul, to move it;
 Some one that hides her sweetness
 From neighbours whom she slights,
 Nor can attain completeness,
 Nor give her heart its rights;
 Some one whom I could court
 With no great change of manner,
 Still holding reason's fort,
 Though waving fancy's banner;
 A lady, not so queenly
 As to disdain my hand,
 Yet born to smile serenely
 Like those that rule the land;
 Noble, but not too proud;
 With soft hair simply folded,
 And bright face crescent-browed,
 And throat by muses moulded;
 And eyelids lightly falling
 On little glistening seas,
 Deep-calm, when gales are brawling,
 Though stirred by every breeze:
 Swift voice, like flight of dove
 Through minister arches floating,
 With sudden turns, when love
 Gets overnear to doting;
 Keen lips, that shape soft sayings
 Like crystals of the snow,
 With pretty half betrayings
 Of things one may not know;
 Fair hand, whose touches thrill,
 Like golden rod of wonder,
 Which *Hermes* wields at will
 Spirit & flesh to sunder;
 Light foot, to press the stirrup

6‡ · “Amaturus” · William Cory (1823 – 1892) · *The Golden Treasury [together with one hundred additional poems]*. ¶ The Latin title can mean subtly different things, but in this context is perhaps best translated as “He who is ready to love”.

In fearlessness & glee,
Or dance, till finches chirrup,
And stars sink to the sea.

Forth, love, and find this maid,
Wherever she be hidden:
Speak, love; be not afraid,
But plead as thou art bidden;
And say, that he who taught thee
His yearning want & pain,
Too dearly, dearly bought thee
To part with thee in vain.

6†

Pious *Selinda* goes to prayers
If I but ask the favour;
And yet the tender fool's in tears
When she believes I'll leave her.

Would I were free from this restraint,
Or else had hopes to win her;
Would she could make of me a saint,
Or I of her a sinner.

6* He whose face gives no light shall never become a star.

6† · William Congreve (1670 – 1729) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

6* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

7

7†

Alice is tall & upright as a pine,
 White as blanched almonds, or the falling snow,
 Sweet as the damask roses when they blow,
 And doubtless fruitful as the swelling vine.
 Ripe to be cut, & ready to be pressed,
 Her full cheeked beauties very well appear,
 And a year's fruit she loses every year,
 Wanting a man to improve her to the best.

Full fain she would be husbanded, and yet,
 Alas, she cannot a fit labourer get
 To cultivate her own content:
 Fain she would be (God wot) about her task,
 And yet (forsooth) she is too proud to ask,
 And (which is worse) too modest to consent.

Margaret is of humbler stature by the head
 Is (as oft falls out with yellow hair)
 Than her fair sister, yet so much more fair,
 As her pure white is better mixed with red.
 This, hotter than the other 10 to one,
 Longs to be put into her mother's trade,
 And loud proclaims she lives too long a maid,
 Wishing for one t'untie her virgin zone.

She finds virginity a kind of ware,
 That's very very troublesome to bear,
 And being gone, she thinks will ne'er be missed:
 And yet withal, the girl has so much grace,
 To call for help I know she wants the face,
 Though asked, I know not how she would resist.

7†

Love in her sunny eyes does basking play;
 Love walks the pleasant mazes of her hair;
 Love does on both her lips for ever stray
 And sows and reaps a thousand kisses there.

7‡ · “Two Rural Sisters” · Charles Cotton (1630 – 1687) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

7† · R Abraham Cowley (1618 – 1667) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is the first verse of a poem called “The Change”.

In all her outward parts love's always seen;
But O he never went within.

7* If the fool would persist in his folly he would be wise.

7* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

8

8‡

Winds, whisper gently whilst she sleeps,
 And fan her with your cooling wings;
 While she her drops of beauty weeps,
 From pure, and yet unrivalled springs.

Glide over beauty's field, her face,
 To kiss her lip & cheek be bold;
 But with a calm & stealing pace;
 Neither too rude, nor yet too cold.

Play in her beams, and crisp her hair
 With such a gale as wings soft love,
 And with so sweet, so rich an air,
 As breathes from the arabian grove.

A breath as hushed as lover's sigh;
 Or that unfolds the morning's door:
 Sweet as the winds that gently fly
 To sweep the spring's enamelled floor.

Murmur soft music to her dreams,
 That pure & unpolluted run
 Like to the new-born crystal streams,
 Under the bright enamoured sun.

But when she walking shall display,
 Her light, retire within your bar;
 Her breath is life, her eyes are day,
 And all mankind her creatures are.

8†

Fair is my love & cruel as she's fair;
 Her brow-shades frown, although her eyes are sunny.
 Her smiles are lightning, though her pride despair,
 And her disdains are gall, her favours honey;
 A modest maid, decked with a blush of honour,
 Whose feet do tread green paths of youth & love,
 The wonder of all eyes that look upon her:

8‡ · R "Laura Sleeping" · Charles Cotton (1630 – 1687) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

8† · Samuel Daniel (1562 – 1619) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is one of Daniel's sonnets "To Delia".

Sacred on earth, designed a saint above.
Chastity & beauty, which were deadly foes,
Live reconcilèd friends within her brow;
And had she pity to conjoin with those,
Then who had heard the plaints I utter now?
For had she not been fair & thus unkind,
My muse had slept, and none had known my mind.

8* Prisons are built with stones of law, brothels with bricks of religion.

8* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

9

9†

What have we done? What cruel passion moved thee
 Thus to ruin her that loved thee?
 Me thou'st robbed, but what art thou
 Thyself the richer now?
 Shame succeeds the short-lived pleasure;
 So soon is spent & gone, this thy ill-gotten treasure.

We've done no harm; nor was it theft in me,
 But noblest charity in thee.
 I'll the well-gotten pleasure
 Safe in my mem'ry treasure;
 What though the flower itself do waste,
 The essence from it drawn does long & sweeter last.

No: I'm undone; my honour thou hast slain,
 And nothing can restore't again.
 Art & labour to bestow
 Upon the carcass of it now
 Is but t'embalm a body dead;
 The figure may remain; the life & beauty's fled.

Never, my dear, was honour yet undone
 By love, but indiscretion.
 To th'wise it all things does allow;
 And cares not what we do, but how.
 Like tapers shut in ancient urns,
 Unless it let in air for ever shines & burns.

Thou first perhaps, who didst the fault commit,
 Wilt make thy wicked boast of it.
 For men, with roman pride, above
 The conquest, do the triumph love:
 Nor think a perfect vict'ry gained
 Unless they through the streets their captive lead enchained.

Whoe'er his secret joys has open laid,
 The bawd to his own wife is made.
 Beside what boast is left for me,
 Whose whole wealth's a gift from thee?

9† · "Dialogue: After Enjoyment" · Abraham Cowley (1618 – 1667) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

'Tis you the conqu'ror are; 'tis you
Who have not only ta'en, but bound & gagged me too.

Though publique pun'shment we escape, the sin
Will rack & torture us within:
Guilt & sin our bosom bears;
And though fair, yet the fruit appears,
That worm which now the core does waste,
When long t'as gnawed within will break the skin at last.

That thirsty drink, that hungry food I sought,
That wounded balm, is all my fault.
And thou in pity didst apply,
The kind & only remedy:
The cause absolves the crime; since me
So mighty force did move, so mighty goodness thee.

Curse on thine arts. Methinks I hate thee now;
And yet I'm sure I love thee too!
I'm angry, but my wrath will prove,
More innocent than did thy love.
Thou hast this day undone me quite;
Yet wilt undo me more should'st thou not come at night.

9†

If he from heaven that filched the living fire
Condemned by *Jove* to endless torment be,
I greatly marvel how you still go free,
That far beyond *Prometheus* did aspire.
The fire he stole, although of heavenly kind,
Which from above he craftily did take,
Of lifeless clods, us living men to make,
He did bestow in temper of the mind.
But you broke into heaven's immortal store,
Where virtue, honour, wit, and beauty lay;
Which taking thence you have escaped away,
Yet stand as free as ere you did before;
Yet old *Prometheus* punished for his rape.
Thus poor thieves suffer while the greater 'scape.

9* You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough.

9† · Michael Drayton (1563 – 1631) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

9* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

IO

IO†

May I feel? said he.
 I'll squeal, said she.
 Just once, said he.
 It's fun, said she.

May I touch? said he.
 How much? said she.
 A lot, said he.
 Why not? said she.

Let's go, said he.
 Not too far, said she.
 What's too far? said he.
 Where you are, said she.

May I stay? said he.
 Which way? said she.
 Like this, said he.
 If you kiss, said she.

May I move? said he.
 Is it love? said she.
 If you're willing, said he.
 But you're killing, said she.

But it's life, said he.
 But your wife, said she.
 Now, said he.
 Ow, said she.

Tiptop, said he.
 Don't stop, said she.
 O no, said he.
 Go slow, said she.

Cccome? said he.
 Ummm... said she.
 You're divine! said he.
 You are mine, said she.

IO† · "may i feel said he" · Prof Edward Cummings (1894 – 1962) · *The Penguin Book of Light Verse*. ¶ The Almanacker has standardised Prof Cummings's famously distinctive capitalisation and punctuation.

10†

Old Father *Ocean* calls my tide:
 Come away; come away.
 The barks upon the billows ride;
 The master will not stay:
 The merry boatswain from his side
 His whistle takes to check & chide
 The lingering lad's delay,
 And all the crew aloud has cried,
 Come away; come away.

See the god of seas attends thee,
 Nymphs divine, a beauteous train;
 All the calmer gales befriend thee
 In thy passage o'er the main:
 Every maid her locks is binding;
 Every *Triton's* horn is winding;
 Welcome to the watery plain.

10*

The night has a thousand eyes,
 And the day but one.

10† · R "A Song of the River Thames" · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

10* · Francis Bourdillon (1852 – 1921) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This eminently-quotable line has provided the titles for a 1945 novel by Cornell Woolrich, a 1948 film directed by John Farrow, and a song first recorded in 1962 by Bobby Vee.

II

II†

I can love both fair & brown,
 Her whom abundance melts, & her whom want betrays,
 Her who loves loneliness best, & her who masks & plays,
 Her whom the country formed, & whom the town,
 Her who believes, & her who tries,
 Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,
 And her who is dry cork, & never cries;
 I can love her, & her, and you, & you;
 I can love any, so she be not true.

Will no other vice content you?
 Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
 Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?
 Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?
 O we are not; be not you so;
 Let me, and do you, so know.
 Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
 Must I, who came to travail thorough you,
 Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?

Venus heard me sigh this song,
 And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore,
 She heard not this till now; and that it should be so no more.
 She went, examined, and returned ere long,
 And said, Alas, some two or three
 Poor heretics in love there be
 Which think to 'stablish dangerous constancy.
 But I have told them, Since you will be true,
 You shall be true to them who are false to you.

II†

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
 Their flag to april's breeze unfurled,
 Here once the embattled farmers stood,
 And fired the shot heard round the world.

II† · "The Indifferent" · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

II† · "Hymn: Sung at the Completion of the Concord Monument, April 19, 1838" · The Rev Prof Ralph Emerson (1803 – 1882) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ The Battles of Lexington and Concord were the first engagements of the American Revolutionary War.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set today a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare,
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid time & nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them & thee.

¶* He that is down needs fear no fall.

¶* · John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) · *Pilgrim's Progress*. ¶ This is a line from the shepherd boy's song in the second part of *Pilgrim's Progress*.

I2

12‡

Sweetest love, I do not go
 For weariness of thee,
 Nor in hope the world can show
 A fitter love for me;
 But since that I
 Must die at last, 'tis best
 To use myself in jest
 Thus by feigned deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
 And yet is here today;
 He hath no desire nor sense,
 Nor half so short a way:
 Then fear not me,
 But believe that I shall make
 Speedier journeys, since I take
 More wings & spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power,
 That if good fortune fall
 Cannot add another hour,
 Nor a lost hour recall!
 But come bad chance,
 And we join to't our strength,
 And we teach it art & length,
 Itself o'er us t'advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind,
 But sigh'st my soul away;
 When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
 My life's blood doth decay.
 It cannot be
 That thou lov'st me, as thou say'st,
 If in thine my life thou waste,
 That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
 Forethink me any ill;
 Destiny may take thy part,

And may thy fears fulfil;
But think that we
Are but turned aside to sleep;
They who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be.

12†

Let us use it while we may,
Snatch those joys that haste away.
Earth her winter coat may cast,
And renew her beauty past:
But, our winter come, in vain
We solicit spring again;
And when our furrows snow shall cover,
Love may return but never lover.

12* Oaths are but words.

12† · "Of Beauty" · Sir Richard Fanshaw, 1st Baronet (1608 – 1666) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

12* · Samuel Butler (1612 – 1680) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

13

13†

April is the cruellest month, breeding
 Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain.
 Winter kept us warm, covering
 Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
 A little life with dried tubers.
 Summer surprised us, coming over the STARNBERGERSEE
 With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
 And went on in sunlight, into the HOFGARTEN,
 And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Wir gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
 And when we were children, staying at the Archduke's,
 My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
 And I was frightened. He said, *Marie*,
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
 In the mountains, there you feel free.
 I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
 Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
 A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
 And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
 And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
 There is shadow under this red rock,
 (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
 And I will show you something different from either
 Your shadow at morning striding behind you
 Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
 I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

13†

Take O take those lips away
 That so sweetly were forsworn,
 And those eyes, like break of day,
 Lights that do mislead the morn;

13† · Prof Thomas Eliot (1888 – 1965) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ These are the opening lines of *The Waste Land*.

13† · R John Fletcher (1579 – 1625) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This song appears in the play *Bloody Brother*.

But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, though sealed in vain.

Hide O hide those hills of snow
Which thy frozen bosom bears,
On whose tops the pinks that grow
Are of those that april wears;
But first set my poor heart free,
Bound in those icy chains by thee.

13* An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered.

I4

I4[‡]

If you can keep your head when all about you
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
 If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
 But make allowance for their doubting too;
 If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
 Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
 Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
 And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream – and not make dreams your master;
 If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim;
 If you can meet with triumph & disaster
 And treat those two impostors just the same;
 If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
 Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
 And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
 And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
 And lose, and start again at your beginnings
 And never breathe a word about your loss;
 If you can force your heart & nerve & sinew
 To serve your turn long after they are gone,
 And so hold on when there is nothing in you
 Except the will which says to them, Hold on.

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
 Or walk with kings – nor lose the common touch,
 If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
 If all men count with you, but none too much;
 If you can fill the unforgiving minute
 With 60 seconds' worth of distance run,
 Yours is the earth & everything that's in it,
 And – which is more – you'll be a man, my son.

14[†]

She turned in the high pew, until her sight
 Swept the west gallery, and caught its row
 Of music-men with viol, book, & bow
 Against the sinking sad tower-window light.
 She turned again; and in her pride's despite
 One strenuous viol's inspirer seemed to throw
 A message from his string to her below,
 Which said: I claim thee as my own forthright.

Thus their hearts' bond began, in due time signed.
 And long years thence, when age had scared romance,
 At some old attitude of his or glance
 That gallery-scene would break upon her mind,
 With him as minstrel, ardent, young, & trim,
 Bowing "New Sabbath" or "Mount Ephraim".

14* A scot within a beast is no disguise.

14[†] · "A Church Romance" · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ This poem is subtitled 'Mellstock: circa 1835', Mellstock being a name Hardy coined himself for a village in his semi-fictional Wessex which corresponded to his native Stinsford. The poem describes Hardy's own parents' courtship.

14* · John Cleveland (1613 – 1658) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is a line from 'The Rebel Scot'.

15

15†

You promised to send me some violets. Did you forget?
 White ones & blue ones from under the orchard hedge?
 Sweet dark purple, & white ones mixed for a pledge
 Of our early love that hardly has opened yet.

Here there's an almond tree – you have never seen
 Such a one in the north – it flowers on the street, and I stand
 Every day by the fence to look up for the flowers that expand
 At rest in the blue, and wonder at what they mean.

Under the almond tree, the happy lands
 Provence, Japan, & Italy repose,
 And passing feet are chatter & clapping of those
 Who play around us, country girls clapping their hands.

You, my love, the foremost, in a flowered gown,
 All your unbearable tenderness, you with the laughter
 Startled upon your eyes now so wide with hereafter,
 You with loose hands of abandonment hanging down.

15†

The nightingale has a lyre of gold,
 The lark's is a clarion call,
 And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
 But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
 And we in the mad, spring weather,
 We two have listened till he sang
 Our hearts & lips together.

15* To go naked is the best disguise.

15† · “Letter from Town: The Almond-Tree” · David Lawrence (1885 – 1930) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*.

15† · “To A D” · Dr William Henley (1849 – 1903) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

15* · William Congreve (1670 – 1729) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

16

16‡

When, when, & whenever death closes our eyelids,
 Moving naked over ACHERON
 Upon the one raft, victor & conquered together,
Marius & Jugurtha together,
 One tangle of shadows.

Caesar plots against India,
 TIGRIS & EUPHRATES shall, from now on, flow at his bidding,
 Tibet shall be full of roman policemen,
 The parthians shall get used to our statuary
 And acquire a roman religion;

One raft on the veiled flood of ACHERON,
Marius & Jugurtha together.
 Nor at my funeral either will there be any long trail,
 Bearing ancestral *lares* & images;
 No trumpets filled with my emptiness,
 Nor shall it be on an attalic bed;
 The perfumed cloths shall be absent.
 A small plebeian procession.
 Enough, enough & in plenty
 There will be three books at my obsequies
 Which I take, my not unworthy gift, to *Persephone*.

You will follow the bare scarified breast
 Nor will you be weary of calling my name, nor too weary
 To place the last kiss on my lips
 When the syrian onyx is broken.

‘He who is now vacant dust
 Was once the slave of one passion:’
 Give that much inscription
 ‘Death why tardily come?’

You, sometimes, will lament a lost friend,
 For it is a custom:
 This care for past men,

16‡ · R Ezra Pound (1885 – 1972) · *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. ¶ This is the first two-thirds of *Homage to Sextus Propertius* IV. ℓ16: Yeats, and all other sources consulted, give ‘Atalic’, but the correct spelling is surely Attalic, i.e. of the city of Attalia (modern Antalya). ℓ33: Idalia = the region around Mount Ida in Crete (not the mountain of the same name near to Troy).

Since *Adonis* was gored in Idalia, and the cytharean
 Ran crying with out-spread hair;
 In vain, you call back the shade,
 In vain, *Cynthia*. Vain call to unanswering shadow;
 Small talk comes from small bones.

16†

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
 His rollrock highroad roaring down,
 In coop & in comb the fleece of his foam
 Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-fróth
 Turns and twindles over the broth
 Of a pool so pitchblack, féll-frówning,
 It rounds and rounds despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
 Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
 Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
 And the beadbony ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
 Of wet & of wildness? Let them be left;
 O let them be left, wildness & wet;
 Long live the weeds & the wilderness yet.

16* When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

16† · “Inversnaid” · Fr Gerard Hopkins (1844 – 1889) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ Inversnaid is a hamlet on the southern edge of the Scottish Highlands, famous for a nearby cave associated with the folk hero Rob Roy, and in more recent times for having a primary school with only two pupils, which subsequently closed for that reason.

16* · Sir Arthur Doyle (1859 – 1930) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This famous maxim ends with a question mark in *The Sign of Four*, the text in which it first appears.

17

17‡

Beautiful as the flying legend of some leopard
 She had not yet chosen her great captain or prince
 Depositary to her flesh, & our defense;
 A wandering beauty is a blade out of its scabbard.
 You know how dangerous, gentlemen of three-score?
 May you know it yet ten more.

Nor by process of veiling she grew less fabulous.
 Grey or blue veils, we were desperate to study
 The invincible emanations of her white body,
 And the winds at her ordered raiment were ominous.
 Might she walk in the market, sit in the council of soldiers?
 Only of the extreme elders.

But a rare chance was the girl's then, when the invader
 Trumpeted from the south, and rumbled from the north,
 Beleaguered the city from four quarters of the earth,
 Our soldiery too craven & sick to aid her –
 Where were the arms could countervail his horde?
 Her beauty was the sword.

She sat with the elders, and proved on their bleary visage
 How bright was the weapon unruined in her keeping,
 While he lay surfeiting on their harvest heaping,
 Wasting the husbandry of their rarest vintage –
 And dreaming of the broad-breasted dames for concubine?
 These floated on his wine.

He was lapped with bay leaves, & grass & fumiter weed,
 And from under the wine-film encountered his mortal vision,
 For even within his tent she accomplished his derision;
 She loosed one veil & another, standing unafraid;
 And he perished. Nor brushed her with even so much as a daisy?
 She found his destruction easy.

17‡ · “Judith of Bethulia” · John Ransom (1888 – 1974) · *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*. ¶ This poem is, of course, a rather priapic retelling of the Book of Judith. The original makes no mention of any orgiastic revelries (and is, arguably, all the poorer for the omission); indeed Judith 16.22 states: ‘And many desired her, but none knew her all the days of her life, after that Manasses her husband was dead, and was gathered to his people.’ Another version of this poem, probably a revision of this one, is floating around; but the differences are such that a reader would probably fail to spot them unless he was expecting to find them.

The heathen have all perished. The victory was furnished.
 We smote them hiding in vineyards, barns, annexes,
 And now their white bones clutter the holes of foxes,
 And the chieftain's head, with grinning sockets, & varnished –
 Is it hung on the sky with a hideous epitaphy?
 No, the woman keeps the trophy.

May God send unto the virtuous lady her prince.
 It is stated she went reluctant to that orgy,
 Yet a madness fevers our young men, and not the clergy
 Nor the elders have turned them unto modesty since.
 Inflamed by the thought of her naked beauty with desire?
 Yes, and chilled with fear & despair.

17†

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
 Is hung with bloom along the bough,
 And stands about the woodland ride
 Wearing white for eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years & ten,
 Twenty will not come again,
 And take from 70 springs a score,
 It only leaves me 50 more.

And since to look at things in bloom
 Fifty springs are little room,
 About the woodlands I will go
 To see the cherry hung with snow.

17* There must be a beginning of any great matter.

17† · Prof Alfred Housman (1859 – 1936) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Prof Housman's 'threescore years and ten' is a direct quotation from the King James Version of Psalm 90.10; although, happily, he died at the age of seventy-seven.

17* · Sir Francis Drake (1540 – 1596) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

18

18‡

'Tis not that I am weary grown
 Of being yours, & yours alone,
 But with what face can I incline
 To damn you to be only mine?
 You, whom some kinder power did fashion
 By merit & by inclination
 The joy at least of a whole nation.

Let meaner spirits of your sex
 With humble aims their thoughts perplex,
 And boast if by their arts they can
 Contrive to make one happy man;
 While moved by an impartial sense
 Favours, like nature, you dispense
 With universal influence.

See the kind seed-receiving earth
 To every grain affords a birth:
 On her no showers unwelcome fall,
 Her willing womb retains 'em all,
 And shall my *Caelia* be confined?
 No, live up to thy mighty mind,
 And be the mistress of mankind.

18†

Beauty, I know, is good, and blood is more;
 Riches thought most; but, madam, think what store
 The world hath seen, which all these had in trust
 And now lie in their forgotten dust.
 It is the muse alone, can raise to heaven,
 And at her strong arm's end, hold up, and even
 The souls she loves. Those other glorious notes,
 Inscribed in touch or marble, or the coats
 Painted or carved upon our great men's tombs,
 Or in their windows, do but prove the wombs
 That bred them, graves: when they were born they died

18‡ · "Upon His Leaving His Mistress" · John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647 – 1680) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

18† · ℞ Ben Jonson (1572 – 1637) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are taken from Jonson's verse letter to Elizabeth, the wife of the 5th Earl of Rutland (of the third creation) and daughter of Sir Philip Sidney.

That had no muse to make their fame abide
How many equal with the argive queen,
Have beauty known, yet none so famous seen?

18* Beware the fury of a patient man.

18* · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from the first part of *Absalom and Achitophel*.

19

19†

If music be the food of love, play on;
 Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
 The appetite may sicken, and so die.
 That strain again! It had a dying fall:
 O it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,
 That breathes upon a bank of violets,
 Stealing & giving odour! Enough; no more:
 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
 O spirit of love! How quick and fresh art thou,
 That, notwithstanding thy capacity
 Receiveth as the sea; nought enters there,
 Of what validity & pitch soe'er,
 But falls into abatement & low price,
 Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy
 That it alone is high fantastical.

19†

This living hand, now warm & capable
 Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
 And in the icy silence of the tomb,
 So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights
 That thou would wish thine own heart dry of blood
 So in my veins red life might stream again,
 And thou be conscience-calmed; see here it is;
 I hold it towards you.

19* He who would search for pearls must dive below.

19† · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ It is with these lines that Orsino opens *Twelfth Night*.

19† · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

19* · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from the prologue to *All for Love*.

20

20‡

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 fettered 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 & 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 & swings,

20‡ · "The Cloud" · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem may well have been influenced by, and in any case bears a striking likeness to, riddles from the *Exeter Book*.

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 & of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine aEDDOTry 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 & flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till calm the 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 & 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 & water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean & 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 & 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.

20†

I remember rooms that have had their part
 In the steady slowing down of the heart.
 The room in PARIS, the room at GENEVA,
 The little damp room with the seaweed smell,
 And that ceaseless maddening sound of the tide –
 Rooms where for good or for ill – things died.
 But there is the room where we two lie dead,
 Though every morning we seem to wake and might just as well seem to
 sleep again
 As we shall somewhere in the other quieter, dustier bed
 Out there in the sun – in the rain.

20* Rashness is a better fault than fear.

20† · “Rooms” · Miss Charlotte Mew (1869 – 1928) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

20* · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is a line from the prologue to *Tyrannic Love*.

21

21†

The loppèd tree in time may grow again;
 Most naked plants renew both fruit & flower;
 The sorest wight may find release of pain;
 The driest soil suck in some moistening shower.
 Times go by turns, and chances change by course:
 From foul to fair, from better hap to worse.

The sea of fortune doth not ever flow;
 She draws her favours to the lowest ebb;
 Her tide hath equal times to come & go;
 Her loom doth weave the fine & coarsest web.
 No joy so great, but runneth to an end;
 No hap so hard, but may in fine amend.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring;
 No endless night, yet not eternal day;
 The saddest birds a season find to sing;
 The roughest storm a calm may soon allay.
 Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all,
 That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall.

A chance may win that by mischance was lost;
 The net that holds no great, takes little fish;
 In some things all, in all things none are crossed:
 Few all they need, but none have all they wish.
 Unmeddled joys here to no man befall;
 Who least, hath some, who most, hath never all.

21†

Two or three visits, & two or three bows,
 Two or three civil things, two or three vows,
 Two or three kisses, with two or three sighs,
 Two or three *Jesuses* – & Let me dies –
 Two or three squeezes, & two or three touses,
 With two or three £1000 lost at their houses,
 Can never fail cuckolding two or three spouses.

21† · R “Tymes Goe by Turnes” · St Robert Southwell (1561 – 1595) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

21† · R “Two or Three: A Recipe to Make a Cuckold” · Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

21* · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from Dryden’s translation of Horace’s *Odes* III.29.

21* Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today.

22

22‡

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
 The mother of months in meadow or plain
 Fills the shadows and windy places
 With lisp of leaves & ripple of rain;
 And the brown bright nightingale amorous
 Is half assuaged for *Itylus*,
 For the thracian ships & the foreign faces,
 The tongueless vigil, & all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
 Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
 With a noise of winds & many rivers,
 With a clamour of waters, & with might;
 Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
 Over the splendour & speed of thy feet;
 For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
 Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her? How shall we sing to her,
 Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
 O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
 Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
 For the stars & the winds are unto her
 As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
 For the risen stars & the fallen cling to her,
 And the southwest wind & the west wind sing.

For winter's rains & ruins are over,
 And all the season of snows & sins;
 The days dividing lover & lover,
 The light that loses, the night that wins;
 And time remembered is grief forgotten,
 And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
 And in green underwood & cover
 Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

22‡ · "Chorus" · Algernon Swinburne (1837 – 1909) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is a chorus from Swinburne's tragedy *Atalanta in Calydon*. ℓ6: According to the *Odύσσεια* XIX.519–24, Aedon killed her own son, Itylus, during a psychotic episode, for which Zeus transformed her into a nightingale – hence the bird's mournful song. ℓ44: The terms 'maenad' and 'bassarid' are synonyms.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
 Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
 The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
 From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
 And fruit & leaf are as gold & fire,
 And the oat is heard above the lyre,
 And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
 The chestnut husk at the chestnut root.

And *Pan* by noon and *Bacchus* by night,
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
 Follows with dancing and fills with delight
 The maenad & the bassarid;
 And soft as lips that laugh and hide
 The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
 And screen from seeing and leave in sight
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the bacchanal's hair
 Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
 The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
 Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
 The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
 But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
 To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
 The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

22†

I have been here before,
 But when or how I cannot tell:
 I know the grass beyond the door,
 The sweet keen smell,
 The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before.
 How long ago I may not know:
 But just when at that swallow's soar
 Your neck turned so,
 Some veil did fall. I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?
 And shall not thus time's eddying flight

Still with our lives our love restore
In death's despite,
And day & night yield one delight once more?

22* The female of the species is more deadly than the male.

22* · Rudyard Kipling (1865 – 1936) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ¶ This is a line from “The Female of the Species”.

23

23†

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or grey grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound & single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere march made sweet the weather
With daffodil & starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives & seasons
With loving looks & treasons
And tears of night & morrow
And laughs of maid & boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were april's lady,
And I were lord in may,
We'd throw with leaves for hours

And draw for days with flowers,
 Till day like night were shady
 And night were bright like day;
 If you were april's lady,
 And I were lord in may.

If you were queen of pleasure,
 And I were king of pain,
 We'd hunt down love together,
 Pluck out his flying feather,
 And teach his feet a measure,
 And find his mouth a rein;
 If you were queen of pleasure,
 And I were king of pain.

23†

I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;
 And I with my long nails will dig thee pignuts,
 Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
 To snare the nimble marmoset. I'll bring thee
 To clustering filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee
 Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me?

23* I play for seasons; not eternities.

23† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ These lines are uttered by Caliban in *The Tempest* II.2.

23* · George Meredith (1828 – 1909) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is the first line of *Modern Love* XIII.

24

24[†]

I believe in you, my soul. The other I am must not abase itself to
 you,
 And you must not be abased to the other.

Loaf with me on the grass; loose the stop from your throat.
 Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture, not
 even the best.
 Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvèd voice.

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning,
 How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turned over
 upon me,
 And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue
 to my bare-stripped heart,
 And reached till you felt my beard, and reached till you held my feet.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace & knowledge that pass
 all the argument of the earth,
 And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
 And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
 And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women
 my sisters & lovers,
 And that a kelson of the creation is love,
 And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields,
 And brown ants in the little wells beneath them,
 And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heaped stones, elder, mullein &
 poke-weed.

24[†]

Alas, so all things now do hold their peace.
 Heaven & earth disturbèd in no thing;
 The beasts, the air, the birds their song do cease;
 The night's car the stars about doth bring;
 Calm is the sea; the waves work less & less:
 So am not I, whom love, alas, doth wring,
 Bringing before my face the great increase

24[†] · Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ These lines constitute “Song of Myself” §5.

24[†] · R “A Complaint by Night of the Lover not Beloved” · Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517 – 1547) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing,
In joy & woe, as in a doubtful case.
For my sweet thoughts sometime do pleasure bring:
But by & by, the cause of my disease
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.

24* I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive.

24* · Sir Henry Newbolt (1862 – 1938) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ¶ This is a line from “He Fell among Thieves”.

25

25†

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of MANHATTAN the son,
 Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking & breeding,
 No sentimentalist, no stander above men & women or apart from them,
 No more modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
 Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Whoever degrades another degrades me,
 And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the afflatus surging & surging, through me the current & index.

I speak the pass-word primeval; I give the sign of democracy;
 By God, I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the
 same terms.

Through me many long dumb voices,
 Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners & slaves,
 Voices of the diseased & despairing & of thieves & dwarfs,
 Voices of cycles of preparation & accretion,
 And of the threads that connect the stars, & of wombs & of the father-stuff,
 And of the rights of them the others are down upon,
 Of the deformed, trivial, flat, foolish, despised,
 Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

Through me forbidden voices,
 Voices of sexes & lusts, voices veiled and I remove the veil,
 Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigured.

25†

Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green
 Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice,
 In temperate heat where he is felt and seen;
 In presence prest of people, mad or wise;
 Set me in high or yet in low degree,
 In longest night or in the shortest day,
 In clearest sky or where clouds thickest be,

25† · Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These lines are from “Song of Myself”. ℓ5: This and the following line are of some significance to the plot of *Paper Towns* (2015).

25† · “A Vow to Love Faithfully, Howsoever He be Rewarded” · Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517 – 1547) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

In lusty youth or when my hairs are grey.
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell;
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood;
Thrall or at large, alive whereso I dwell,
Sick or in health, in evil fame or good:
Hers will I be, and only with this thought
Content myself although my chance be nought.

25* The multitude is always in the wrong.

26

26‡

Could we stop the time that's flying
 Or recall it when 'tis past,
 Put far off the day of dying
 Or make youth for ever last,
 To love would then be worth our cost.

But since we must lose those graces
 Which at first your hearts have won,
 And you seek for in new faces
 When our spring of life is done,
 It would but urge our ruin on.

Free as nature's first intention
 Was to make us, I'll be found,
 Nor by subtle man's invention
 Yield to be in fetters bound
 But one that walks a freer round.

Marriage does but slightly tie men
 Whilst close prisoners we remain;
 They the larger slaves of *Hymen*
 Still are begging love again
 At the full length of all their chain.

26†

Now hardly here & there an hackney coach
 Appearing, showed the ruddy morn's approach.
 Now *Betty* from her master's bed had flown,
 And softly stole to discompose her own;
 The slipshod 'prentice from his master's door
 Had pared the dirt, and sprinkled round the floor.
 Now *Moll* had whirled her mop with dextrous airs,
 Prepared to scrub the entry & the stairs.
 The youth with broomy stumps began to trace
 The kennel's edge, where wheels had worn the place.
 The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,
 Till drowned in shriller notes of chimney sweep:

26‡ · ℞ "The Unequal Fetters" · Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea (1661 – 1720) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

26† · ℞ "A Description of the Morning" · The Very Rev Dr Jonathan Swift (1667 – 1745) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

Duns at His Lordship's gate began to meet;
And brickdust *Moll* had screamed through half the street.
The turn-key now his flock returning sees,
Duly let out a-nights to steal for fees:
The watchful bailiffs take their silent stands,
And schoolboys lag with satchels in their hands.

26* O brave new world, that has such people in 't!

26* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ This famous line is uttered by Miranda in *The Tempest* V.1. It provided the title for Huxley's dystopia *Brave New World*.

27

27[‡]

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 & 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 & gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords & ladies of BYZANTIUM
Of what is passed, or passing, or to come.

27†

Your smiles are not, as other women's be,
 Only the drawing of the mouth awry;
 For breasts & cheeks & forehead we may see,
 Parts wanting motion, all stand smiling by:
 Heaven hath no mouth, and yet is said to smile
 After your style:
 No more hath earth, yet that smiles too,
 Just as you do.

No simpering lips nor looks can breed
 Such smiles as from your face proceed:
 The sun must lend his golden beams,
 Soft winds their breath, green trees their shade,
 Sweet fields their flowers, clear springs their streams,
 Ere such another smile be made:
 But these concurring, we may say,
 So smiles the spring and so smiles lovely may.

27*

Go not, happy day,
 Till the maiden yields.

27† · R Aurelian Townshend (1583 – 1651) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This poem is sometimes printed under the title “To the Lady Mary”.

27* · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ¶ These are two lines from the poet's longer poem *Maud*.

28

28†

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 & 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.

28†

Skirting the river road (my forenoon walk, my rest),
 Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the eagles,
 The rushing amorous contact high in space together,
 The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel,
 Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling,
 In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight downward falling,
 Till o'er the river poised, the twain yet one, a moment's lull,
 A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing,
 Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse flight,
 She hers, he his, pursuing.

28* In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

28† · R "The Dalliance of the Eagles" · Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

28* · Proverbs 1.17 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

29

29‡

I gently touched her hand: she gave
 A look that did my soul enslave;
 I pressèd to her rebel lips in vain:
 They rose up to be pressed again.
 Thus happy, I no further meant
 Than to be pleased & innocent.

On her soft breasts my hand I laid,
 And a quick light impression made;
 They with a kindly warmth did glow,
 And swelled, & seemed to overflow.
 Yet – trust me – I no farther meant
 Than to be pleased & innocent.

On her eyes my eyes did stay:
 On her smooth limbs my hands did stray;
 Each sense was ravished with delight,
 And my soul stood prepared for flight.
 Blame me not if at last I meant
 More to be pleased than innocent.

29†

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, & temples lie
 Open unto the fields, & to the sky –
 All bright & 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!

29* My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

29‡ · Anonymous · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

29† · "Upon Westminster Bridge" · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Golden Treasury*.

29* · 1 Kings 12.10 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

30

30†

Brave flowers – that I could gallant it like you,
 And be as little vain.
 You come abroad, and make a harmless show,
 And to your beds of earth again.
 You are not proud: you know your birth:
 For your embroidered garments are from earth.

You do obey your months & times, but I
 Would have it ever spring:
 My fate would know no winter, never die,
 Nor think of such a thing.
 O that I could my bed of earth but view
 And smile, and look as cheerfully as you.
 O teach me to see death and not to fear,
 But rather to take truce.
 How often have I seen you at a bier,
 And there look fresh & spruce.
 You fragrant flowers, then teach me, that my breath
 Like yours may sweeten and perfume my death.

30†

Do not conceal those tresses fair,
 The silken snares of thy curled haire,
 Least finding neither gold, nor ore,
 The curious silkworm work no more.

Do not conceale those breasts of thine,
 More snow-white than the Appennine,
 Lest if there be like cold or frost,
 The lily be for ever lost.

Do not conceal thy heavenly voice,
 Which makes the hearts of gods rejoice,
 Lest music hearing no such thing,
 The nightingale forget to sing.

30† · Henry King, Bishop of Chichester (1592 – 1669) · *Metaphysical Poetry*.

30† · “To Cynthia: On the concealment of her beauty” · Sir Francis Kynaston (1587 – 1642) · *Cassel's Anthology of English Poetry*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised the first, fourth and sixth verses from the original.

Do not conceal no beauty grace,
That's either in thy mind or face,
Lest virtue, overcome by vice,
Make men believe no paradise.

30* Money speaks sense in a language all nations understand.

MONTH III

Milk

I

1‡

Melinda, who had never been
Esteemed a beauty at 15,
Always amorous was, & kind:
To every swain she lent an ear;
Free as air, but false as wind;
Yet none complained she was severe.
She eased more than she made complain;
Was always singing, pert, & vain.

Wheree'er the throng was, she was seen,
And swept the youths along the green;
With equal grace she flattered all;
And fondly proud of all address,
Her smiles invite, her eyes do call,
And her vain heart her looks confess.
She rallies this, to that she bowed,
Was talking ever, laughing loud.

On every side she makes advance,
And every where a confidence;
She tells for secrets all she knows,
And all to know she does pretend:
Beauty in maids she treats as foes:
But every handsome youth as friend.
Scandal still passes off for truth;
And noise & nonsense, wit & youth.

1‡ · “The Coquet” · Mrs Aphra Behn (1640 – 1689) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ Mrs Behn included this poem in the section for one o’clock in Mrs Behn’s *The Lover’s Watch*.

Coquet all o'er, & every part,
 Yet wanting beauty, even of art;
 Herds with the ugly, & the old;
 And plays the critick on the rest:
 Of men, the bashful, and the bold,
 Either, and all, by turns, likes best:
 Even now, though youth be langished, she
 Sets up for love & gallantry.

1†

Now that the midday heat doth scorch my shame
 With lightning of fond lust, I will retire
 Under this vine whose arms with wandering spire
 Do climb upon the cross, and on the same
 Devise a cool repose from lawless flame,
 Whose leaves are intertwist with love entire,
 That envy's eye cannot transfuse her fire,
 But is rebated on the shady frame;
 And youthful vigour from the leavèd tier,
 Doth stream upon my soul a new desire.
 List, list, the ditties of sublimèd fame,
 Which in the closet of those leaves the choir
 Of heavenly birds do warble to his name.
 Or where was I that was not where I am?

1* Fetters of gold are still fetters.

1† · R "Ego Sum Vitis" · The Rev Dr William Alabaster (1568 – 1640) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

¶ The title is taken from the Vulgate of John 14.6.

1* · Miss Mary Astell (1668 – 1731) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

2

2‡

'Mamma,' said *Amanda*, 'I want to know what
Our relatives mean when they say
That Aunt *Jane* is a gorgon who ought to be shot,
Or at any rate taken away.

'Pray what is a gorgon and why do you shoot
It? Or are its advances refused?
Or is it perhaps a maleficent brute?
I protest I am wholly bemused.'

"The term," said her mother, 'is certain to pain,
And is quite inexcusably rude.
Moreover Aunt *Jane*, though uncommonly plain,
Is also uncommonly good.

'Her visiting list is of clergymen who
Have reached a respectable age,
And she pays her companion Miss *Angela Drew*
A sufficient & regular wage.

'Her fortune is large, though we often remark
On a modesty rare in the rich;
For her nearest & dearest are quite in the dark
As to what she will leave, or to which.

'Her conduct has ever been totally free
From censorious whispers of ill,
At any rate since nineteen hundred & three –
And probably earlier still.

'Your father's dear sister presents, in a word,
A model for all of her sex,
With a firmness of will that is never deterred,
And a confidence nothing can vex.

'I can only desire that you too should aspire
To such earthly reward as appears
In a high reputation, at present entire,
After heaven knows how many years.

‡ · "Aunt Jane" · Hilaire Belloc (1870 – 1953) · *The Penguin Book of Unrespectable Verse*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised the fourth and fifth verses from the original.

'So in future remember to turn a deaf ear
 To detraction – and now run away
 To your brothers & sisters whose laughter I hear
 In the garden below us at play.'

'O thank you, mamma!' said *Amanda* at that,
 And ran off to the innocent band
 Who were merrily burying *Thomas* the cat
 Right up to his neck in the sand.

2†

I asked a thief to steal me a peach:
 He turned up his eyes.
 I asked a lithe lady to lie her down:
 Holy & meek, she cries.

As soon as I went
 An angel came:
 He winked at the thief,
 And smiled at the dame;

And without one word said
 Had a peach from the tree,
 And still as a maid
 Enjoyed the lady.

2* Books will speak plain when counsellors blanch.

2† · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

2* · Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (1561 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

3

3†

I love the jocund dance,
 The softly-breathing song,
 Where innocent eyes do glance,
 And where lisps the maiden's tongue.

I love the laughing vale;
 I love the echoing hill,
 Where mirth does never fail,
 And the jolly swain laughs his fill.

I love the pleasant cot,
 I love the innocent bower,
 Where white & brown is our lot,
 Or fruit in the midday hour.

I love the oaken seat
 Beneath the oaken tree,
 Where all the old villagers meet,
 And laugh our sports to see.

I love our neighbours all,
 But, *Kitty*, I better love thee;
 And love them I ever shall;
 But thou art all to me.

3†

Love seeketh not itself to please,
 Nor for itself hath any care,
 But for another gives its ease,
 And builds a heaven in hell's despair.

So sung a little clod of clay
 Trodden with the cattle's feet,
 But a pebble of the brook
 Warbled out these metres meet:

Love seeketh only self to please,
 To bind another to its delight,
 Joys in another's loss of ease,
 And builds a hell in heaven's despite.

3† · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton.*

3† · “The Clod & the Pebble” · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton.*

3*

I'm tired of love: I'm still more tired of rhyme.
But money gives me pleasure all the time.

3* · "Fatigue" · Hilaire Belloc (1870 – 1953) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

4

4†

There is no thing in all the world but love,
No jubilant thing of sun or shade worth one sad tear.
Why dost thou ask my lips to fashion songs
Other than this, my song of love to thee?

See where I lie and pluck the thorns of grief,
Dust on my head and fire, as one who mourns his slain.
Are they not slain, my treasures of dear peace?
This their red burial is, sand heaped on sand.

Here came I in the morning of my joys.
Before the dawn was born, through the dark downs I rode.
The low stars led me on as with a voice,
Stars of the scorpion's tail in the deep Ssouth.

Sighing I came, and scattering wide the sand.
No need had I to urge her speed with hand or heel,
The creature I bestrode. She knew my haste,
And knew the road I sought, the road to thee.

Jangling her bells aloud in wantonness,
And sighing soft, she too, her sighs to my soul's sighs.
Behind us the wind followed thick with scents
Of incense blossoms & the dews of night.

The thorn trees caught at us with their crook'd hands;
The hills in blackness hemmed us in and hid the road;
The spectres of the desert howled and warned;
I heeded nothing of their words of woe.

Thus till the dawn I sped in my desire,
Breasting the ridges, slope on slope, till morning broke;
And lo, the sun revealed to me no sign,
And lo, the day was widowed of my hope.

Where are the tents of pleasure & dear love,
Set in the vale of thyme, where winds in spring are fain?
The highways of the valley, where they stood
Strong in their flocks, are there. But where are they?

The plain was dumb, as emptied of all voice;
No bleat of herds, no camels roaring far below
Told of their presence in the pastures void,
Of the waste places which had been their homes.

I climbed down from my watch-tower of the rocks,
To where the tamarisks grow, & the dwarf palms, alarmed.
I called them with my voice, as the deer calls,
Whose young the wolves have hunted from their place.

I sought them in the foldings of the hill,
In the deep hollows shut with rocks, where no winds blow.
I sought their footstep under the tall cliffs,
Shut from the storms, where the first lambs are born.

The tamarisk boughs had blossomed in the night,
And the white broom which bees had found, the wild bees' brood.
But no dear signal told me of their life,
No spray was torn in all that world of flowers.

Where are the tents of pleasure & dear love,
For which my soul took ease for its delight in spring,
The black tents of her people beautiful
Beyond the beauty of the sons of kings?

The wind of war has swept them from their place,
Scattering them wide as quails, whom the hawk's hate pursues;
The terror of the sword importunate
Was at their backs, nor spared them as they flew.

The summer wind has passed upon their fields;
The rain has purged their hearth-stones, and made smooth their floors;
Low in the valley lie their broken spears,
And the white bones which are their tale forlorn.

Where are the sons of Saba in the south,
The men of mirth & pride to whom my songs were sung,
The kinsmen of her soul who is my soul,
The brethren of her beauty whom I love?

She mounted her tall camel in the waste,
Loading it high for flight with her most precious things;
She went forth weeping in the wilderness,
Alone with fear on that far night of ill.

She fled mistrusting, as the wild roe flees,
 Turning her eyes behind her, while fear fled before;
 No other refuge knew she than her speed,
 And the black land that lies where night is born.

Under what canopy of sulphurous heaven,
 Dark with the thunderclouds unloosing their mad tongues,
 Didst thou lie down aweary of thy burden,
 In that dread place of silence thou hadst won?

Close to what shelter of what naked rocks,
 Carved with what names of terror of what kings of old,
 Near to what monstrous shapes unmerciful,
 Watching thy death, didst thou give up thy soul?

Or dost thou live by some forgotten well,
 Waiting thy day of ransom to return and smile,
 As the birds come when spring is in the heaven,
 And dost thou watch me near while I am blind?

Blind in my tears, because I only weep,
 Kindling my soul to fire because I mourn my slain,
 My kindred slain, and thee, & my dear peace,
 Making their burial thus, sand heaped on sand.

For see, there nothing is in all the world
 But only love worth any strife or song or tear.
 Ask me not then to sing or fashion songs
 Other than this, my song of love to thee.

4†

Thou hearest the nightingale begin the song of spring.
 The lark sitting upon his earthy bed, just as the morn
 Appears, listens silent; then springing from the waving cornfield, loud
 He leads the choir of day: trill, trill, trill, trill,
 Mounting upon the wings of light into the great expanse,
 Re-echoing against the lovely blue & shining heavenly shell,
 His little throat labours with inspiration; every feather
 On throat & breast & wings vibrates with the effluence divine
 All nature listens silent to him, & the awful sun
 Stands still upon the mountain looking on this little bird
 With eyes of soft humility & wonder, love & awe,

4† · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These are lines 28-44 of §31 (in Book the Second) of Blake's long poem *Milton*.

Then loud from their green covert all the birds begin their song:
The thrush, the linnet & the goldfinch, robin & the wren
Awake the sun from his sweet reverie upon the mountain.
The nightingale again assays his song, & thro' the day
And thro' the night warbles luxuriant, every bird of song
Attending his loud harmony with admiration & love.

4*

When I am dead, I hope it may be said:
His sins were scarlet, but his books were read.

5

5‡

That's my last duchess painted on the wall,
 Looking as if she were alive. I call
 That piece a wonder, now; Frè *Pandolf's* hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I said,
 'Fra Pandolf' by design, for never read
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
 The depth & 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,
 How such a glance came there; so, not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the duchess' cheek; perhaps
 Frè *Pandolf* chanced to say, 'Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat.' Such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart – how shall I say? – too soon made glad,
 Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
 The dropping of the daylight in the west,
 The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace – all & each
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men – good! But thanked
 Somehow – I know not how – as if she ranked
 My gift of a 900-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame

‡ · "My Last Duchess" · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ The narrator of the poem is Alfonso II of Ferrara. It is likely that the duke was homosexual; he fathered no children despite three marriages, nor was he known ever to have kept a mistress. At the time of her death, it was widely believed that he had had his first wife, the sixteen-year-old Lucrezia de' Medici, of whom Bronzino painted an exquisite portrait, poisoned; although later writers have suggested that she more likely succumbed to tuberculosis.

This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
 In speech – which I have not – to make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, ‘Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark” – and if she let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse –
 E’en then would be some stooping; and I choose
 Never to stoop. O sir, she smiled, no doubt,
 Whene’er I passed her; but who passed without
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will’t please you rise? We’ll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat,
 The Count your master’s known munificence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretense
 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!

5†

Follow your saint, follow with accents sweet;
 Haste you, sad notes, fall at her flying feet.
 There, wrapped in cloud of sorrow, pity move,
 And tell the ravisher of my soul I perish for her love:
 But if she scorns my never-ceasing pain,
 Then burst with sighing in her sight and ne’er return again.

All that I sung still to her praise did tend,
 Still she was first; still she my songs did end;
 Yet she my love & music both doth fly,
 The music that her echo is and beauty’s sympathy.
 Then let my notes pursue her scornful flight:
 It shall suffice that they were breathed and died for her delight.

5* Put your trust in God, my boys, and keep your powder dry.

5† · R Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

5* · Valentine Blacker (1778 – 1826) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Sometimes attributed to Oliver Cromwell.

6

6‡

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
 Where burning *Sappho* loved and sung,
 Where grew the arts of war & peace,
 Where *DELOS* rose, and *Phoebus* sprung!
 Eternal summer gilds them yet,
 But all, except their sun, is set.

The scian & the teian muse,
 The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
 Have found the fame your shores refuse:
 Their place of birth alone is mute
 To sounds which echo further west
 Than your sires' Islands of the Blest.

The mountains look on *MARATHON* –
 And *MARATHON* looks on the sea;
 And musing there an hour alone,
 I dreamed that Greece might still be free;
 For standing on the persians' grave,
 I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
 Which looks o'er sea-born *SALAMIS*;
 And ships, by thousands, lay below,
 And men in nations; all were his.
 He counted them at break of day –
 And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? And where art thou,
 My country? On thy voiceless shore
 The heroic lay is tuneless now –
 The heroic bosom beats no more.

6‡ · “The Isles of Greece” · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Dragon Book of Verse*. ¶ This is actually a poem-within-a-poem, being embedded in the third canto of *Don Juan*. ℓ4: In mythology, Apollo (‘Phoebus’) and his twin Artemis were born on Delos. ℓ7: That is Homer (‘Scian’, i.e. of Scios) and Anacreon (‘Teian’, i.e. of Teos). In modern times, Scios is better known as Chios. ℓ59: According to Herodotus (*Ἱστορίαι* V.58), the legendary hero Cadmus invented the Greek alphabet by introducing the Phoenician writing system to Greece. ℓ61: The wine of Samos is particularly prized – now as it was in antiquity. ℓ74: Suli = Souli. ℓ78: The Heraclides were the descendants of Hercules, from whom the Dorians claimed descent. ℓ83: The collapse of the (Greek Orthodox) Byzantine Empire was brought about by the military prowess of the Turks and the treachery – most notoriously in the Fourth Crusade – of the Roman Catholic kingdoms who ought to have been the Greeks’ allies. ℓ91: Sunium = Sounion.

And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something in the dearth of fame,
Though linked among a fettered race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For greeks a blush – for Greece a tear.

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush? Our fathers bled.
Earth, render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our spartan dead.
Of the 300 grant but three,
To make a new THERMOPYLAE.

What, silent still? And silent all?
Ah no, the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one, arise – we come, we come!'
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

In vain – in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with samian wine!
Leave battles to the turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of SCIO's vine:
Hark, rising to the ignoble call
How answers each bold bacchanal.

You have the pyrrhic dance as yet;
Where is the pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler & the manlier one?
You have the letters *Cadmus* gave –
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with samian wine.
We will not think of themes like these.
It made *Anacreon's* song divine:
He served – but served *Polycrates* –
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
 Was freedom's best & bravest friend;
 That tyrant was *Miltiades*.

O that the present hour would lend
 Another despot of the kind.
 Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with samian wine.
 On SULI's rock, & PARGA's shore,
 Exists the remnant of a line
 Such as the doric mothers bore;
 And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
 The heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the franks –
 They have a king who buys and sells;
 In native swords & native ranks
 The only hope of courage dwells:
 But turkish force & latin fraud
 Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with samian wine.
 Our virgins dance beneath the shade –
 I see their glorious black eyes shine;
 But gazing on each glowing maid,
 My own the burning tear drop laves,
 To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on SUNIUM's marbled steep,
 Where nothing, save the waves & I,
 May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
 There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
 A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine –
 Dash down yon cup of samian wine.

6†

What then is love but mourning?
 What desire, but a self-burning?
 Till she that hates doth love return,
 Thus will I mourne, thus will I sing:
 Come away, come away, my darling.

Beauty is but a blooming,
Youth in his glory entombing;
Time hath a wheel which none can stay:
Then come away, while thus I sing:
Come away, come away, my darling.

Summer in winter fadeth;
Gloomy night heavenly light shadeth;
Like to the morn are *Venus* flowers;
Such are her howers: then will I sing:
Come away, come away, my darling.

6* One law for the lion and ox is oppression.

6* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

7

7†

I wonder, by my troth, what thou & I
 Did, till we loved? Were we not weaned till then?
 But sucked on country pleasures, childishy?
 Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?
 'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.
 If ever any beauty I did see,
 Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

And now good morrow to our waking souls,
 Which watch not one another out of fear;
 For love, all love of other sights controls,
 And makes one little room an everywhere.
 Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,
 Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown,
 Let us possess one world; each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
 And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
 Where can we find two better hemispheres,
 Without sharp north, without declining west?
 Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;
 If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
 Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.

7†

Young & simple though I am,
 I have heard of *Cupid's* name;
 Guess I can what thing it is
 Men desire when they do kiss.
 Smoke can never burn they say,
 But the flames that follow may.

7* Shame is pride's cloak.

7† · R "The Good Morrow" · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

7† · R Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

7* · R William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

8

8†

Sylvia the fair, in the bloom of 15,
 Felt an innocent warmth as she lay on the green:
 She had heard of a pleasure, and something she guessed
 By the towsing & tumbling & touching her breast:
 She saw the men eager, but was at a loss
 What they meant by their sighing & kissing so close.

*By their praying & whining,
 And clasping & twining,
 And panting & wishing,
 And sighing & kissing,
 And sighing & kissing so close.*

Ah, she cried. Ah, for a languishing maid
 In a country of christians to die without aid.
 Not a whig, or a tory, or trimmer at least,
 Or a protestant parson, or catholic priest,
 To instruct a young virgin that is at a loss
 What they meant by their sighing & kissing so close.

Cupid in shape of a swain did appear;
 He saw the sad wound, and in pity drew near;
 Then showed her his arrow, and bid her not fear,
 For the pain was no more than a maiden may bear;
 When the balm was infused, she was not at a loss
 What they meant by their sighing & kissing so close.

*By their praying & whining,
 And clasping & twining,
 And panting & wishing,
 And sighing & kissing,
 And sighing & kissing so close.*

8†

Tyrian dye why do you wear,
 You whose cheeks best scarlet are?
 Why do you fondly pin
 Pure linens o'er your skin

8† · "Song" · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

8† · "Ode to His Mistress" · Abraham Cowley (1618 – 1667) · *Cassel's Anthology of English Poetry*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised the third verse from the original.

(Your skin that's whiter far),
Casting a dusky cloud before a star?

Why bears your neck a golden chain?
Did nature make your hair in vain
Of gold most pure & fine?
With gems why do you shine?
They, neighbours to your eyes,
Show but like *Phosphor* when the sun doth rise.

For 'tis not buildings make a court,
Or pomp, but 'tis the king's resort:
If *Jupiter* down pour
Himself, and in a shower
Hide such bright majesty,
Less than a golden one it cannot be.

8* The cut worm forgives the plough.

8* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

9

9†

After the fiercest pangs of hot desire,
 Between *Panthea's* rising breasts,
 His bending breast *Philander* rests:
 Though vanquished, yet unknowing to retire,
 Close hugs the charmer, and ashamed to yield,
 Though he has lost the day, yet keeps the field.

When with a sigh the fair *Panthea* said,
 What pity 'tis, ye gods, that all
 The noblest warriors soonest fall!
 Then with a kiss he gently reared his head,
 Armed him again to fight, for nobly she
 More loved the combat than the victory.

But more enraged, for being beat before,
 With all his strength he does prepare
 More fiercely to renew the war;
 Nor ceased he till the noble prize he bore:
 Ev'n her much wondrous courage did surprise;
 She hugs the dart that wounded her, & dies.

9†

One face looks out from all his canvases,
 One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans:
 We found her hidden just behind those screens,
 That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
 A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
 A nameless girl in freshest summer-greens,
 A saint, an angel – every canvas means
 The same one meaning, neither more or less.
 He feeds upon her face by day and night,
 And she with true kind eyes looks back on him,
 Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:
 Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;
 Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright;
 Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

9† · The Rev Richard Duke (1658 – 1711) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ Dying was frequently used in seventeenth century poetry as a euphemism for reaching orgasm.

9† · "In an Artist's Studio" · Miss Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

9* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

9* The weak in courage is strong in cunning.

IO

IO†

Who are these from the strange ineffable places,
 From the topaz mountain to the desert of doubt,
 With the glow of the Yemen full on their faces,
 And a breath from the spices of Hadramaut?

Travel-apprentices, travel-indenturers,
 Young men, old men, black hair, white,
 Names to conjure with, wild adventurers,
 From the noonday furnace to the purple night.

Burckhardt, Halévy, Niebuhr, Slater,
 Seventeenth, 18th century beys,
Seetzen, Saddleir, Struys and later
 Down to the long victorian days.

A 1000 miles at the back of ADEN,
 There they had time to think of things;
 In the outer silence and burnt air laden
 With the shadow of death & a vulture's wings.

There they remembered the last house in SAMNA,
 Last of the plane-trees, last shepherd & flock,
 Prayed for the heavens to rain down manna,
 Prayed for a *Moses* to strike down the rock.

IO† · “Arabia” · John Falkner (1858 – 1932) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ The poem has the subtitle: ‘[David George] Hogarth’s *Penetration of Arabia*’. £9: This poem contains a number of intriguingly obscure references, beginning with a roll-call of significant – though now largely forgotten – European explorers. Jean Louis Burckhardt (1784 – 1817) was a Swiss explorer and the first European to set eyes on the city of Petra in over a thousand years. Joseph Halévy (1827 – 1917) was an Ottoman-French-Jewish orientalist who was most notable for his exploration of the Yemen. Karsten Niebuhr (1733 – 1815) was the cartographer of the Royal Danish Arabian Expedition, and the only member of that group to return to Europe alive. Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767 – 1811) was murdered as an infidel by his fellow Muslims – he had undertaken an apparently sincere conversion two years before – while in search of the lost city that Burckhardt would finally rediscover. George Saddleir (1789 – 1859) was a captain in the British Army who, in endeavouring (successfully) to deliver a ceremonial sword to an Egyptian commander on behalf of Queen Victoria, inadvertently became the first European to cross the Arabia Peninsula. Jan Jansz Struys (1630 – 1694) was a Dutch sailor more famous for exploring Russia, but who, as prisoner of war in the Ottoman Empire, must have seen more of the Middle East than most Europeans of his day. The exact Slater being referred to, however, remains unclear. £17: The location of Samna is likewise unclear. Is this perhaps an archaic name for – or a garbled version of – Sana’a? £24: ‘Zobëide’ is an archaic romanisation of زبيدة, now more commonly transliterated as Zubaidah, i.e. Zubaidah bint Ja’far ibn al-Mansur, the granddaughter, niece and wife of three distinct Abbasid caliphs, famous for constructing a series of aqueducts for Mecca and Medina.

Famine & fever flagged their forces
 Till they died in a dream of ice & fruit
 In the long-forgotten watercourses
 By the edge of Queen *Zobëide*'s route.

They have left the hope of the green oases,
 The fear of the bleaching bones & the pest,
 They have found the more ineffable places –
Allah has given them rest.

10†

Through the open french window the warm sun
 Lights up the polished breakfast table, laid
 Round a bowl of crimson roses, for one –
 A service of worcester porcelain, arrayed
 Near it a melon, peaches, figs, small hot
 Rolls in a napkin, fairy rack of toast,
 Butter in ice, high silver coffee pot,
 And, heaped on a salver, the morning's post.

She comes over the lawn, the young heiress,
 From her early walk in her garden wood,
 Feeling that life's a table set to bless
 Her delicate desires with all that's good,

That even the unopened future lies
 Like a love letter, full of sweet surprise.

10* What is now proved was once only imagined.

10† · "Still-Life" · Mrs Elizabeth Daryush (1887 – 1977) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

10* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

II

II†

My God, I heard this day
 That none doth build a stately habitation,
 But he that means to dwell therein.
 What house more stately hath there been,
 Or can be, than is man, to whose creation
 All things are in decay?

For man is every thing,
 And more: he is a tree, yet bears more fruit;
 A beast, yet is or should be more:
 Reason & speech we only bring.
 Parrots may thank us, if they are not mute,
 They go upon the score.

Man is all symmetry,
 Full of proportions, one limb to another,
 And all to all the world besides:
 Each part may call the furthest brother;
 For head with foot hath private amity,
 And both with moons & tides.

Nothing hath got so far,
 But man hath caught & kept it, as his prey.
 His eyes dismount the highest star:
 He is in little all the sphere.
 Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
 Find their acquaintance there.

For us the winds do blow,
 The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow.
 Nothing we see but means our good,
 As our delight or as our treasure:
 The whole is either our cupboard of food,
 Or cabinet of pleasure.

The stars have us to bed:
 Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws;
 Music & light attend our head.
 All things unto our flesh are kind

II† · "Man" · The Rev George Herbert (1593 – 1633) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ℄8: Other sources put 'no fruit' instead of fruit.

In their descent & being; to our mind
In their ascent & cause.

Each thing is full of duty.
Waters united are our navigation;
Distinguishèd, our habitation;
Below, our drink; above, our meat;
Both are our cleanliness. Hath one such beauty?
Then how are all things neat?

More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of: in every path
He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sickness makes him pale & wan.
O might love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.

Since then, my God, thou hast
So brave a palace built, O dwell in it,
That it may dwell with thee at last.
Till then, afford us so much wit,
That, as the world serves us, we may serve thee,
And both thy servants be.

II†

Fair as unshaded light, or as the day
In its first birth, when all the year was may;
Sweet as the altar's smoke, or as the new
Unfolded bud, swelled by the early dew;
Smooth as the face of waters first appeared,
Ere tides began to strive or winds were heard;
Kind as the willing saints, and calmer far
Than in their sleeps forgiven hermits are.
You that are more than our discreeter fear
Dares praise, with such full art, what make you here?
Here, where the summer is so little seen,
That leaves, her cheapest wealth, scarce reach at green;
You come, as if the silver planet were
Misled awhile from her much injured sphere;
And t'ease the travels of her beams tonight,
In this small lantern would contract her light.

II† · R "To the Queen, Entertain'd at Night by the Countess of Anglesey" · Sir William Davenant (1606 – 1668) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

¶* Hold the fort, for I am coming.

¶* · Philip Bliss (1838 – 1876) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is the chorus to a hymn, inspired by a flag message from General Sherman.

I2

12‡

I dreamed this mortal part of mine
 Was metamorphosed to a vine,
 Which crawling one & every way
 Enthralled my dainty *Lucia*.
 Methought her long small legs & thighs
 I with my tendrils did surprise;
 Her belly, buttocks & her waist
 By my soft nervelets were embraced.
 About her head I writhing hung,
 And with rich clusters (hid among
 The leaves) her temples I behung,
 So that my *Lucia* seemed to me
 Young *Bacchus* ravished by his tree.
 My curls about her neck did crawl,
 And arms & hands they did enthrall,
 So that she could not freely stir
 (All parts there made one prisoner).
 But when I crept with leaves to hide
 Those parts which maids keep unespied,
 Such fleeting pleasures there I took
 That with the fancy I awoke;
 And found (ah me!) this flesh of mine
 More like a stock than like a vine.

12†

The lark now leaves his watery nest
 And climbing, shakes his dewy wings;
 He takes this window for the east;
 And to implore your light, he sings;
 Awake, awake. The morn will never rise,
 Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes.

The merchant bows unto the seaman's star,
 The ploughman from the sun his season takes;
 But still the lover wonders what they are,
 Who look for day before his mistress wakes.
 Awake, awake. Break through your veils of lawn!
 Then draw your curtains, and begin the dawn.

12‡ · "The Vine" · Robert Herrick (1591 – 1634) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.12† · Sir William Davenant (1606 – 1668) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

12* Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants; electric light the most efficient policeman.

12* · The Hon Louis Brandeis (1856 – 1941) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Generally rephrased as “Sunlight is the best disinfectant”, which is much better.

13

13†

As I came round the harbour buoy,
 The lights began to gleam,
 No wave the land-locked water stirred,
 The crags were white as cream;
 And I marked my love by candlelight
 Sewing her long white seam.
 It's aye sewing ashore, my dear,
 Watch and steer at sea,
 It's reef and furl, and haul the line,
 Set sail and think of thee.

I climbed to reach her cottage door;
 O sweetly my love sings!
 Like a shaft of light her voice breaks forth,
 My soul to meet it springs
 As the shining water leaped of old,
 When stirred by angel wings.
 Aye longing to list anew,
 Awake and in my dream.
 But never a song she sang like this,
 Sewing her long white seam.

Fair fall the lights, the harbour lights.
 That brought me in to thee.
 And peace drop down on that low roof
 For the sight that I did see,
 And the voice, my dear, that rang so clear,
 All for the love of me.
 For O, for O with brows bent low
 By the candle's flickering gleam,
 Her wedding gown it was she wrought,
 Sewing the long white seam.

13†

In turn, to please my maids,
 Most deftly will I sing

13‡ · “The Long White Seam” · Miss Jean Ingelow (1820 – 1897) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

13† · Michael Field (1846 – 1914) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is part LIV of *Long Ago*, except that the Almanacker has excised the first verse. The original is inscribed with a fragment of Sappho, “Τάδε νῦν ἑταίραις/ταῖς ἔμαισι τέρεπνα κάλως αἰείσω”, which means ‘I will now sing such-and-such beautifully to please my friends’.

Of their soft cherishing
 In apple orchards with cool waters by,
 Where slumber streams
 From quivering shades,
 And *Cypris* seems
 To bend and sigh,
 Her golden calyx offering amorously.

What praises would be best
 Wherewith to crown my girls?
 The rose when she unfurls
 Her balmy, lighted buds is not so good,
 So fresh as they
 When on my breast
 They lean, and say
 All that they would,
 Opening their glorious, candid maidenhood.

To that pure band alone
 I sing of marriage loves;
 As *Aphrodite's* doves
 Glance in the sun, their colour comes and goes:
 No girls let fall
 Their maiden zone
 At *Hymen's* call
 Serene as those
 Taught by a poet why sweet *Hesper* glows.

13* Quiet to quick bosoms is a hell.

13* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

14

14[‡]

Maid of ATHENS, ere we part,
 Give O give me back my heart;
 Or, since that has left my breast,
 Keep it now, and take the rest;
 Hear my vow before I go,
Ζωή μου, σας αγαπώ.

By those tresses unconfined,
 Wooed by each aegean wind;
 By those lids whose jetty fringe
 Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
 By those wild eyes like the roe,
Ζωή μου, σας αγαπώ.

By that lip I long to taste;
 By that zone-encircled waist;
 By all the token-flowers that tell
 What words can never speak so well;
 By love's alternate joy & woe,
Ζωή μου, σας αγαπώ.

Maid of ATHENS, I am gone:
 Think of me, sweet, when alone.
 Though I fly to ISTAMBOUL,

14[‡] · "Song" · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *Cassel's Anthology of English Poetry*. ¶ Over several intervals in 1809 and 1810, Lord Byron stayed in Athens at the home of one Tasia Makri, widow of a former English vice-consul, who was mother to three beautiful daughters. The poet wrote in a letter to one Henry Drury (dated 03 May 1810) that he was 'dying for love' of all three of them; but he especially took to the youngest, Teresa, who was only twelve at the time, and who inspired this poem; the specific parting which it describes seems to have been when he left Athens for Constantinople in Feb 1810. The following July, Lord Byron returned to Athens on his way to the Peloponnese; it was likely at this point that he offered the mother £500 for Teresa, but, thankfully, she declined, and he never saw her again after July 1810. Later, she married a Scotsman called James Black – arguably a more terrible fate than ending up as an Englishman's concubine. (There are rumours of an article, which the Almanacker was unable to get his hands on, and which explores the life and family of Teresa Black née Makri in extraordinary detail: C G Brouzas, 'Byron's Maid of Athens: Her family and surroundings'. *Philological Papers* v. 7, 65–??, West Virginia University Bulletin, Series 49, n. 12–VI, June 1949.) ¶6: Lord Byron's original polytonic Greek refrain is 'Ζωή μου, σας αγαπώ', which he himself translated as 'My life, I love you'. But the Almanacker has been advised that the poet's diacritics may well be incorrect – if nothing else, Lord Byron's Ζωή should in fact be ζωή – and therefore said refrain has been rendered in modern, monotonic Greek. ¶15: Lord Byron's own note: 'In the East (where ladies are not taught to write, lest they should scribble assignations), flowers, cinders, pebbles, etc., convey the sentiments of the parties, by that universal deputy of Mercury – an old woman. A cinder says, "I burn for thee;" a bunch of flowers tied with hair, "Take me and fly;" but a pebble declares—what nothing else can.'

ATHENS holds my heart & soul:
 Can I cease to love thee? No!
Ζωή μου, σας αγαπώ.

14†

The rain has come, and the earth must be very glad
 Of its moisture, and the made roads, all dust clad;
 It lets a veil down on the lucent dark,
 And not of any bright ground thing shows its spark.

Tomorrow's gray morning will show cow parsley,
 Hung all with shining drops, and the river will be
 Duller because of the all soddenness of things,
 Till the skylark breaks his reluctance, hangs shaking, and sings.

14* Good workmen never quarrel with their tools.

14† · “The Soaking” · Ivor Gurney (1890 – 1937) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

14* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from the first canto of *Don Juan*.

15

15†

A snake came to my water trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there.
In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob tree
I came down the steps with my pitcher
And must wait, must stand & wait, for there he was at the trough before me.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth wall in the gloom
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over the edge of the stone
trough
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness,
He sipped with his straight mouth,
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,
Silently.

Someone was before me at my water-trough,
And I, like a second comer, waiting.

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,
And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused a moment,
And stooped and drank a little more,
Being earth-brown, earth-golden from the burning bowels of the earth
On the day of sicilian july, with ETNA smoking.
The voice of my education said to me,
He must be killed,
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are venomous.

And voices in me said, If you were a man
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But must I confess how I liked him,
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at my water-trough
And depart peaceful, pacified, & thankless,
Into the burning bowels of this earth?

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him?
Was it perversity, that I longed to talk to him?

15‡ · “Snake” · David Lawrence (1885 – 1930) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Lawrence’s own note indicates that he wrote this poem in Taormina in 1923.

Was it humility, to feel so honoured?
I felt so honoured.

And yet those voices:
If you were not afraid, you would kill him!

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,
But even so, honoured still more
That he should seek my hospitality
From out the dark door of the secret earth.

He drank enough
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,
And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,
Seeming to lick his lips,
And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,
And slowly turned his head,
And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,
Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round
And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face.

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered farther,
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that horrid black hole,
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself after,
Overcame me now his back was turned.

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,
I picked up a clumsy log
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

I think it did not hit him,
But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in undignified haste.
Writhed like lightning, and was gone
Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,
At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.

And immediately I regretted it.
I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!
I despised myself & the voices of my accursed human education.

And I thought of the albatross
And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,
 Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
 Now due to be crowned again.

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords
 Of life.
 And I have something to expiate:
 A pettiness.

15†

As, in a dusky & tempestuous night,
 A star is wont to spread her locks of gold,
 And while her pleasant rays abroad are rolled,
 Some spiteful cloud doth rob us of her sight;
 Fair soul, in this black age so shined thou bright,
 And made all eyes with wonder thee behold,
 Till ugly death, depriving us of light,
 In his grim misty arms thee did enfold.
 Who more shall vaunt true beauty here to see?
 What hope doth more in any heart remain,
 That such perfections shall his reason rein,
 If beauty, with thee born, too died with thee?
 World, plain no more of love, nor count his harms;
 With his pale trophies death hath hung his arms.

15* An injury is much sooner forgotten than an insult.

15† · R William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585 – 1649) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

15* · Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694 – 1773) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

16

16‡

Love in my bosom like a bee
 Doth suck his sweet;
 Now with his wings he plays with me,
 Now with his feet.
 Within mine eyes he makes his nest,
 His bed amidst my tender breast;
 My kisses are his daily feast,
 And yet he robs me of my rest.
 Ah, wanton, will ye?

And if I sleep, then percheth he
 With pretty flight,
 And makes his pillow of my knee
 The livelong night.
 Strike I my lute, he tunes the string;
 He music plays if so I sing;
 He lends me every lovely thing;
 Yet cruel he my heart doth sting.
 Whist, wanton, still ye.

Else I with roses every day
 Will whip you hence,
 And bind you, when you long to play,
 For your offense.
 I'll shut mine eyes to keep you in,
 I'll make you fast it for your sin,
 I'll count your power not worth a pin.
 Alas! what hereby shall I win
 If he gainsay me?

What if I beat the wanton boy
 With many a rod?
 He will repay me with annoy,
 Because a god.
 Then sit thou safely on my knee,
 And let thy bower my bosom be;
 Lurk in mine eyes, I like of thee.

16‡ · R "Rosalindes Madrigall" · Thomas Lodge (1558 – 1625) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This lines are taken from Lodge's *Rosalind, Euphues' Golden Legacy*.

O *Cupid*, so thou pity me,
Spare not, but play thee.

16†

Out of the night that covers me
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath & tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

16* When he first drew the sword, he threw away the scabbard.

16† · “Echoes” · Dr William Henley (1849 – 1903) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ *The London Book of Verse* gives the title of this poem as “Echoes”, although it is perhaps better known under the title “Invictus”.

16* · Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon (1609 – 1674) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ The ‘he’ in question John Hampden, the Parliamentarian general.

17

17†

Why should you swear I am forsworn,
 Since thine I vowed to be?
 Lady, it is already morn,
 And 'twas last night I swore to thee
 That fond impossibility.

Have I not loved thee much & long,
 A tedious 12 hours' space?
 I must all other beauties wrong,
 And rob thee of a new embrace,
 Could I still dote upon thy face.

Not but all joy in thy brown hair
 By others may be found;
 But I must search the black & fair,
 Like skilful mineralists that sound
 For treasure in unploughed-up ground.

Then if, when I have loved my round,
 Thou prov'st the pleasant she,
 With spoils of meaner beauties crowned
 I laden will return to thee,
 Ev'n sated with variety.

17†

In our town, people live in rows.
 The only irregular thing in a street is the steeple;
 And where that points to, God only knows,
 And not the poor disciplined people!

And I have watched the women growing old,
 Passionate about pins, & pence, & soap,
 Till the heart within my wedded breast grew cold,
 And I lost hope.

But a young soldier came to our town;
 He spoke his mind most candidly.

17‡ · "The Scrutiny" · Col Richard Lovelace (1617 – 1657) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

17† · "The Fired Pot" · Mrs Edith Hepburn (1883 – 1947) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ Despite these lines, the act of *turning down* a prospective sexual partner doesn't appear to be something the poetess ever practised herself.

He asked me quickly to lie down,
And that was very good for me.

For though I gave him no embrace
– Remembering my duty –
He altered the expression of my face,
And gave me back my beauty.

17* I stand astonished at my own moderation.

17* · Robert Clive, 1st Baron Clive (1725 – 1774) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Uttered during a parliamentary inquiry into his dealings in India.

18

18‡

Under yonder beech tree single on the green sward,
 Couched with her arms behind her golden head,
 Knees & tresses folded to slip and ripple idly,
 Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.
 Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath her,
 Press her parting lips as her waist I gather slow,
 Waking in amazement she could not but embrace me:
 Then would she hold me and never let me go?

Shy as the squirrel & wayward as the swallow,
 Swift as the swallow along the river's light
 Circleting the surface to meet his mirrored winglets,
 Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her flight.
 Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the pine-tops,
 Wayward as the swallow overhead at set of sun,
 She whom I love is hard to catch and conquer,
 Hard, but O the glory of the winning were she won.

When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror,
 Tying up her laces, looping up her hair,
 Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
 More love should I have, & much less care.
 When her mother tends her before the lighted mirror,
 Loosening her laces, combing down her curls,
 Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
 I should miss but one for many boys & girls.

Heartless she is as the shadow in the meadows
 Flying to the hills on a blue & breezy noon.
 No, she is athirst & drinking up her wonder:
 Earth to her is young as the slip of the new moon.
 Deals she an unkindness, 'tis but her rapid measure,
 Even as in a dance; and her smile can heal no less:
 Like the swinging may cloud that pelts the flowers with hailstones
 Off a sunny border, she was made to bruise and bless.

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
 Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.
 Lone on the fir branch, his rattle note unvaried,

18‡ · "Love in the Valley" · George Meredith (1828 – 1909) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

Brooding o'er the gloom, spins the brown eve jar.
Darker grows the valley, more & more forgetting:
So were it with me if forgetting could be willed.
Tell the grassy hollow that holds the bubbling wellspring,
Tell it to forget the source that keeps it filled.

Stepping down the hill with her fair companions,
Arm in arm, all against the raying West
Boldly she sings, to the merry tune she marches,
Brave in her shape, & sweeter unpossessed.
Sweeter, for she is what my heart first awaking
Whispered the world was; morning light is she.
Love that so desires would fain keep her changeless;
Fain would fling the net, & fain have her free.

Happy happy time, when the white star hovers
Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart the darkness,
Threading it with colour, as yewberries the yew.
Thicker crowd the shades while the grave East deepens
Glowing, & with crimson a long cloud swells.
Maiden still the morn is; and strange she is, & secret;
Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as cold seashells.

Sunrays, leaning on our southern hills and lighting
Wild cloud mountains that drag the hills along,
Oft ends the day of your shifting brilliant laughter
Chill as a dull face frowning on a song.
Ay, but shows the south west a ripple-feathered bosom
Blown to silver while the clouds are shaken and ascend
Scaling the mid-heavens as they stream, there comes a sunset
Rich, deep like love in beauty without end.

When at dawn she sighs, and like an infant to the window
Turns grave eyes craving light, released from dreams,
Beautiful she looks, like a white water lily
Bursting out of bud in havens of the streams.
When from bed she rises clothed from neck to ankle
In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of May,
Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden lily
Pure from the night, & splendid for the day.

Mother of the dews, dark eyelashed twilight,
Low-lidded twilight, o'er the valley's brim,

Rounding on thy breast sings the dew-delighted skylark,
Clear as though the dewdrops had their voice in him.
Hidden where the rose-flush drinks the rayless planet,
Fountain-full he pours the spraying fountain showers.
Let me hear her laughter, I would have her ever
Cool as dew in twilight, the lark above the flowers.

All the girls are out with their baskets for the primrose;
Up lanes, woods through, they troop in joyful bands.
My sweet leads: she knows not why, but now she totters,
Eyes the bent anemones, and hangs her hands.
Such a look will tell that the violets are peeping,
Coming the rose: and unaware a cry
Springs in her bosom for odours & for colour,
Covert & the nightingale; she knows not why.

Kerchiefed head & chin she darts between her tulips,
Streaming like a willow grey in arrowy rain:
Some bend beaten cheek to gravel, and their angel
She will be; she lifts them, and on she speeds again.
Black the driving raincloud breasts the iron gateway:
She is forth to cheer a neighbour lacking mirth.
So when sky & grass met rolling dumb for thunder
Saw I once a white dove, sole light of earth.

Prim little scholars are the flowers of her garden,
Trained to stand in rows, and asking if they please.
I might love them well but for loving more the wild ones:
O my wild ones, they tell me more than these.
You, my wild one, you tell of honied field rose,
Violet, blushing eglantine in life; and even as they,
They by the wayside are earnest of your goodness,
You are of life's, on the banks that line the way.

Peering at her chamber the white crowns the red rose,
Jasmine winds the porch with stars two & three.
Parted is the window; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Breathes a falling breath that carries thoughts of me.
Sweeter unpossessed, have I said of her my sweetest?
Not while she sleeps: while she sleeps the jasmine breathes,
Luring her to love; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Bears me to her pillow under white rose wreaths.

Yellow with birdfoot trefoil are the grass glades;
 Yellow with cinquefoil of the dew-grey leaf;
Yellow with stonecrop; the moss mounds are yellow;
 Blue-necked the wheat sways, yellowing to the sheaf:
Green yellow bursts from the copse the laughing yaffle;
 Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade & shine:
Earth in her heart laughs looking at the heavens,
 Thinking of the harvest: I look and think of mine.

This I may know: her dressing & undressing
 Such a change of light shows as when the skies in sport
Shift from cloud to moonlight; or edging over thunder
 Slips a ray of sun; or sweeping into port
White sails furl; or on the ocean borders
 White sails lean along the waves leaping green.
Visions of her shower before me, but from eyesight
 Guarded she would be like the sun were she seen.

Front door and back of the mossed old farmhouse
 Open with the morn, and in a breezy link
Freshly sparkles garden to stripe-shadowed orchard,
 Green across a rill where on sand the minnows wink.
Busy in the grass the early sun of summer
 Swarms, and the blackbird's mellow fluting notes
Call my darling up with round & roguish challenge:
 Quaintest, richest carol of all the singing throats.

Cool was the woodside; cool as her white dairy
 Keeping sweet the cream pan; and there the boys from school,
Cricketing below, rushed brown & red with sunshine;
 O the dark translucence of the deep-eyed cool.
Spying from the farm, herself she fetched a pitcher
 Full of milk, & tilted for each in turn the beak.
Then a little fellow, mouth up & on tiptoe,
 Said, 'I will kiss you.' She laughed and leaned her cheek.

Doves of the fir wood walling high our red roof
 Through the long noon coo, crooning through the coo.
Loose droop the leaves, and down the sleepy roadway
 Sometimes pipes a chaffinch; loose droops the blue.
Cows flap a slow tail knee-deep in the river,
 Breathless, given up to sun & gnat & fly.

Nowhere is she seen; and if I see her nowhere,
Lightning may come, straight rains & tiger sky.

O the golden sheaf, the rustling treasure armful.
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced.
O the treasure-tresses one another over
Nodding. O the girdle slack about the waist.
Slain are the poppies that shot their random scarlet
Quick amid the wheatears: wound about the waist,
Gathered, see these brides of earth one blush of ripeness.
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced.

Large & smoky red the sun's cold disk drops,
Clipped by naked hills, on violet shaded snow:
Eastward large & still lights up a bower of moonrise,
Whence at her leisure steps the moon aglow.
Nightlong on black print branches our beech tree
Gazes in this whiteness: nightlong could I.
Here may life on death or death on life be painted.
Let me clasp her soul to know she cannot die.

Gossips count her faults; they scour a narrow chamber
Where there is no window, read not heaven or her.
'When she was a tiny,' one aged woman quavers,
Plucks at my heart and leads me by the ear.
Faults she had once as she learnt to run and tumbled:
Faults of feature some see, beauty not complete.
Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes holy
Earth & air, may have faults from head to feet.

Hither she comes; she comes to me; she lingers,
Deepens her brown eyebrows, while in new surprise
High rise the lashes in wonder of a stranger;
Yet am I the light & living of her eyes.
Something friends have told her fills her heart to brimming,
Nets in her blushes, and wounds her, and tames.—
Sure of her haven, O like a dove alighting,
Arms up, she dropped: our souls were in our names.

Soon will she lie like a white-frost sunrise.
Yellow oats & brown wheat, barley pale as rye,
Long since your sheaves have yielded to the thresher,
Felt the girdle loosened, seen the tresses fly.
Soon will she lie like a blood-red sunset.

Swift with the to-morrow, green-winged spring.
Sing from the south west, bring her back the truants,
Nightingale & swallow, song & dipping wing.

Soft new beech leaves, up to beamy April
Spreading bough on bough a primrose mountain, you,
Lucid in the moon, raise lilies to the skyfields,
Youngest green transfused in silver shining through:
Fairer than the lily, than the wild white cherry:
Fair as in image my seraph love appears
Borne to me by dreams when dawn is at my eyelids:
Fair as in the flesh she swims to me on tears.

Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,
I would speak my heart out: heaven is my need.
Every woodland tree is flushing like the dogwood,
Flashing like the whitebeam, swaying like the reed.
Flushing like the dogwood crimson in october;
Streaming like the flag reed south west blown;
Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted white beam:
All seem to know what is for heaven alone.

18†

In valleys green & still
Where lovers wander maying,
They hear from over hill
A music playing.

Behind the drum & fife,
Past hawthornwood & hollow,
Through earth & out of life
The soldiers follow.

The soldier's is the trade:
In any wind or weather
He steals the heart of maid
And man together.

The lover & his lass
Beneath the hawthorn lying
Have heard the soldiers pass,
And both are sighing.

And down the distance they
With dying note & swelling
Walk the resounding way
To the still dwelling.

18* Let us do something today which the world may talk of hereafter.

18* · Cuthbert Collingwood, Baron Collingwood (1748 – 1810) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.
¶ Uttered on the morning of the Battle of Trafalgar.

19

19[‡]

Had she come all the way for this,
 To part at last without a kiss?
 Yea, had she borne the dirt & rain
 That her own eyes might see him slain
 Beside the haystack in the floods?
 Along the dripping leafless woods,
 The stirrup touching either shoe,
 She rode astride as troopers do;
 With kirtle kilted to her knee,
 To which the mud splashed wretchedly;
 And the wet dripped from every tree
 Upon her head & heavy hair,
 And on her eyelids broad & fair;
 The tears & rain ran down her face.
 By fits & starts they rode apace,
 And very often was his place
 Far off from her; he had to ride
 Ahead, to see what might betide
 When the roads crossed; and sometimes, when
 There rose a murmuring from his men,
 Had to turn back with promises;
 Ah me! she had but little ease;
 And often for pure doubt & dread
 She sobbed, made giddy in the head
 By the swift riding; while, for cold,
 Her slender fingers scarce could hold
 The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
 She felt the foot within her shoe
 Against the stirrup : all for this,
 To part at last without a kiss
 Beside the haystack in the floods.
 For when they neared that old soaked hay,
 They saw across the only way
 That *Judas*, *Godmar*, and the three.
 Red running lions dismally
 Grinned from his pennon, under which,
 In one straight line along the ditch,
 They counted thirty heads.

So then,
While *Robert* turned round to his men,
She saw at once the wretched end,
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend
Her coif the wrong way from her head,
And hid her eyes; while *Robert* said:
'Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one,
At POITIERS where we made them run
So fast – why, sweet my love, good cheer,
The gascon frontier is so near,
Nought after this.'

But, 'O,' she said,
'My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you; then
The court at PARIS; those six men;
The gratings of the CHÂTELET;
The swift SEINE on some rainy day
Like this, and people standing by,
And laughing, while my weak hands try
To recollect how strong men swim.
All this, or else a life with him,
For which I should be damned at last,
Would God that this next hour were past!'
He answered not, but cried his cry,
'St *George* for *Marny*!' cheerily;
And laid his hand upon her rein.
Alas! no man of all his train
Gave back that cheery cry again;
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast
Upon his sword-hilts, some one cast
About his neck a kerchief long,
And bound him.

Then they went along
To *Godmar*; who said: 'Now, *Jehane*,
Your lover's life is on the wane
So fast, that, if this very hour
You yield not as my paramour,
He will not see the rain leave off –
Nay, keep your tongue from gibe & scoff,
Sir *Robert*, or I slay you now.'
She laid her hand upon her brow,

Then gazed upon the palm, as though
 She thought her forehead bled, and – ‘No.’
 She said, and turned her head away,
 As there were nothing else to say,
 And everything were settled: red
 Grew *Godmar*’s face from chin to head:
 ‘*Jehane*, on yonder hill there stands
 My castle, guarding well my lands:
 What hinders me from taking you,
 And doing that I list to do
 To your fair wilful body, while
 Your knight lies dead?’

A wicked smile

Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
 A long way out she thrust her chin: go
 ‘You know that I should strangle you
 While you were sleeping; or bite through
 Your throat, by God’s help – ah!’ she said,
 ‘Lord *Jesus*, pity your poor maid!
 For in such wise they hem me in,
 I cannot choose but sin & sin,
 Whatever happens : yet I think
 They could not make me eat or drink,
 And so should I just reach my rest.’
 ‘Nay, if you do not my behest,
 O *Jehane*! though I love you well,’
 Said *Godmar*, ‘would I fail to tell
 All that I know.’ ‘Foul lies,’ she said.
 ‘Eh? lies my *Jehane*? by God’s head,
 At PARIS folks would deem them true!
 Do you know, *Jehane*, they cry for you,
 “*Jehane* the brown! *Jehane* the brown!
 Give us *Jehane* to bum or drown!” –
 Eh – gag me *Robert*! – sweet my friend,
 This were indeed a piteous end no
 For those long fingers, and long feet,
 And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;
 An end that few men would forget
 That saw it. So, an hour yet:
 Consider, *Jehane*, which to take
 Of life or death!’

So, scarce awake,
Dismounting, did she leave that place,
And totter some yards : with her face
Turned upward to the sky she lay,
Her head on a wet heap of hay,
And fell asleep: and while she slept,
And did not dream, the minutes crept
Round to the 12 again; but she,
Being waked at last, sighed quietly,
And strangely childlike came, and said:
'I will not.' Straightway *Godmar's* head,
As though it hung on strong wires, turned
Most sharply round, and his face burned.

For *Robert* – both his eyes were dry,
He could not weep, but gloomily
He seemed to watch the rain; yea, too,
His lips were firm; he tried once more
To touch her lips; she reached out, sore
And vain desire so tortured them,
The poor grey lips, and now the hem
Of his sleeve brush'd them.

With a start
Up *Godmar* rose, thrust them apart;
From *Robert's* throat he loosed the bands
Of silk & mail; with empty hands
Held out, she stood & gazed, and saw,
The long bright blade without a flaw
Glide out from *Godmar's* sheath, his hand
In *Robert's* hair; she saw him bend
Back *Robert's* head; she saw him send
The thin steel down; the blow told well,
Right backward the knight *Robert* fell,
And moaned as dogs do, being half dead,
Unwitting, as I deem : so then
Godmar turned grinning to his men,
Who ran, some five or six, and beat
His head to pieces at their feet.

Then *Godmar* turned again and said:
'So, *Jehane*, the first fitte is read!
Take note, my lady, that your way

Lies backward to the CHÂTELET!
 She shook her head and gazed awhile
 At her cold hands with a rueful smile,
 As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had
 Beside the haystack in the floods.

19†

The dark-haired girl, who holds my thought entirely
 Yet keeps me from her arms and what I desire,
 Will never take my word for he is proud
 And none may have his way with *Peggy Browne*.

Often I dream that I am in the woods
 At WESTPORT HOUSE. She strays alone, blue-hooded,
 Then lifts her flounces, hurries from a shower,
 But sunlight stays all day with *Peggy Browne*.

Her voice is music, every little echo
 My pleasure and O her shapely breasts, I know,
 Are white as her own milk, when taffeta gown
 Is let out, inch by inch, for *Peggy Browne*.

A lawless dream comes to me in the night time,
 That we are stretching together side by side;
 Nothing I want to do can make her frown.
 I wake alone, sighing for *Peggy Browne*.

19* I know that's a secret, for it's whispered everywhere.

19† · “Peggy Browne” · Austin Clarke (1896 – 1974) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are based on an Irish song by the eighteenth century harper Turlough O'Carolan 166: The foundations of Westport House were laid by one Col John Browne, whose descendants, eleven of whom held the title Marquess of Sligo, continue to possess the house into the twenty-first century.

19* · William Congreve (1670 – 1729) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

20

20‡

Come, take up your hats, and away let us haste
To the butterfly's ball & the grasshopper's feast:
The trumpeter gadfly has summoned the crew,
And the revels are now only waiting for you.

On the smooth-shaven grass by the side of a wood
Beneath a broad oak which for ages has stood,
See the children of earth & the tenants of air
For an evening's amusement together repair.

And there came the beetle so blind & so black,
Who carried the emmet his friend on his back;
And there came the gnat & the dragonfly too,
And all their relations, green, orange & blue.

And there came the moth in his plumage of down,
And the hornet in jacket of yellow & brown,
Who with him the wasp his companion did bring;
But they promised that evening to lay by their sting.

And the sly little dormouse crept out of his hole,
And led to the feast his blind brother the mole;
And the snail, with his horns peeping out from his shell,
Came from a great distance – the length of an ell.

A mushroom their table, and on it was laid
A water-dock leaf, which a tablecloth made;
The viands were various, to each of their taste,
And the bee brought his honey to crown the repast.

There close on his haunches, so solemn & wise,
The frog from a corner look'd up to the skies;
And the squirrel, well-pleased such diversion to see,
Sat cracking his nuts overhead in a tree.

Then out came a spider, with fingers so fine,
To show his dexterity on the tight-line;
From one branch to another his cobweb he slung,
Then as quick as an arrow he darted along.

20‡ · “The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast” · William Roscoe (1753 – 1831) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

But just in the middle – oh, shocking to tell! –
 From his rope in an instant poor *Harlequin* fell;
 Yet he touched not the ground, but with talons outspread,
 Hung suspended in air at the end of a thread.

Then the grasshopper came, with a jerk & a spring,
 Very long was his leg, though but short was his wing
 He took but three leaps, and was soon out of sight,
 Then chirped his own praises the rest of the night

With steps quite majestic the snail did advance,
 And promis'd the gazers a minuet to dance;
 But they all laughed so loud that he pulled in his head,
 And went in his own little chamber to bed.

Then as evening gave way to the shadows of night,
 Their watchman, the glowworm, came out with his light;
 Then home let us hasten while yet we can see,
 For no watchman is waiting for you & for me.

20†

How pleasant to know Mr *Lear*!
 Who has written such volumes of stuff!
 Some think him ill-tempered & queer,
 But a few think him pleasant enough.

His mind is concrete & fastidious;
 His nose is remarkably big;
 His visage is more or less hideous;
 His beard it resembles a wig.

He sits in a beautiful parlour,
 With 100s of books on the wall;
 He drinks a great deal of marsala,
 But never gets tipsy at all.

He has many friends, lay men & clerical;
Old Foss is the name of his cat;
 His body is perfectly spherical;
 He wareth a runcible hat.

20† · Edward Lear (1812 – 1888) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ The Almanacker has omitted some weaker verses.

He reads, but he cannot speak, spanish,
He cannot abide ginger beer:
Ere the days of his pilgrimage vanish,
How pleasant to know Mr *Lear*!

20* A little scorn is alluring.

21

21†

Unhappy verse, the witness of my unhappy state,
 Make thy self fluttering wings of thy fast flying
 Thought, and fly forth unto my love, wheresoever she be:
 Whether lying restless in heavy bed, or else
 Sitting so cheerless at the cheerful board, or else
 Playing alone careless on her heavenly virginals.
 If in bed, tell her, that my eyes can take no rest:
 If at board, tell her, that my mouth can eat no meat:
 If at her virginals, tell her, I can hear no mirth.
 Asked why say: waking love suffereth no sleep:
 Say that raging love doth appal the weak stomach:
 Say that lamenting love marreth the musical.
 Tell her, that her pleasures were wont to lull me asleep:
 Tell her, that her beauty was wont to feed mine eyes:
 Tell her, that her sweet tongue was wont to make me mirth.
 Now do I nightly waste, wanting my kindly rest:
 Now do I daily starve, wanting my lively food:
 Now do I always die, wanting thy timely mirth.
 And if I waste, who will bewail my heavy chance?
 And if I starve, who will record my cursèd end?
 And if I die, who will say, 'This was *Immerito*'?

21†

So when the shadows laid asleep
 From underneath these banks do creep,
 And on the river as it flows
 With eben shuts begin to close;
 The modest halcyon comes in sight,
 Flying betwixt the day & night;
 And such an horror calm & dumb,
 Admiring nature does benumb;

21† · “Iambicum Trimetrum” · Edmund Spenser (1552 – 1599) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ ‘Iambicum Trimetrum’ means iambic trimeter, but these lines follow a very different prosody. ℓ21: The word ‘immerito’ is Italian for ‘undeserved’, although in this poem it seems to be used primarily as a man’s name.

21† · ℞ Andrew Marvell (1621 – 1678) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These are verses 44 and 45 of Marvell’s longer poem “Upon Appleton House”. These two verses are said to describe a kingfisher. ℓ4: For ‘eben shuts’ read “ebony shutters”. ℓ7: The word ‘horror’ in this context refers to awe, rather than fear and revulsion.

The viscous air, wheresoe'er she fly,
Follows and sucks her azure dye;
The gellying stream compacts below,
If it might fix her shadow so;
The stupid fishes hang, as plain
As flies in crystal overta'en,
And men the silent scene assist,
Charmed with the sapphire-wingèd mist.

21* I feel like an old warhorse at the sound of a trumpet.

22

22[‡]

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me;
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway night me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river –
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger;
White as meal the frosty field –
Warm the fireside haven –
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around,
And the road before me.
Wealth I ask not, hope, nor love,
Nor a friend to know me.
All I ask, the heaven above
And the road below me.

22†

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea & the sky,
 And all I ask is a tall ship & a star to steer her by;
 And the wheel's kick & the wind's song & the white sail's shaking,
 And a grey mist on the sea's face, & a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
 Is a wild call & a clear call that may not be denied;
 And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
 And the flung spray & the blown spume, & the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
 To the gull's way & the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
 And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
 And quiet sleep & a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

22* Men do not call surgeons to commend the bone, but to set it.

22† · "Sea-Fever" · Dr John Masefield, Poet Laureate (1878 – 1967) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

22* · Miss Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ These words are from a letter to Col Higginson, in which she asks for a frank assessment of her poetry.

23

23†

These little limbs,
 These eyes & hands which here I find,
 These rosy cheeks wherewith my life begins,
 Where have ye been? Behind
 What curtain were ye from me hid so long?
 Where was, in what abyss, my speaking tongue?

When silent I
 So many thousand thousand years
 Beneath the dust did in a chaos lie,
 How could I smiles or tears,
 Or lips or hands or eyes or ears perceive?
 Welcome ye treasures which I now receive.

I that so long
 Was nothing from eternity,
 Did little think such joys as ear or tongue
 To celebrate or see:
 Such sounds to hear, such hands to feel, such feet,
 Beneath the skies on such a ground to meet.

New burnished joys,
 Which yellow gold & pearls excel!
 Such sacred treasures are the limbs in boys,
 In such a soul doth dwell;
 Their organised joints & azure veins
 More wealth include than all the world contains.

From dust I rise,
 And out of nothing now awake;
 These brighter regions which salute mine eyes,
 A gift from God I take.
 The earth, the seas, the light, the day, the skies,
 The sun & stars are mine if those I prize.

Long time before
 I in my mother's womb was born,
 A God, preparing, did this glorious store,
 The world, for me adorn.

23† · “The Salutation” · The Rev Thomas Traherne (1636 – 1674) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem, as with all the Rev Traherne's verses, was first published more than two centuries after the poet's death.

Into this Eden so divine & fair,
So wide and bright, I come his son & heir.

A stranger here
Strange things doth meet, strange glories see;
Strange treasures lodged in this fair world appear,
Strange all and new to me;
But that they mine should be, who nothing was,
That strangest is of all, yet brought to pass.

23†

Nymphs & shepherds, dance no more
By sandy LADON's liliated banks.
On old LYCAEUS or CYLLENE hoar,
Trip no more in twilight ranks;
Though ERYMANTH your loss deplore,
A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony MAENALUS,
Bring your flocks, and live with us;
Here ye shall have greater grace
To serve the lady of this place.
Though syrinx your *Pan*'s mistress were,
Yet syrinx well might wait on her.
Such a rural queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

23* Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves.

23† · John Milton (1608 – 1674) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This song concludes Milton's masque *Arcades*.

23* · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

24

24[†]

To the same purpose: he, not long before
 Brought home from nurse, going to the door
 To do some little thing
 He must not do within,
 With wonder cries,
 As in the skies
 He saw the moon, 'O yonder is the moon,
 Newly come after me to town,
 That shined at LUGWARDINE but yesternight,
 Where I enjoyed the self-same sight.'

As if it had ev'n 20,000 faces,
 It shines at once in many places;
 To all the earth so wide
 God doth the stars divide,
 With so much art
 The moon impart,
 They serve us all; serve wholly every one
 As if they servèd him alone.
 While every single person hath such store,
 'Tis want of sense which makes us poor.

24[†]

With thee conversing I forget all time;
 All seasons, and their change, all please alike.
 Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
 With charm of earliest birds: pleasant the sun,
 When first on this delightful land he spreads
 His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, & flower,
 Glistering with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
 After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
 Of grateful evening mild; then silent night
 With this her solemn bird & this fair moon,
 And these the gems of heaven, her starry train:
 But neither breath of morn when she ascends
 With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
 On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flower,

24[†] · "To the Same Purpose" · The Rev Thomas Traherne (1636 – 1674) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

¶ Lugwardine (which the *Norton Anthology* spells without an *e*) is a village in Herefordshire.

24[†] · R John Milton (1608 – 1674) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

Glistening with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night
With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon,
Or glittering starlight without thee is sweet.

24* There is plenty of time to win this game, and to thrash the Spaniards too.

25

25†

Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born,
 Well-begotten, and raised by a perfect mother,
 After roaming many lands, lover of populous pavements,
 Dweller in MANNAHATTA my city, or on southern savannas,
 Or a soldier camped or carrying my knapsack & gun, or a miner in California,
 Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods, my diet meat, my drink from the spring,
 Or withdrawn to muse and meditate in some deep recess,
 Far from the clank of crowds intervals passing rapt & happy,
 Aware of the fresh free giver the flowing MISSOURI, aware of mighty NIAGARA,
 Aware of the buffalo herds grazing the plains, the hirsute & strong-breasted bull,
 Of earth, rocks, fifth-month flowers experienced, stars, rain, snow, my amaze,
 Having studied the mocking-bird's tones & the flight of the mountain hawk,
 And heard at dawn the unrivalled one, the hermit thrush from the swamp cedars,
 Solitary, singing in the west, I strike up for a new world.

25†

Whenas the rye reach to the chin,
 And chop-cherry, chop-cherry ripe within,
 Strawberries swimming in the cream,
 And schoolboys playing in the stream;
 Then O, then O, then O, my true love said,
 Till that time come again
 She could not live a maid.

25* Good fences make good neighbours.

25† · Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These are the opening lines of “Starting from Paumanok” – Paumanok being an old Indian name for Long Island – which was itself the opening poem of the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

25† · R George Peele (1556 – 1596) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ℓ2: Chop-cherry was a traditional English children's game in which the player attempts to catch a cherry, perhaps suspended from a thread, between his teeth.

25* · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This quotation comes at the very end of Frost's “Mending Wall”.

26

26‡

Her ivory hands on the ivory keys
 & Strayed in a fitful fantasy,
 Like the silver gleam when the poplar trees
 & Rustle their pale leaves listlessly,
 & Or the drifting foam of a restless sea
 When the waves show their teeth in the flying breeze.

Her gold hair fell on the wall of gold
 & Like the delicate gossamer tangles spun
 On the burnished disk of the marigold,
 & Or the sunflower turning to meet the sun
 & When the gloom of the jealous night is done,
 And the spear of the lily is aureoled.

And her sweet red lips on these lips of mine
 & Burned like the ruby fire set
 In the swinging lamp of a crimson shrine,
 & Or the bleeding wounds of the pomegranate,
 & Or the heart of the lotus drenched & wet
 With the spilt-out blood of the rose-red wine.

26†

Stand not uttering sedately
 Trite oblivious praise above her.
 Rather say you saw her lately
 Lightly kissing her last lover.

Whisper not, 'There is a reason
 Why we bring her no white blossom':
 Since the snowy bloom's in season,
 Strow it on her sleeping bosom:

O for it would be a pity
 To o'erpraise her or to flout her:

26‡ · "In the Gold Room" · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*. ¶ Subtitle: 'A Harmony'.

26† · "Epitaphium Citharistriae" · Victor Plarr (1863 – 1929) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ Austin Clarke stated in his memoir *A Penny in the Clouds* that this poem was inspired by Mabel Beardsley, sister of the famous painter, who also inspired Yeats' "Upon a Lady Dying"; but if this is the case then it cannot be a literal epitaph, since it was written no later than 1889 whereas Mabel Beardsley died in 1916. Ernest Dowson indicated in a letter to Arthur Moore that he believed that the poem was a translation; but it seems that he was either mistaken or joking, since the Almanacker has been unable to find the Greek or Latin original.

She was wild, & sweet, & witty –
Let's not say dull things about her.

26*

Treason doth never prosper. What's the reason?
For if it prosper none dare call it treason.

27

27[‡]

Beneath these fruit tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard seat.
And birds & flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice & pinion!
Thou, linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding spirit here today,
Dost lead the revels of the may;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, & butterflies, & flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up & down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A life, a presence like the air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back & body flings
Shadows & sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves

Pours forth his song in gushes;
 As if by that exulting strain
 He mocked & treated with disdain
 The voiceless form he chose to feign,
 While fluttering in the bushes.

27†

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
 O stay & hear! your truelove's coming
 That can sing both high & low;
 Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
 Journeys end in lovers meeting –
 Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
 Present mirth hath present laughter;
 What's to come is still unsure:
 In delay there lies no plenty –
 Then come kiss me, sweet & so,
 Youth's a stuff will not endure.

27*

I dreamt a dream tonight. 'And so did I.'
 Well what was yours? 'That dreamers often lie.'

27† · “Carpe Diem” · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ This song is sung by Feste in *Twelfth Night* II.3.

27* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is a dialogue between Romeo and Mercutio from *Romeo and Juliet* I.4.

28

28†

She was a phantom of delight
 When first she gleamed upon my sight;
 A lovely apparition, sent
 To be a moment's ornament;
 Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
 Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
 But all things else about her drawn
 From may-time and the cheerful dawn;
 A dancing shape, an image gay,
 To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
 A spirit, yet a woman too!
 Her household motions light & free,
 And steps of virgin-liberty;
 A countenance in which did meet
 Sweet records, promises as sweet;
 A creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine;
 A being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A traveller between life and death;
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
 A perfect woman, nobly planned,
 To warn, to comfort, and command;
 And yet a spirit still, and bright
 With something of angelic light.

28†

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,
 Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

28† · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Golden Treasury*.

28† · "The Eagle" · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

28* Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

28* · William Shakespeare (1564–1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ This line is uttered by Miranda in *The Tempest* I.2.

29

29‡

Give place, you ladies, and begone:
Boast not yourselves at all;
For here at hand approacheth one
Whose face will stain you all.

The virtue of her lively looks
Excels the precious stone;
I wish to have none other books
To read or look upon.

In each of her two crystal eyes
Smileth a naked boy;
It would you all in heart suffice
To see that lamp of joy.

I think nature hath lost the mould
Where she her shape did take;
Or else I doubt if nature could
So fair a creature make.

She may be well compared
Unto the phoenix kind,
Whose like was never seen or heard,
That any man can find.

In life she is *Diana* chaste,
In truth *Penelopey*;
In word & eke in deed steadfast;
What will you more we say?

If all the world were sought so far,
Who could find such a wight?
Her beauty twinkleth like a star
Within the frosty night.

Her rosial colour comes and goes
With such a comely grace,
More ruddier, too, than doth the rose,
Within her lively face.

At *Bacchus'* feast none shall her meet,
 Ne at no wanton play,
 Nor gazing in an open street,
 Nor gadding as a stray.

The modest mirth that she doth use
 Is mixed with shamefastness;
 All vice she doth wholly refuse
 And hateth idleness.

O Lord, it is a world to see
 How virtue can repair,
 And deck in her such honesty,
 Whom nature made so fair.

Truly she doth so far exceed
 Our women nowadays,
 As doth the gillyflower a weed;
 And more a 1000 ways.

How might I do to get a graff
 Of this unspotted tree?
 For all the rest are plain but chaff,
 Which seem good corn to be.

This gift alone I shall her give;
 When death doth what he can,
 Her honest fame shall ever live
 Within the mouth of man.

29†

From these high hills as when a spring doth fall
 It trilleth down with still & subtle course,
 Of this & that it gathers aye and shall
 Till it have just off flowed the stream & force,
 Then at the foot it rageth over all.
 So fareth love when he hath ta'en a source:
 His rein is rage; resistance vaileth none;
 The first eschew is remedy alone.

29† · R "Comparison of Love to a Streame Falling from the Alpes" · Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 – 1542) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

29* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Dragon Book of Verse*. ¶ This line is spoken by the title character in *Othello* I.3. The two preceding lines give the explanation: 'She loved me for the dangers I had passed,/ And I loved her that she did pity them.'

29* This only is the witchcraft I have used.

30

30[‡]

Ladies, I do here present you
 With a token love hath sent you;
 'Tis a thing to sport and play with,
 Such another pretty thing
 For to pass the time away with;
 Prettier sport was never seen.

Name I will not, nor define it,
 Sure I am you may divine it:
 By those modest looks I guess it,
 And those eyes so full of fire,
 That I need no more express it,
 But leave your fancies to admire.

Yet as much of it be spoken
 In the praise of this love token:
 'Tis a wash that far supasseth
 For the cleansing of your blood;
 All the saints may bless your faces,
 Yet not do you so much good.

Were you ne'er so melancholy,
 It will make you blithe & jolly;
 Go no more, no more admiring,
 When you feel your spleen's amiss,
 For all the drinks of steel & iron
 Never did such cures as this.

It was born in th'Isle of Man;
Venus nursed it with her hand,
 She puffed it up with milk & pap,
 And lulled it in her wanton lap,
 So ever since this monster can
 In no place else with pleasure stand.

30[‡] · R "A Present to a Lady" · Anonymous · *The Penguin Book of Light Verse*. ¶ This poem seems to be a parody of the verse introduction, which also begins 'Ladies, I do here present you', to Hannah Woolley's *The Queen-Like Closet*, a seventeenth century cookbook. ℓ34: Where the Almanacker gives 'satyrian', Ewart gives 'Saterian'. But 'sater' is a rare variant spelling of 'satyr'; thus the 'Saterian Dames', as Ewart's version spells them, are the female spirits – nymphs, dryads, naiads, etc – associated with the satyrs in Greek mythology.

Colossus-like, between two rocks,
 I have seen him stand and shake his locks,
 And when I have heard the names
 Of the sweet satyrian dames,
 O he's a champion for a queen;
 'Tis pity but he should be seen.

Nature, that made him, was so wise
 As to give him neither tongue nor eyes,
 Supposing he was born to be
 The instrument of jealousy,
 Yet here he can, as poets feign,
 Cure a lady's lovesick brain.

He was the first that did betray
 To mortal eyes the milky way;
 He is the *Proteus* cunning ape
 That will beget you any shape;
 Give him but leave to act his part,
 And he'll revive your saddest heart.

Though he want legs, yet he can stand,
 With the least touch of your soft hand;
 And though, like *Cupid*, he be blind,
 There's never a hole but he can find;
 If by all this you do not know it,
 Pray, ladies, give me leave to show it.

30†

Why should I blame her that she filled my days
 With misery, or that she would of late
 Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
 Or hurled the little streets upon the great,
 Had they but courage equal to desire?
 What could have made her peaceful with a mind
 That nobleness made simple as a fire,
 With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
 That is not natural in an age like this,
 Being high & solitary & most stern?
 Why, what could she have done, being what she is?
 Was there another TROY for her to burn?

30* Moab is my washpot.

MONTH IV

Flower

I

1†

Tune: Mary Blaize

Good people all, with one accord,
Lament for Madam *Blaize*,
Who never wanted one good word –
From those who spoke her praise.

The needy seldom passed her door,
And always found her kind;
She freely lent to all the poor –
Who left a pledge behind.

She strove the neighbourhood to please
With manners wondrous winnings
And never followed wicked ways –
Unless when she was sinning.

At church, in silks & satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumbered in her pew –
But when she shut her eyes.

Her love was sought, I do aver,
By twenty beaux & more;
The king himself has followed her –
When she has walked before.

1† · ℞ “An Elegy on the Glory of Her Sex, Mrs Mary Blaize” · Oliver Goldsmith (1728 – 1774) · *The Poems and Plays of Oliver Goldsmith*. ℓ3: The Almanacker has amended this line to follow the version sung by Mrs McKusker, as a cherished example of the so-called folk process. ℓ21: The Almanacker has amended this verse to follow the version sung by Mrs McKusker, as a cherished example of the so-called folk process.

But wealth & finery all fled
 And hangers-on all gone,
 The doctors found, when she was dead,
 The life within her none.

Let us lament in sorrow sore,
 For KENT STREET well may say
 That had she lived a twelvemonth more
 She had not died today.

1†

How did the party go in PORTMAN SQUARE?
 I cannot tell you; *Juliet* was not there.
 And how did Lady *Gaster*'s party go?
Juliet was next me and I do not know.

1* We are always doing... something for posterity, but I would fain see posterity
 do something for us.

1† · "Juliet" · Hilaire Belloc (1870 – 1953) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

1* · The Rt Hon Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

2

2‡

Tune: The Lish Young Buy-a-Broom

As I was a-travelling in the north country,
 Down by KIRKBY STEPHEN I happened for to be,
 As I was a-walking up & down the street,
 A pretty little buy-a-broom I chanced for to meet.

*And she was right; I was tight; everybody has their way.
 It was the lish young buy-a-broom that led me astray.*

She kindly then invited me to go along the way.
 Yes was the answer to her that I did say.
 There was me with my music walking down the street,
 And her with her tambourine was beating hand & feet.

Straightway for KENDAL we steerèd, her & I;
 Over yon white mountain, the weather it was dry.
 We each had a bottle filled up to the top,
 And whenever we were feeling dry, we took a little drop.

The night's coming on, good lodgings we did find,
 Eatables of all sorts & plenty of good wine,
 Good bed & blankets just for we two.
 And I rolled her in my arms, my boys, and wouldn't you do too?

Well early the next morning we arose to go away.
 I called to the landlord to see what was to pay:
 Fourteen and sixpence, just for you two.
 And a fiver on the table O my darling then she threw.

Now the reason that we parted, I now will let you hear.
 She started off for Germany right early the next year;
 And me not being willing to cross the raging sea –
 Here's a health to my buy-a-broom, wherever she may be.

*And she was right; I was tight; everybody has their way.
 It was the lish young buy-a-broom that led me astray.*

2†

I see you, *Juliet*, still, with your straw hat
 Loaded with vines, and with your dear pale face,
 On which those 30 years so lightly sat,
 And the white outline of your muslin dress.
 You wore a little **fichu** trimmed with lace
 And crossed in the front, as was the fashion then,
 Bound at your waist with a broad band or sash,
 All white & fresh & virginally plain.
 There was a sound of shouting far away
 Down in the valley, as they called to us,
 And you, with hands clasped seeming still to pray
 Patience of fate, stood listening to me thus
 With heaving bosom. There a rose lay curled.
 It was the reddest rose in all the world.

2* There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.

2† · “Farewell to Juliet” · Wilfrid Blunt (1840 – 1922) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

¶ This is from Blunt’s somewhat disappointing (in the light of the brilliance of this poem) series, *Love Sonnets of Proteus*.

2* · Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (1561 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

3

3‡

Tune: A Pilgrim's Way

I do not look for holy saints to guide me on my way
 Or male & female devilkens to lead my feet astray.
 If these are added I rejoice – if not, I shall not mind
 So long as I have leave & choice to meet my fellow-kind.
 For as we come and as we go (and deadly soon go we!)
 The people, Lord, thy people, are good enough for me.

Thus I will honour pious men whose virtue shines so bright
 (Though none are more amazed than I when I by chance do right)
 And I will pity foolish men for woe their sins have bred
 (Though 99% of mine I brought on my own head)
 And amomite or eremite or general averagee,
 The people, Lord, thy people, are good enough for me.

And when they bore me overmuch, I will not shake mine ears,
 Recalling many 1000 such whom I have bored to tears,
 And when they labour to impress I will not doubt nor scoff,
 Since I myself have done no less and sometimes pulled it off.
 Yea as we are and we are not and we pretend to be,
 The people, Lord, thy people, are good enough for me.

And when they work me random wrong, as oftentimes hath been,
 I will not cherish hate too long (my hands are none too clean),
 And when they do me random good, I will not feign surprise,
 No more than those whom I have cheered with wayside courtesies,
 But as we give and as we take (whate'er our takings be)
 The people, Lord, thy people, are good enough for me.

But when I meet with frantic folk who sinfully declare
 There is no pardon for their sin, the same I will not spare
 Till I have proved that heaven and hell, which in our hearts we have,
 Show nothing irredeemable on either side the grave,
 For as we live and as we die – if utter death there be –
 The people, Lord, thy people, are good enough for me.

Deliver me from every pride – the middle, high & low –
 That bars me from a brother's side, whatever pride he show,
 And purge me from all heresies of thought & speech & pen

That bid me judge him otherwise than I am judged. Amen.
 That I might sing of crowd or king or road-borne company,
 That I may labour in my day, vocation and degree,
 To prove the same by deed & name, and hold unshakenly
 (Where'er I go, whate'er I know, whoe'er my neighbour be)
 This single faith in life & death and to eternity:
 The people, Lord, thy people, are good enough for me.

3†

If ever two were one, then surely we.
 If ever man were loved by wife, then thee.
 If ever wife was happy in a man,
 Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
 I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,
 Or all the riches that the east doth hold.
 My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
 Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.
 Thy love is such I can no way repay;
 The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
 Then while we live, in love let's so persever,
 That when we live no more, we may live ever.

3* To me old age is always fifteen years older than I am.

3† · "To My Dear and Loving Husband" · Mrs Anne Bradstreet (1612 – 1672) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

3* · Dr Bernard Baruch (1870 – 1965) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

4

4‡

Tune: The Dalesman's Litany

It's hard when folks can't find their work
 Where they've been bred an' born;
 I were young I always thought
 I'd bide 'mong t'roots an' corn.
 I've bin forced to work i' towns,
 So here's my litany:
 From HULL, an' HALIFAX, an' hell,
 Good Lord, deliver me!

When I were courtin' Mary Ann,
 T'owd squire, he says one day:
 I've got no bield for wedded folks;
 Choose, wilt ta wed or stay?
 I couldn't gi'e up t'lass I loved;
 To t'town we had to flee:
 From HULL, an' HALIFAX, an' hell,
 Good Lord, deliver me!

I've wrought i' LEEDS an' HUDDERSFIELD,
 An' addled honest brass;
 I' BRADFORD, KEIGHLEY, ROTHERHAM,
 I've kept my barns an' lass.
 I've travelled all three Ridin's round,
 And once I went to sea:
 From forges, mills, an' coalin' boats,
 Good Lord, deliver me!

I've walked at night through SHEFFIELD lanes,
 'Twere same as bein' i' hell:
 Furnaces thrust out tongues o' fire,
 An' roared like t'wind on t'fell.
 I've sammed up coals i' BARNSLEY pits,
 Wi' muck up to my knee:

4‡ · "The Dalesman's Litany" · Prof Frederic Moorman (1872 – 1918) · *Songs of the Ridings*. ¶ Tim Hart wrote in the sleeve notes to *Folk Songs of Old England Vol 1* (1968): 'The words of this song were collected by F W Moorman who was president of the Yorkshire Dialect Society during the latter part of the 19th century. The beautiful haunting melody was written only a few years ago by Dave Keddie of Bradford to whom we are indebted for allowing its inclusion on this record. Although the lyrics were originally in broad dialect Tim translated them where necessary to enable more people to understand them.' The penultimate line of Moorman's original has been excised in order to fit the tune.

From SHEFFIELD, BARNSELY, ROTHERHAM,
Good Lord, deliver me!

I've seen grey fog creep o'er LEEDS BRIDGE
As thick as bastile soup;
I've lived where folks were stowed away
Like rabbits in a coop.
I've watched snow float down BRADFORD BECK
As black as ebony:
From HUNSLET, HOLBECK, WIBSEY SLACK,
Good Lord, deliver me!

But now, when all wer children's fledged,
To t'country we've come back.
There's 40 mile o' heathery moor
Twix' us an' t'coal-pit slack.
And when I sit o'er t'fire at night,
I laugh an' shout wi' glee:
From HULL, an' HALIFAX, an' hell,
T'good Lord's delivered me!

4†

There be none of beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still & gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming:

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep,
Whose breast is gently heaving
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee
To listen & adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of summer's ocean.

4* Life is very sweet, brother. Who would wish to die?

4† · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Golden Treasury*.

4* · George Borrow (1803 – 1881) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

5

5‡

Tune: The Blaydon Races

I went to BLAYDON races. 'Twas on the ninth o' june,
 Eighteen hundred & 62 on a summer's afternoon.
 I took the bus from BALMBRAS, an' she was heavy laden.
 Away we went along COLLINGWOOD STREET that's on the road to BLAYDON.

O lads! You should've seen us gannin'!
Passin' the folks along the road, just as they were stan'in':
Al' the lads & lasses there, an' al' wi' smilin' faces,
Gannin' along the SCOTSWOOD ROAD to see the BLAYDON races.

We flew past Armstrong's factory an' up to the ROBIN ADAIR.
 Gannin' down the railway bridge, the bus wheel flew off there.
 The lasses lost their crinolines & the veils that hide their faces.
 I got two black eyes & a broken nose a-gannin to BLAYDON races.

An' when we got the wheel put on, away we went again.
 Them that had their noses broke had to go back ower hyem.
 Some went to the dispensary, an' some to Dr *Gibbs*,
 An' some went to the infirmary to mend their broken ribs.

An' when we got to PARADISE, there was bonnie gam's begun.
 There was four & 20 on the bus, man. How they danced & sung!
 They called on me to sing a song, and I sang them "Paddy Fagan".
 An' I danced a jig an' I swung me twig on the day we went to BLAYDON.

We flew across the chain bridge right into BLAYDON toon.
 The bellman he was callin' there. They call him *Jacky Broon*.
 I saw 'im talkin' to some chaps, an' he was them persuadin'
 To gan an' see *Geordie Ridley's* show at the MECHANICS' HALL in BLAYDON.

The rain it poured al' the day an' made the ground quite muddy.
Coffee John 'ad a white hat on, an' he yelled, We stole a cuddy!
 There was spice stalls & monkey stalls an' old wives sellin' ciders.
 An' a chap wi' a ha'penny round about shoutin, Now, me lads, for riders!

O lads! You should've seen us gannin'!
Passin' the folks along the road, just as they were stan'in':

‡ · "The Blaydon Races" · George Ridley (1835 – 1864) · *The Spinners*. ¶ The words here are from The Spinners' version; they seem to have modified Ridley's lyrics to improve the meter.

*Al' the lads & lasses there, an' al' wi' smilin' faces,
Gannin along the SCOTSWOOD ROAD to see the BLAYDON races.*

5†

I love a lass that will not wed,
Yet values not her maidenhead;
That is not peevish, proud, nor poor,
That scorns the title of a whore;
That can both dance, and sing, and quaff,
And, in what ever humour, laugh;
Who swears by fate, she'll not abuse
What nature gives her leave to use;
Yet to a friend will not be coy,
But give him leave for to enjoy
What he desires, so he'll conceal
Those hidden pleasures which they steal.

5* We rise with the lark and go to bed with the lamb.

5† · Matthew Coppinger (1650 – 1700) · *Parnassian Molehill*. ¶ This seems to be the third quarter of a longer poem titled “The Surrender”.

5* · Nicholas Breton (1545 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

6

6†

Tune: Merry Green Broom

A wager with you, my pretty fair maid,
 Five hundred pounds to your io:
 A maid you will go to the merry green broom,
 And a maid you'll no longer return O.
 'A wager, a wager with you, kind sir,
 Five hundred pounds to my io:
 A maid I will go to the merry green broom,
 And a maid I will boldly return.

The maiden she sat in her bower alone:
 She is in torment & strife:
 If I don't go to the broom this night,
 My love he won't make me his wife O.
 So up and she's gone on her good white steed,
 Away for her young man to meet.
 She found him there and all fast asleep,
 With a blood red rose at his feet.

She's kissed him twice on cheek & on chin,
 Then over his body did lean.
 There she did place five rings on his chest
 Just so he would know she had been O.
 Then off through the woods the young maid did go,
 Just when her love did arise.
 He saw the five rings laid there on his chest;
 On his face was nought but surprise.

6†

Sweet *Cupid*, ripen her desire
 Thy joyful harvest may begin;
 If age approach a little higher,
 'Twill be too late to get it in.

Cold winter storms lay standing corn,
 Which once too ripe will never rise,
 And lovers wish themselves unborn,
 When all their joys lie in their eyes.

6† · Anonymous · *Little Lights*.

6† · William Corkine (? – ?) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is number VII in the first of Corkine's books of *Ayres*.

Then, sweet, let us embrace and kisse.
Shall beauty shale upon the ground?
If age bereave us of this bliss,
Then will no more such sport be found.

6* Life is just a bowl of cherries.

7

7†

Tune: The Holmfirth Anthem

Abroad for pleasure as I was a-walking –
 It was one summer summer's evening clear –
 There I beheld a most beautiful damsel,
 Lamenting for her shepherd swain.

The fairest evening that e'er I beheld
 Was ever evermore with the lad I adore.
 Wilt thou fight yon french & spaniards?
 Wilt thou leave me thus, my dear?

No more to yon green banks will I take thee,
 With pleasure for to rest yourself and view the land.
 But I will take you to yon green gardens,
 Where the pretty pretty flowers grow.

7†

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 thickset 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.

7* The exercise of singing is delightful to nature, and good to preserve the health of man.

7‡ · “Pratty Flowers” · Anonymous · *While Mortals Sleep*.

7† · “A Birthday” · Miss Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ There is a second verse, which the Almanacker has excised.

7* · William Byrd (1543 – 1623) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

8

8‡

Tune: Dark Eyes Sailor

As I roved out one evening fair,
It being the summertime to take the air,
I spied a sailor & a lady gay,
And I stood to listen to hear what they would say.

He said, 'Fair lady, why do you roam,
For the day is spent and the night is on?'
She heaved a sigh while the tears did roll:
'For my dark-eyed sailor, so young & stout & bold.

"Tis seven long years since he left this land.
A ring he took from off his lily-white hand.
One half of the ring is still here with me,
But the other's rolling at the bottom of the sea.'

He said, 'You may drive him out of your mind.
Some other young man you will surely find.
Love turns aside and soon cold has grown.
Like the winter's morning, the hills are white with snow.'

She said, 'I'll never forsake my dear,
Although we're parted this many a year.
Genteel he was and a rake like you
To induce a maiden to slight the jacket blue.'

One half of the ring did young *William* show;
She ran distracted in grief & woe,
Saying, '*William, William*, I have gold in store
For my dark-eyed sailor has proved his honour long.'

And there is a cottage by yonder lea.
This couple's married and does agree.
So maids be loyal when your love's at sea,
For a cloudy morning brings in a sunny day.

8†

The sun was shining on the sea,
 Shining with all his might:
 He did his very best to make
 The billows smooth & bright –
 And this was odd, because it was
 The middle of the night.

8* Love in this part of the world is no sinecure.

8† · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Penguin Book of Light Verse*. ¶ This is the first verse of “The Walrus and the Carpenter”.

8* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ These words are from a letter to John Murray. The ‘part of the world’ Lord Byron had in mind seems to have been Venice.

9

9‡

Tune: New York Girls

As I walked down through CHATHAM STREET,
A fair maid I did meet.
She asked me to see her home;
She lived in BLEEKER STREET.

*And away, you santy,
My dear honey!
O you NEW YORK girls,
Can't you dance the polka?*

And when we got to BLEEKER STREET
We stopped at 44:
Her mother & her sister there
To meet her at the door.

And when I got inside the house,
The drinks were passed around.
The liquor was so awful strong,
My head went round and round.

And then we had another drink
Before we sat to eat.
The liquor was so awful strong,
I quickly fell asleep.

When I awoke next morning,
I had an aching head.
There was I, *Jack*, all alone,
Stark naked in my bed.

My gold watch & my pocketbook
And lady friend were gone.
And there was I *Jack*, all alone,
Stark naked in my room.

On looking round this little room,
There's nothing I could see
But a woman's shift & apron
That were no use to me.

With a flour barrel for a suit of clothes
 Down CHERRY STREET forlorn,
 There *Martin Churchill* took me in
 And sent me round CAPE HORN.

*And away, you santy,
 My dear honey!
 O you NEW YORK girls,
 Can't you dance the polka?*

9†

Thou joy of my life,
 First love of my youth,
 Thou safest of pleasures
 And fullest of truth,
 Thou purest of nymphs
 And never more fair,
 Breathe this way and cool me,
 Thou pitying air;
 Come hither and hover
 On every part,
 Thou life of my sense
 And joy of my heart.

9*

What men call gallantry, and gods adultery,
 Is much more common when the climate's sultry.

9† · R Sidney Godolphin (1610 – 1643) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines drawn from a longer poem, called “A Ballet”. These lines in particular are the shepherd’s speech to the nymph Amarillis.

9* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a couplet from the first canto of *Don Juan*.

IO

IO†

Tune: The Game of All Fours

As I was a-walking one midsummer's morning
 To hear the birds whistle and the nightingales play.
 'Twas there that I met a beautiful maiden
 As I was a-walking all on the highway.

'Where are you going, my fair pretty lady?
 Where are you going so early this morn?'
 She answered, 'Kind sir, to visit my neighbours;
 I'm going down to LINCOLN, the place I was born.'

'May I go with you, my fair pretty lady?
 May I go along in your sweet company?'
 She turned her head round and, smiling all at me,
 Said, 'You may come with me, kind sir, if you please.'

We hadn't been walking a few miles together
 Before this young damsel began to show free.
 She sat herself down, saying, 'Sit down beside me.
 The games we shall play will be one, two & three.'

I said, 'My dear lady, if you're fond of the gaming,
 There's one game I know I would like you to learn.
 The game it is called "The Game of All Fours".'
 So I took out my pack and began the first turn.

She cut the cards and I fell a-dealing.
 I dealt her a trump and myself the poor jack.
 She led off her ace and stole my jack from me,
 Saying, 'Jack is the card I like best in your pack.'

'I dealt them last time: it's your turn to shuffle,
 My turn to show the best card in the pack.'
 Once more she'd the ace & deuce for to beat me;
 Once again I had lost when I laid down poor jack.

So I took up my hat and I bid her good morning.
 I said, 'You're the best that I know at this game.'
 She answered, 'Young man, if you'll come back tomorrow,
 We'll play the game over & over again.'

10†

A sweet disorder in the dress
 Kindles in clothes a wantonness:—
 A lawn about the shoulders thrown
 Into a fine distraction;
 An erring lace, which here & there
 Enthrals the crimson stomacher;
 A cuff neglectful, and thereby
 Ribbands to flow confusedly;
 A winning wave, deserving note,
 In the tempestuous petticoat;
 A careless shoestring, in whose tie
 I see a wild civility —
 Do more bewitch me, than when art
 Is too precise in every part.

10* No man ought to be compelled to live where a rose cannot grow.

10† · “The Poetry of Dress” · Robert Herrick (1591 – 1634) · *The Golden Treasury*.

10* · George Cadbury (1839 – 1922) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

II

II†

Tune: Cadgwith Anthem

Come fill up your glasses, and let us be merry,
For to rob and to plunder it is our intent.

*As we roam through the valleys
Where the lilies and the roses,
And the beautiful cashmere lies drooping its head:
Then away, then away, then away, away,
To the caves in yonder mountains,
To the robbers' retreat!*

We come from yonder mountains. Our pistols are loaded,
For to rob and to plunder it is our intent.

Hark, hark! In the distance there's footsteps approaching.
Stand, stand and deliver, shall be our watchword.

Your gold and your jewels – your life if resisted!
We shall laugh at your agony, and scorn at your threats.

Come fill up your glasses and let be a-drinking,
For the moonbeams are shining all over our heads.

*As we roam through the valleys
Where the lilies and the roses,
And the beautiful cashmere lies drooping its head:
Then away, then away, then away, away,
To the caves in yonder mountains,
To the robbers' retreat!*

II†

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, & bowers,
Of april, may, of june, & july flowers.

II† · Anonymous · *The Spyglass and the Herringbone*. ¶ George Goodenough wrote in *The Handy Man Afloat and Ashore* (1901): 'The following song always struck me as having one of the finest airs ever sung on a foc's'le. To hear the chorus pealing forth from some hundred or more throats was a thing to be remembered. The only pity is that the words are not more sensible. Such as they are they were very difficult to obtain. A bluejacket once wrote down all he could remember of them for me, but the copy got mixed up with other papers and I thought I had lost it. No one else could I find that could repair the supposed loss. Inquiries at second-hand music shops in London were fruitless. Many men could tell me that they knew the song but could not give me the words. Quite recently I came across my copy and here is the song.'

II† · "The Argument of His Book" · Robert Herrick (1591 – 1634) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

I sing of may-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, & of their bridal-cakes.
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness.
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice, & ambergris.
I sing of time's trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, & lilies white.
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of *Mab*, & of the fairy king.
I write of hell; I sing (and ever shall)
Of heaven, and hope to have it after all.

¶ True hearts may have dissembling eyes.

¶ Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is a line from a song which begins, 'Never love unless you can'.

12

12[‡]*Tune: Leaving of Liverpool*

Farewell, the PRINCES LANDING STAGE;

RIVER MERSEY, fare thee well.

I am bound for California,

A place I know right well.

*So fare thee well, my own true love.**When I return united we will be.**It's not the leaving of LIVERPOOL that grieves me,**But my darling when I think of thee.*

I've shipped on a yankee clipper ship;

Baug Crockett is her name.*Dan Burgess* is the captain of her,

And they say that she's a floating hell.

I have sailed with *Burgess* once before;

I think I know him well.

If a man's a sailor he will get along;

If not then he's sure in hell.

Farewell to LOWER FREDERICK STREET,

ANSON TERRACE and PARK LANE.

I am bound away for to leave you,

And I'll never see you again.

I am bound for California

By way of stormy CAPE HORN,

And I will write to thee a letter, love,

When I am homeward bound.

*So fare thee well, my own true love.**When I return united we will be.**It's not the leaving of LIVERPOOL that grieves me,**But my darling when I think of thee.*

12†

So good luck came, and on my roof did light,
Like noiseless snow, or as the dew of night:
Not all at once, but gently, as the trees
Are by the sunbeams tickled by degrees.

12* Ridicule is the best test of truth.

12† · R “The coming of good luck” · Robert Herrick (1591 – 1633) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

12* · Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694 – 1773) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

13

13[‡]*Tune: The Blind Harper*

Have you heard of the blind harper,
 How he lived in LOCHMAVEN town,
 How he went down to fair England,
 To steal King *Henry's* wanton brown?

First he went unto his wife,
 With all the haste that go could he.
 This work, he said, it will never go well,
 Without the help of our good grey mare.

Says she, You take the good grey mare,
 She'll run o'er hills both low & high.
 Go take the halter in your hose,
 And leave the foal at home with me.

So he's up and went to England gone.
 He went as fast as go could he.
 And when he got to CARLISLE gates
 Who should be there but King *Henry*?

Come in, come in, you blind harper,
 And of your music let me hear.
 But up and says the blind harper,
 I'd rather have a stable for my mare.

The king he looks over his left shoulder
 And he says unto his stable groom,
 Go take the poor blind harper's mare,
 And put her beside my wanton brown.

Then he's harped and then he sang,
 Till he played them all so sound asleep,
 And quietly he took off his shoes,
 And down the stairs he did creep.

Straight to the stable door he goes,
 With a tread so light as light could be,
 And when he opened and went in
 There he found 30 steeds & three.

And he took the halter from his horse
 And from his purse he did not fail.
 He slipped it over the wanton's nose
 And he's tied it to the grey mare's tail.

Then he let her loose at the castle gates
 And the mare didn't fail to find her way.
 She's went back to her own colt foal,
 Three long hours before the day.

So then in the morning, at fair daylight
 When they had ended all their cheer,
 Behold the wanton brown has gone,
 And so has the poor blind harper's mare.

And O & alas, says the blind harper,
 However alas that I came here!
 In Scotland I've got me a little colt foal;
 In England they stole my good grey mare.

Hold your tongue, says King *Henry*,
 And all your mournings let them be,
 For you shall get a far better mare
 And well paid shall your colt foal be.

Again he harped and again he sang;
 The sweetest music he let them hear.
 And he was paid for a foal that he never had lost
 And three times over for the good grey mare.

13†

Whenas in silks my *Julia* goes
 Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows
 That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes & see
 That brave vibration each way free;
 O how that glittering taketh me!

13* I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine.

13† · Robert Herrick (1591 – 1634) · *The Golden Treasury*.

13* · Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from Chesterton's "Wine and Water".

14

14‡

Tune: The Waters of Tyne

I cannot get to my love if I would dee,
 The waters of TYNE run between her & me.
 And here I must stand with a tear in my e'e,
 Both sighing & sickly my sweetheart to see.

O where is the boatman, my bonnie hinny?
 Where is the boatman? Bring him to me,
 To ferry me over the TYNE to my hinny,
 And I will remember the boatman & thee.

O bring me the boatman. I'll gi'e all my money,
 And you for your trouble rewarded shall be.
 To ferry me o'er the TYNE to my honey
 Or scull her across the rough river to me.

14†

Cloe's the wonder of her sex;
 'Tis well her heart is tender.
 How might such killing eyes perplex
 With virtue to defend her?

But nature, graciously inclined,
 With liberal hand to please us,
 Has to her boundless beauty joined
 A boundless bent to ease us.

14* If this be not love, it is madness, and then it is pardonable.

14‡ · Anonymous · *The Spinners*.

14† · "Cloe" · George Granville, Baron Lansdowne (1666 – 1735) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

14* · William Congreve (1670 – 1729) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

15

15†

Tune: The Lancashire Witches

In vain I attempt to describe
 The charms of my favourite fair;
 She's the sweetest of mother *Eve's* tribe;
 With her there is none to compare.
 She's a pride of beauty so bright,
 Her image my fancy enriches;
 My charmer's the village delight,
 And the pride of the Lancashire witches.

*Then hurrah for the Lancashire witches,
 Whose smile every bosom enriches;
 O dearly I prize
 The pretty blue eyes
 Of the pride of the Lancashire witches.*

They may talk of the dark eyes of Spain:
 'Tis useless to talk as they do:
 They attempt to compare them in vain
 With the Lancashire ladies' of blue.
 Only view the dear heavenly belles,
 You're soon seized with love's sudden twitches,
 Which nought could create but the spells
 From the eyes of the Lancashire witches.

The Lancashire witches, believe me,
 Are beautiful every one;
 But mine, or my fancy deceives me,
 Is the prettiest under the sun.
 If the wealth of the Indies, I swear,
 Were mine, and I wallowed in riches,
 How gladly my fortune I'd share
 With the pride of the Lancashire witches.

*Then hurrah for the Lancashire witches,
 Whose smile every bosom enriches;
 O dearly I prize*

15† · R "The Lancashire Witches" · Anonymous · *Bodleian* 17687. ¶ There is an association between witchcraft and the County Palatine of Lancashire due to the infamous Pendle witch trials. The Almanacker is only familiar with the tune sung by the Oldham Tinkers in *For Old Time's Sake*.

*The pretty blue eyes
Of the pride of the Lancashire witches.*

15†

Ye living lamps, by whose dear light
The nightingale does sit so late,
And studying all the summer night,
Her matchless songs does meditate;

Ye country comets, that portend
No war nor prince's funeral,
Shining unto no higher end
Than to presage the grass's fall;

Ye glow-worms, whose officious flame
To wand'ring mowers shows the way,
That in the night have lost their aim,
And after foolish fires do stray;

Your courteous lights in vain you waste,
Since *Juliana* here is come,
For she my mind hath so displaced
That I shall never find my home.

15* I never saw an ugly thing in my life.

15† · “The Mower to the Glowworms” · Andrew Marvell (1621 – 1678) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

¶ Prof Philip Larkin wrote a poem called “The Mower”, which perhaps is a response to these lines.

15* · John Constable (1776 – 1837) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

16

16‡

Tune: We're All Jolly Fellows that Follow the Plough

It was early one morning at the break of the day;
The farmer came to us, and this he did say:
'Come rise up, young fellows, with the best of good will.
Your horses need something, their bellies to fill.'

When four o'clock comes, my boys, it's up we do rise,
And off to the stable we merrily flies.
With a-rubbing and a-scrubbing, our horses will go,
For we're all jolly fellows that follows the plough.

When six o'clock comes, at breakfast we'll meet,
And with cold beef and pork we'll heartily eat.
With a piece in our pocket, to the fields we do go,
For we're all jolly fellows that follows the plough.

Then up spoke the farmer, and this he did say:
'What have you been doing this long summer's day?
You've not ploughed your acre. I'll swear and I'll vow:
You are all lazy fellows that follows the plough.'

Then up spoke our carter, and this he did cry:
'We've all ploughed our acre. You tell us a lie.
We've all ploughed our acre. I'll swear and I'll vow:
We are all jolly fellows that follows the plough.'

Then up spoke the farmer, and laughed at the joke:
'O it's gone half past two boys. It's time to unyoke.
Unharness your horses, and rub them down well,
And I'll give you a jug of the very best ale.'

So all you young ploughboys, where'er you may be,
Come take this advice and be ruled by me:
Never fear any master, where'er you may go,
For we're all jolly fellows that follows the plough.

16‡ · Anonymous · *Hourglass*. ¶ This song seems to have originated from a broadside printed around 1820.

16†

All my past life is mine no more;
 The flying hours are gone
 Like transitory dreams giv'n o'er,
 Whose images are kept in store
 By memory alone.

The time that is to come is not.
 How can it then be mine?
 The present moment's all my lot;
 And that, as fast as it is got,
Phyllis, is only thine.

Then talk not of inconstancy,
 False hearts & broken vows;
 If I, by miracle, can be
 This live-long minute true to thee,
 'Tis all that heav'n allows.

16* If once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination.

16† · "Love and Life" · John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647 – 1680) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

16* · Thomas de Quincey (1785 – 1859) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

17

17‡

Tune: Y'Acre of Land

My father he left me an acre of land –

Sing hey! Sing ho! Sing hivy!

My father he left me an acre of land –

*And a bunch of holly & ivy!*And we ploughed it up with a ram's horn,
And scattered it over with one peppercorn.And we reaped it with a sickle of leather,
And tied it all up with a tomtit's feather.And we threshed it with a peddler's pack,
Sing hey! Sing ho! Sing hivy!
And carried it home on a butterfly's back.
And a bunch of holly & ivy!

17†

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:–O no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips & cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours & weeks,
But bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom:–If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

17* It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards.

17‡ · “An Acre of Land” · Anonymous · *The Albion Band: Live at the Cambridge Folk Festival*. ¶ This song is closely related to Child Ballad 2.

17† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*.

17* · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

18

18†

*Tune: Who's the Fool Now?*O *Martin* said to his man,*Fie, man! Fie!**Martin* said to his man,*Who's the fool now?**Martin* said to his man,

Fill thou the cup and I the can.

*Thou hast well drunken, man.**Who's the fool now?*

I saw the man in the moon

Clouting of St *Peter's* shoon.

I saw a hare chase a hound

Twenty miles above the ground.

I saw a mouse chase a cat,

Saw a cheese eat a rat.

O *Martin* said to his man,*Fie, man! Fie!**Martin* said to his man,*Who's the fool now?**Martin* said to his man,

Fill thou the cup and I the can.

*Thou hast well drunken, man.**Who's the fool now?*

18†

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely & 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;

18† · "Who's the Fool Now?" · Anonymous · *Folk Songs of Old England*, Vol 1. ¶ This song is truly ancient; a version of it appears in Ravenscroft's *Deuteromelia* (1609). The narrative behind it is a rich man and his servant drinking together. The rich man is drinking considerably larger quantities, and is amusing his servant with improbable tales. ℓ9: The 'man in the moon' is said to refer here to Henry VIII, and his troubles with Clement VII, although this seems more likely to be just nonsense verse, at least at first glance.

18† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*.

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 owest;
Nor shall death brag thou wanderest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:—

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

18* It is better to love two too many than one too few.

18* · Sir John Harington (1560 – 1612) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ¶ The ultimate origin of this popular saying, which Lord Wavell quotes with a wink in the introductory text to his favourite love poems, seems to be the poet's *Epigrams* (1612).

19

19‡

Tune: The Streams of Lovely Nancy

O the streams of lovely *Nancy* divide in three parts,
 Oh, the streams of lovely *Nancy* are divided in three parts
 It's the drinking of good liquor that makes my heart sing,
 And the noise in the valley makes the rocks for to ring.

At the top of this mountain, my love's castle stands,
 It's all o'erbuilt with ivory on yonder black sands.
 Fine arches, fine porches, and diamonds so bright:
 It's a beacon for a sailor on a dark winter's night.

On yonder high mountain where the wild fowl do fly.
 There is one in amongst them that flies very high.
 If I had her in my arms, near the diamond's black land
 How soon I would secure her by the sleight of my hand.

At the base of this mountain a river runs clear.
 A ship from the Indies did once anchor there,
 With her red flags a-flying, the beating of her drum,
 Sweet instruments of music and the firing of her gun.

19†

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:
 In a cowslip's bell I lie;
 There I couch when owls do cry.
 On the bat's back I do fly
 After summer merrily.
 Merrily, merrily shall I live now
 Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

19* Remember, you're fighting for this woman's honour... which is probably more than she ever did.

19‡ · "The Streams of Lovely Nancy" · Anonymous · *Awkward Annie*. ¶ The origin and meaning of this beautiful song are as fascinating as they are obscure, but an educated guess seems to be that it was cobbled together in the West Country in the eighteenth century from a number of sailors' songs.

19† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This song is sung by Ariel in *The Tempest* V.1.

19* · Julius Marx (1890 – 1977) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This a line from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

20

20‡

Tune: Lily Bulero

O there was an old farmer in Sussex did dwell,
And he had a wife who he didn't love well.

Well the devil he came to the farmer at plough,
Saying one of your family I've got to have now.

Well you see, mister farmer, I've come for your wife.
I hear she's the bane and torment of your life,
So now I'll take her without more strife.

O take her, O take her, with all of my heart,
And I'm hoping that you & she never will part.

So the devil he hoisted her up on his hump,
And off down to hell he has gone with a jump.

And when they've travelled to purgatory's gate,
The night it was dark and the hour it was late.
Says he, Take in an old Sussex chap's mate.

There were two little devil a-dancing in chains;
She took out a stick and clattered their brains.

There were two little devils a-playing at ball,
Saying, Take her back, father; she'll murder us all.

So the devil he hoisted her up on his back,
Like a bunch of potatoes bound up in a sack,
And back to her house she's gone with a crack.

Well I've been a tormentor for most of my life,
But I never knew torment till I met your wife.

This proves that the women is better than men;
They go down to hell and get sent back again.

20†

I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden;
 Thou needest not fear mine;
 My spirit is too deeply laden
 Ever to burthen thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion;
 Thou needest not fear mine;
 Innocent is the heart's devotion
 With which I worship thine.

20* Priapus usurpeth Cupid's throne.

20† · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Golden Treasury*.

20* · Thomas Rogers (1550 – 1600) · *Parnassian Molehill*. ¶ This is a line from one of the *Celestial Elegies*; this one is titled “Diana”.

21

21†

Tune: The White Cockade

‘One day as I was walking all o’er yon fields of moss,
 I had no thoughts of enlisting till some soldiers did me cross.
 They kindly did invite me to a flowing bowl, and down
 They avancèd me some money, a shilling from the crown.’

My true love he is handsome and he wears a white cockade.
 He is a handsome young man, likewise a roving blade.
 He is a handsome young man. He’s gone to serve the king.
 O my very heart is aching all for the love of him.

My true love he is handsome & comely for to see,
 And by a sad misfortune a soldier now is he.
 I wish the man that’s listed him might prosper night nor day,
 And I wish that the hollanders might sink him in the sea.

Then he took out his hankerchief to wipe my flowing eye.
 ‘Leave off your lamentations, likewise your mournful sighs.
 Leave off your grief & sorrow until I march o’er yon plain.
 We’ll be married in the springtime when I return again.’

My true love he is listed, and it’s all for him I’ll rove.
 I’ll write his name on every tree that grows in yonder grove.
 My poor heart it does hallow; how my poor heart it does cry,
 To remind me of my ploughboy, until the day I die.

21†

My truelove hath my heart, and I have his,
 By just exchange one to the other given:
 I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
 There never was a better bargain driven:
 My truelove hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him & me in one,
 My heart in him his thoughts & senses guides:
 He loves my heart, for once it was his own,

21† · “The White Cockade” · Anonymous · *Underneath the Stars*. ¶ This love song is not to be confused with the stirring Jacobite marching song of the same name. £3: A ‘flowing bowl’ seems to have been some sort of party involving a bowl of punch.

21† · “A Ditty” · Sir Philip Sidney (1554 – 1586) · *The Golden Treasury*.

I cherish his because in me it bides:
My truelove hath my heart, and I have his.

21* Mr Gladstone read Homer for fun, which I thought served him right.

22

22[‡]*Tune: Sir Eglamore*Sir *Eglamore* was a valiant knight –*Fa la lanky down dilly!*

He took up his sword and he went to fight –

Fa la lanky down dilly!

As he rode o'er hill & dale,

All armoured in a coat of mail.

*Fa la la! Fa la la!**Fa la lanky down dilly!*

Out came a dragon from her den,

That killed God knows how many men.

When she saw Sir *Eglamore*,

You should have heard that dragon roar.

Well then the trees began to shake.

Horse did tremble and man did quake.

The birds betook them all to peep.

it would have made a grown man weep.

But all in vain it was to fear,

For now they fall to fight like bears.

To it they go and soundly fight,

The livelong day from morn till night.

This dragon had a plaguey hide,

That could the sharpest steel abide.

No sword could enter through her skin,

Which vexed the knight and made her grin,

But as in choler she did burn;

He fetched the dragon a great good turn.

As a-yawning she did fall,

He thrust his sword up, hilt & all.

Like a coward she did fly –

Fa la lanky down dilly!

To her den which was hard by.

Fa la lanky down dilly!

22[‡] · R Anonymous · *Hourglass*. ¶ Sir Eglamore is an ill-defined knight floating around late medieval literature: see the Middle English long poem *Sir Eglamour of Artois*.

There she lay all night and roared.
 The knight was sorry for his sword.
Fa la la! Fa la la!
Fa la lanky down dilly!

22†

Fair is my love, when her fair golden heares,
 With the loose wind ye waving chance to mark:
 Fair when the rose in her red cheeks appears,
 Or in her eyes the fire of love does spark.
 Fair when her breast like a rich-laden bark,
 With precious merchandise she forth doth lay:
 Fair when that cloud of pride which oft doth dark
 Her goodly light with smiles she drives away,
 But fairest she, when so she doth display
 The gate with pearls & rubies richly dight:
 Through which her words so wise do make their way
 To bear the message of her gentle sprite.
 The rest be works of nature's wonderment,
 But this the work of heart's astonishment.

22* A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies.

22† · R Edmund Spenser (1552 – 1599) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is one of Spenser's *Amoretti*.

22* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

23

23‡

*Tune: Smith of Bristol**Smith* was a BRISTOL man and a rare old sort was he.*With his cutlass & his pistol, heave your ho!*With a noble crew of cutthroats, he used to scour the sea,
A-plundering and a-robbing high & low.

He swore 'twas no concernin',

He didn't give a herrin',

About right or wrong or any holy show.

He swore that grabbin' booty

Was Britain's foremost duty,

Wherever she could get it! Heave your ho!

*Heave your ho! Heave your ho! Heave your ho!**He swore that grabbin' booty**Was Britain's foremost duty,**Wherever she could get it! Heave your ho!**Smith* had a noble soul and lofty was his pride.

He'd watch his beaten foemen jump out into the tide,

All ye beggers who had nowhere else to go.

And hanging from his lanyards

Was portuguese and spaniards;

And beatmen frenchmen jumping to & fro,

Right along the blazin' story,

Shall illumine England's glory:

Pirate *Smith* of BRISTOL, heave your ho!

But accidents can happen even to heroes such as he.

With his cutlass & his pistol, heave your ho!

He was standing on his capstan as happy as could be,

Hoping soon to have another prize in tow,

When a whistling spanish bullet

Came and caught him in his gullet,

And very sad to say it laid him low.

He was only 97

When his soul had gone to heaven

To rest on *Nelson's* bosom. Heave your ho!

‡ 23 · "Smith of Bristol" · Anonymous · *Wild Rover*. ¶ The origins of this song are obscure, but it may have been written in Ireland, and perhaps was originally intended as a parody, similar to "The Auld Orange Flute".

Heave your ho! Heave your ho! Heave your ho!
He swore that grabbin' booty
Was Britain's foremost duty,
Wherever she could get it! Heave your ho!

23†

Happy ye leaves when as those lily hands,
 Which hold my life in their dead doing might
 Shall handle you and hold in love's soft bands,
 Like captives trembling at the victor's sight.
 And happy lines, on which with starry light,
 Those lamping eyes will deign sometimes to look
 And read the sorrows of my dying sprite,
 Written with tears in heart's close bleeding book.
 And happy rhymes bathed in the sacred brook
 Of HELICON whence she derivèd is,
 When ye behold that angel's blessèd look,
 My soul's long lackèd food, my heaven's bliss.
 Leaves, lines & rhymes, seek her to please alone,
 Whom if ye please, I care for other none.

23* Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.

23† · R Edmund Spenser (1552 – 1599) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is the first of Spenser's *Amoretti*. ℓ10: The Helicon is a river in Greece, part of which runs underground. The women who murdered Orpheus attempted to wash their hands therein after their crime, but the water sank into the earth so as not to be stained with the poet's blood.

23* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *Aristotle at Afternoon Tea: The Rare Oscar Wilde*.

24

24[†]*Tune: The Goodman*

The goodman he came home one night.
 The goodman home came he.
 There he spied an old saddle horse
 Where no horse should there be.
 It's a cow! It's a cow! cried the goodman's wife,
 A cow, just a cow, can't you see?
 Far have I ridden, and much I've seen,
 But a saddle on a cow has never been.

The goodman he came home one night.
 The goodman home came he.
 There he spied a powdered wig
 Where no wig should there be.
 It's a hen! It's a hen! cried the goodman's wife,
 A hen, just a hen, can't you see?
 Far have I ridden, and much I've seen,
 But powder on a hen has never been.

The goodman he came home one night.
 The goodman home came he.
 There he spied a riding coat
 Where no coat should there be.
 It's sheets, just sheets! cried the goodman's wife,
 Sheets, just sheets, can't you see?
 Far have I ridden, and much I've seen,
 But buttons on a sheet has never been.

The goodman he came home one night.
 The good man home came he.
 There he spied a handsome man
 Where no man should there be.
 It's the maid! It's the maid! cried the goodman's wife,
 The milking maid, can't you see?
 Far have I ridden, and much I've seen,
 But a beard on a maid has never been.

24[†] · Anonymous · *Underneath the Stars*. ¶ This song seems to have its roots in an old Scottish song, Child Ballad 274, but from there it has grown into thousands of forms, in a number of European languages.

24†

More than most fair, full of the living fire,
 Kindled above unto the maker near:
 No eyes but joys, in which all powers conspire,
 That to the world naught else be counted dear.
 Through your bright beams doth not the blinded guest
 Shoot out his darts to base affection's wound?
 But angels come to lead frail minds to rest
 In chaste desires on heavenly beauty bound.
 You frame my thoughts & fashion me within;
 You stop my tongue, & teach my heart to speak,
 You calm the storm that passion did begin,
 Strong through your cause, but by your virtue weak.
 Dark is the world, where your light shined never;
 Well is he born, that may behold you ever.

24* I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time; that would be hypocrisy.

24† · Edmund Spenser (1552 – 1599) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is one of Spenser's *Amoretti*.

24* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This a line from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

25

25†

Tune: Sweet William's Ghost

There came a ghost to *Margaret's* door
 With many a grievous groan,
 And, ay, he's turl'd long at the pin,
 But answer she gave none.
 'Is it my father *Philip*?
 Or yet my brother *John*?
 Or yet my own dear *William*
 From Scotland now came home?'

'My faith & troth you'll never get,
 Of me you'll never win,
 Till you take me to yon churchyard
 And wed me with a ring.'
 'O I do dwell in a churchyard
 But far beyond the sea,
 And it is but my ghost, *Margaret*,
 That speaks now unto thee.'

So she's put on her robes of green,
 With a piece below the knee,
 And all the live long winter's night
 The sweet ghost followed she.
 'O is there room at your head, *Willie*,
 Or room here at your feet,
 Or room here at your side, *Willie*,
 Wherein that I may sleep?'

'There's no room at my head, *Margaret*.
 There's no room at my feet.
 There's no room at my side, *Margaret*.
 My coffin is so neat.'
 Then up and spoke the red robin,
 And up and spoke the grey.
 'Tis' time, tis' time, my dear *Margaret*
 That I were gone away.'

25† · Anonymous · *Underneath the Stars*. ¶ This song is essentially the same as the seventy-seventh Child Ballad 77.

No more the ghost to *Margaret* came
 With many a grievous groan.
 He's vanished out into the mist
 And left her there alone
 'O stay my own true love, stay!
 My heart you do divide.'
 Pale grew her cheeks. She closed her eyes,
 Stretched out her limbs and cried.

25†

Yes, I remember ADLESTROP –
 The name, because one afternoon
 Of heat the express-train drew up there
 Unwontedly. It was late june.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
 No one left & no one came
 On the bare platform. What I saw
 Was ADLESTROP – only the name

And willows, willow-herb, & grass,
 And meadowsweet, & haycocks dry,
 No whit less still & lonely fair
 Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
 Close by, and round him, mistier,
 Farther & farther, all the birds
 Of Oxfordshire & Gloucestershire.

25* If nature had been comfortable, mankind would never have invented architecture.

25† · "Adlestrop" · Edward Thomas (1878 – 1917) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

25* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Decay of Lying*.

26

26‡

Tune: John Blount

There was an old couple lived under a hill,
 And *Blunt* it was their name O.
 And they had a good beer and ale for to sell
 And it bore a wonderful fame O.

John Blunt & his wife they drank of the drink
 Till they could drink no more O.
 They both got tired and went up to bed
 But forgot to bar the door O.

So they made a bargain; a bargain they made.
 They made it strong & sure O.
 The first of them to speak the first word
 Gets up to bar the door O.

So there came ramblers, ramblers three,
 Travelling in the night O.
 And so in need of lodgings were they,
 They crept in by candlelight O.

They went to his larder and ate up his food
 Till they could eat no more O;
 But never a word did the old couple speak
 For fear of who stood at the door O.

And down to his cellar they drank of his drink
 Till they could drink no more O;
 But never a word did the old couple speak
 For fear of who stood at the door O.

They went upstairs; they went to his room;
 They broke it down the door O;
 But never a word did the old couple speak
 For fear of who stood at the door O.

They hauled his wife all out of the bed,
 Laid her out on the floor O.
 Then up got *John*, said, It's time to be gone,
 For he could stand no more O.

He said, You've eaten my food and drunk of my drink,
 And my wife you hurt full sore O.
 But you spoke the first word, *John Blunt*, she said,
 So go down and bar the door O.

26†

I saw a peacock with a fiery tail.
 I saw a blazing comet drop down hail.
 I saw a cloud wrapped with ivy round.
 I saw an oak creep upon the ground.
 I saw a pismire swallow up a whale.
 I saw the sea brimful of ale.
 I saw a venice glass full fifteen feet deep.
 I saw a well full of men's tears that weep.
 I saw red eyes all of a flame of fire.
 I saw a house as bigger than the Moon & higher.
 I saw the sun at 12 o'clock at night.
 I saw the man that saw this wondrous sight.

26* Many a woman has a past, but I am told that she has at least a dozen.

26† · Anonymous · *The Poet's Tongue*. ¶ This is a nursery rhyme, tentatively dated to the seventeenth century.

26* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

27

27†

Tune: Paddy Stole the Rope

There were once two irish labouring men; to England they came over;
 And they tramped about in search of work from LIVERPOOL to DOVER.
 Says *Mike* to *Pat*, I'm tired of this. We're both left in the lurch,
 And if I don't get work, bedad, I'll go and rob a church.
 What, rob a church! says *Pat* to *Mike*; How could you be so vile?
 For something sure would happen while we're going down the aisle.
 But if you do, I'll go with you, and we'll get safe out, I hope.
 So, listen and I'll tell you now how *Paddy* stole the rope.

Well off they went with theft intent to the place they wanted finding,
 And they broke inside of a country church where nobody was minding.
 And they scraped together all they could, they were prepared to slope,
 When *Paddy* says, Now hold on, *Mike*. What have we got for rope?
 For we have no bag to hold our swag, and before we get outside,
 With something strong & stout, my lad, this bundle must be tied.
 And just then he spied the church bell rope, and before you could turn about,
 He did ride up the belfry high to climb that rope so stout.

And holding on by one hand & leg, he pulled his clasp knife out,
 And right above his hand & head he cut that rope so stout.
 Well he quite forgot it held him up, and, by the holy Pope,
 Down to the bottom of the church fell *Paddy* and the rope.
 Come out of that, says *Mike* to *Pat*, and will you stop your moaning,
 If that's the way you steal a rope, it's no wonder that you're groaning.
 I'll show you how to steal the rope, if you lend to me your knife.
 O *Mike*, go easy, says old *Pat*, or else you'll lose your life.

So *Mike* climbed up the other rope, just like an antelope,
 But instead of cutting it off above, he cut it off below.
 Down fell the other piece of rope, and *Mike* was left on high.
 Come down, says *Pat*. I can't, says *Mick*, for if I drop, I'll die.
 Well their noise it brought the beagles out, the sexton & police,
 And though they got poor *Micky* down, they spared them no release.
 And for their ingenuity they have now a wider scope
 Than when they broke inside a church to go and steal the rope.

27†

My love in her attire doth show her wit,
It doth so well become her:
For every season she hath dressings fit,
For winter, spring & summer.
No beauty she doth miss
When all her robes are on;
But beauty's self she is
When all her robes are gone.

27* He asked for water and she gave him milk.

27† · Anonymous · *The Golden Treasury*.

27* · Judges 5.25 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

28

28†

Tune: The Postman's Knock

What a wonderful man the postman is
 As he hastens from door to door!
 What medley of news his hands contain
 For high, low, rich, & poor!
 In many's the face the joy he can trace,
 In many's the grief he can see,
 When you open the door to his loud rat-tat
 And his quick delivery.

*Every morning as true as the clock
 Somebody hears the postman's knock!*

Number 1 he presents with news of a birth;
 With tidings of death, ¶4.
 At 13 a bill of terrible length
 He drops through the hole in the door.
 Now a cheque or an order for 15 he leaves
 In 16 his presence to prove,
 While 17 doth an acknowledgement get,
 And 18 a letter of love.

And the mail must get through
 Whatever the hazards or odds.
 This low man of letters just peddles on through
 Pursued by a pack of wild dogs.
 But ease & complaining whatever the trial
 Or beating he never retreats,
 For you get a free bag & a hat with a badge
 And it's better than walking the streets.

*Every morning as true as the clock
 Somebody hears the postman's knock!*

28†

28† · Anonymous · *The Albion Band: Live at the Cambridge Folk Festival*. ¶ The words to this song are said to have been written by one L. M. Thornton, flourishing in 1860.

28† · Anonymous · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ This poem is often attributed to The Very Rev Dr Donne, with some other verses (sadly of inferior quality) affixed. However, Prof Stallworthy contests this, attributing the poem to 'Anon' instead. Prof Sir Herbert Grierson suggests the true author may have been the lutenist John Dowland.

Stay, O sweet, and do not rise.
The light that shines comes from thine eyes:
The day breaks not: it is my heart,
Because that you & I must part.
 Stay, or else my joys will die
 And perish in their infancy.

28* Here's to us. Who's like us? Gey few, and they're a' dead.

29

29†

Tune: The Fox Hunt

You gentlemen of high renown, come listen unto me
 That take delight in fox hunting by every degree.
 A story now I'll tell to you concerning of a fox,
 O'er ROYSTON hills & mountains high & over stony rocks.

Old Reynold being in his den and hearing of these hounds,
 Which made him for to prick his ears and tread upon the ground.
 'Methink me hear some jubal hounds pressing upon my life;
 Before that they do come to me I'll tread upon the ground.'

We hunted full four hours or more by parishes 16.
 We hunted full four hours or more and came by BARKWORTH GREEN.
 'O if you'll only spare my life I'll promise and fulfil:
 I'll touch no more your feathered fowl nor lambs in yonder fold.'

Old Reynold beat and out of breath and dreading of these hounds,
 Thinking that he might lose his life before these jubal hounds:
 'O here's adieu to duck & geese, likewise young lamb also.'
 They've got *Old Reynold* by the brush and will not let him go.

29†

Whistle, daughter, whistle, and you shall have a sheep.
 Mother, I cannot whistle, neither can I sleep.
 Whistle, daughter, whistle, and you shall have a cow.
 Mother, I cannot whistle, neither now I how.
 Whistle, daughter, whistle, and you shall have a man.
 Mother, I cannot whistle, but I'll do the best I can.

29* The sun himself cannot forget his fellow traveller.

29† · Anonymous · *Rigs of the Time: The Best of Martin Carthy*.

29† · Anonymous · *The Oxford Book of Local Verses*. ¶ Prof Holloway labels this 'A Berkshire rhyme'.

29* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ The 'fellow traveller' is Sir Francis Drake, who was one of the first men to circumnavigate the globe, thus, in a certain sense, under the geocentric view of things, made the same journey which the sun makes every day.

30

30†

Tune: Hard Times of Old England

Come all brother tradesmen that travel along;
 O pray come and tell me where the trade is all gone.
 Long time have I travelled and I cannot find none.

And sing O the hard times of old England!
In old England very hard times!

Provisions you buy at the shop it is true
 But if you've no money there's none there for you.
 So what's a poor man and his family to do?

You must go to the shop and you'll ask for a job.
 They'll answer you there with a shake and a nod.
 Well that's enough to make a man turn out and rob.

You will see the poor tradesmen a-walking the street
 From morning till night for employment to seek,
 And scarce have they got any shoes on their feet

Our soldiers & sailors have just come from war,
 Been fighting for Queen & country this year,
 Come home to be starved: better stayed where they were.

And now to conclude and to finish my song:
 Let us hope that these hard times they will not last long.
 I hope soon to have occasion to alter my song.

And sing O the good times of old England!
In old England jolly good times!

30†

Oranges & lemons,
 Say the bells of ST CLEMENT'S.

You owe me five farthings,
 Say the bells of ST MARTIN'S.

30† · Anonymous · *All Around My Hat*.

30† · Anonymous · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ The various locations mentioned in this poem are all in London. These lines have a role in the plot of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

When will you pay me?
Say the bells of OLD BAILEY.

When I grow rich,
Say the bells of SHOREDITCH.

When will that be?
Say the bells of STEPNEY.

I'm sure I don't know,
Says the great bell at Bow.

Here comes a candle to light you to bed.
Here comes a chopper to chop off your head.

30*

Life is a jest; and all things show it,
I thought so once; but now I know it.

30* · "His Own Epitaph" · John Gay (1685 – 1732) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This couplet is on Gay's tombstone in Westminster Abbey, below Pope's epitaph on the poet.

MONTH V

Hay

I

1†

Tune: O'er the Water to Charlie

Come boat me o'er; come row me o'er;
Come boat me o'er to Charlie;
I'll gi'e *John Ross* another bawbee,
To boat me o'er to *Charlie*.

We'll o'er the water and o'er the sea;
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather & go,
And live or die wi' Charlie.

I lo'e well my *Charlie's* name,
Though some there be abhor him:
But O, to see *Old Nick* gone hame,
And *Charlie's* foes before him!

I swear & vow by moon & stars,
And sun that shines so early,
If I had 20,000 lives,
I'd die as oft for *Charlie*.

We'll o'er the water and o'er the sea;
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather & go,
And live or die wi' Charlie.

1† · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ In Scots poetry the word 'o'er' is pronounced like the English word 'hour'. Old Nick is a euphemism for Satan, and is probably used here figuratively to refer to the Hanoverian kings of Great Britain and Ireland. A 'bawbee' was a kind of coin, peculiar to the Kingdom of Scotland, worth about the same as an English halfpenny; though who John Ross was remains a mystery.

1†

Tune: A Hundred Years Ago

A 100 years on the eastern shore,
O! Yes! O!

A 100 years on the eastern shore.
A 100 years ago!

When I sailed across the sea,
My gal said she'd be true to me.

I promised her a golden ring.
She promised me that little thing.

O pulley *John* was the boy for me:
A buck a-land, and a bully at sea.

It's up aloft this yard must go,
For Mr Mate has told me so.

I thought I heard the skipper say,
O! Yes! O!
Just one more pull, and then belay.
A 100 years ago!

1* Man is distinguished from all other creatures by the faculty of laughter.

1† · Anonymous · *Sailors' Songs and Sea Shanties*.

1* · The Rt Hon Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

2

2†

Tune: Common Frae the Town

Coming through the rye, poor body,
 Coming through the rye,
 She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
 Coming through the rye.

*Jenny's a' wet, poor body;
 Jenny's seldom dry.
 She draiglet a' her petticoatie.
 Coming through the rye.*

Gin a body meet a body
 Coming through the rye,
 Gin a body kiss a body,
 Need a body cry?

Gin a body meet a body,
 Coming through the glen,
 Gin a body kiss a body
 Need the world ken?

*Jenny's a' wet, poor body;
 Jenny's seldom dry.
 She draiglet a' her petticoatie.
 Coming through the rye.*

2†

Tune: New York Girls

As I walked down through CHATHAM STREET a fair maid I did meet.
 She asked me to see her home; she lived in BLEEKER STREET.

*And away, you Santy! My dear honey!
 O you NEW YORK girls, can't you dance the polka?*

2† · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ Cunningham remarks that Burns removed ‘some of the coarse chaff’ from the old chant in adapting it to this song, but enough remains for the listener to fill in the blanks. Holden Caulfield’s innocent misunderstanding of the true meaning of this song is the explanation behind the odd title of Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*.

2† · Anonymous · *Commoners Crown*. ¶ It’s unclear whether or not this song is a true sea shanty; although it’s certainly old enough to be one, and, in any case, it displays a marked influence from more bona fide shanties in terms of structure and subject matter.

And when we got to BLEEKER STREET we stopped at 44.
Her mother & her sister were to meet her at the door.

And when I got inside the house the drinks were passed around.
The liquor was so awful strong my head went round & round.

And then we had another drink before we sat to eat.
The liquor was so awful strong I quickly fell asleep.

When I awoke next morning I had an aching head.
There was I, *Jack* all alone, stark naked in my bed.

My gold watch & my pocket book & lady friend were gone.
And there was I, *Jack* all alone, stark naked in my room.

On looking round this little room there's nothing I could see
But a woman's shift & apron that were no use to me.

With a flour barrel for a suit of clothes down CHERRY STREET forlorn,
Where *Martin Churchill* took me in and sent me round CAPE HORN.

And away, you Santy! My dear honey!
O you NEW YORK girls, can't you dance the polka?

2* I am not over-fond of resisting temptation.

3

3‡

Tune: McPherson's Rant

Farewell, ye dungeons dark & strang,
 The wretch's destiny.
Macpherson's time will no' be lang
 On yonder gallows-tree.

It was by a woman's treacherous hand
 That I was condemned to dee.
 She stood above a window ledge
 And a blanket threw over me.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed be.
He played a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

O what is death but parting breath?
 On many a bloody plain
 I've dared his face, and in this place
 I scorn him yet again.

Untie these bands from off my hands,
 And bring to me my sword;
 And there's no' a man in all Scotland,
 But I'll brave him at a word.

I've lived a life of sturt & strife;
 I die by treachery.
 It burns my heart I must depart
 And not avengèd be.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright
 And all beneath the sky.
 May coward shame distain his name,
 The wretch that dares not die.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,

3‡ · ℞ "MacPherson's Farewell" · Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ A version of this song is said to have been composed by James MacPherson, on the eve of his execution, who (rightly or wrongly) was hanged in the autumn of 1700 for banditry. The second verse is from another version; there are many, although the best known one comes from Burns.

*Sae dauntingly gaed be.
He played a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.*

3†

Tune: Blow the Man Down

As I was out walking down PARADISE STREET –
To me! Way! Hey! Blow the man down!
A pretty young damsel I chanced for to meet –
Give me some time to blow the man down!

She was round in the counter and bluff in the bow,
So I took in all sail and cried, 'Way enough now!'

I hailed her in english; she answered me clear,
I'm from the BLACK ARROW bound to the SHAKESPEARE.

So I tailed her my flipper and took her in tow,
And yard-arm to yard-arm, away we did go.

But as we were a-going she said unto me,
There's a spankin' full rigger just ready for sea.

That spankin' full rigger to NEW YORK was bound.
She was very well mannered and very well found.

But as soon as that packet was clear of the bar,
The mate knocked me down with the end of a spar.

As soon as that packet was out on the sea,
'Twas devilish hard treatment of every degree.

So I give you fair warning before we belay –
To me! Way! Hey! Blow the man down!
Don't never take heed of what pretty girls say –
Give me some time to blow the man down!

3* Variety is the soul of pleasure.

3† · Anonymous · *Hard Travelin': The Life and Legacy of Woody Guthrie*. ¶ Paradise Street is in Liverpool, where this sort of thing is not uncommon.

3* · Mrs Aphra Behn (1640 – 1689) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Mrs Behn, cunning linguist that she was, seems to have lived up to this maxim in her personal life.

4

4†

Tune: I'm O'er Young to Marry Yet

I am my mammy's ae bairn;
 Wi' uncou' folk I weary, sir;
 And lying in a man's bed,
 I'm fleyed it mak' me eerie, sir.

I'm o'er young! I'm o'er young!
 I'm o'er young to marry yet!
I'm o'er young! 'Twould be a sin
 To tak' me frae my mammy yet!

My mammy coft me a new gown;
 The kirk maun ha'e the gracing o't;
 Were I to lie wi' you, kind sir,
 I'm feared ye'd spoil the lacing o't.

Hallowmass is come & gone;
 The nights are long in winter, sir,
 And you an' I in ae bed,
 In truth, I dare na venture, sir.

Fu' loud an' sh'ill the frosty wind
 Blows through the leafless tim'er, sir;
 But if ye come this gate again
 I'll older be gin simmer, sir.

I'm o'er young! I'm o'er young!
 I'm o'er young to marry yet!
I'm o'er young! 'Twould be a sin
 To tak' me frae my mammy yet!

4†

Tune: Fish of the Sea

Come all you young sailor-men, listen to me;
 I'll sing you a song of the fish in the sea.

4† · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ 'Hallowmass' is an archaic word for All Saints' Day, i.e. the first day of November.

4† · Anonymous · *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*. ¶ One commentator writes of this shanty: 'According to Hugill, this shanty probably originated as a Scottish fisherman's song. It was also popular with Gloucester fishermen in the American Northeast. Hugill also collected a version in Devonshire, and it was known in Canada... This was a capstan shanty, and sailors would take turns with verses, giving a new fish each time for as long as was necessary.'

And it's windy weather boys!
Stormy weather, boys!
When the wind blows,
We're all together, boys!
Blow ye winds westerly!
Blow ye winds, blow!
Jolly sou'wester, boys!
Steady she goes!

Up jumps the eel with his slippery tail,
 Climbs up aloft and reefs the topsail.

Then up jumps the shark with his nine rows of teeth,
 Saying, You eat the dough boys, and I'll eat the beef!

Up jumps the whale, the largest of all.
 If you want any wind, well, I'll blow ye a squall!

And it's windy weather boys!
Stormy weather, boys!
When the wind blows,
We're all together, boys!
Blow ye winds westerly!
Blow ye winds, blow!
Jolly sou'wester, boys!
Steady she goes!

4* The nakedness of woman is the work of God.

4* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

5

5†

Tune: It was A' for Our Rightfu' King

It was a' for our rightfu' king
 We left fair Scotland's strand;
 It was a' for our rightfu' king
 We e'er saw irish land, my dear;
 We e'er saw irish land.

Now a' is done that men can do,
 And a' is done in vain;
 My love and native land farewell,
 For I maun cross the main, my dear;
 For I maun cross the main.

He turned him right, and round about
 Upon the irish shore;
 And ga'e his bridle-reins a shake,
 With adieu for evermore, my dear;
 With adieu for evermore.

The soldier from the wars returns,
 The sailor frae the main;
 But I ha'e parted frae my love.
 Never to meet again, my dear;
 Never to meet again.

5†

Tune: Wild Goose Shanty

Did you ever see a wild goose sailing on the ocean?
Ranzo! Ranzo! Way-hey!
 They're just like them pretty girls when they gets the notion.
Ranzo! Ranzo! Way-hey!

The other morning I was walkin' by the river,
 When I saw a young girl walkin' with her top-sails all aquiver.

5† · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ This song seems to relate the story of a Scottish Jacobite soldier who fought in the Jacobite-Williamite War in Ireland. The final verse of Burns's original has been omitted.

5† · Anonymous · *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*. ¶ Albert Lloyd wrote in the sleeve notes to *Blow Boys Blow*: 'One of the great halyard shanties, seemingly better-known in English ships than American ones, though some versions of it have become crossed with the American song called "Huckleberry Hunting". From the graceful movement of its melody it is possible that this is an older shanty than most. Perhaps it evolved out of some long-lost lyrical song.'

I said, Pretty fair maid, then how are you this mornin'?
She said, None the better for the seein' of you.

Did you ever see a wild goose sailin' o'er the ocean?
Ranzo! Ranzo! Way-hey!
They're just like them pretty girls when they gets the notion.
Ranzo! Ranzo! Way-hey!

5* Love likes no laws but his own.

5* · Fulke Greville, 1st Baron Brooke (1554 – 1628) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is a line from “Song to His Cynthia”.

6

6‡

Tune: Lassie wi' the Lint-White Locks

*Lassie, wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tend the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?*

Now nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young & sweet like thee;
Wilt thou share its joy wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie, O?

And when the welcome summer shower
Has cheered ilk drooping little flower.
We'll to the breathing woodbine lower
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.

When *Cynthia* lights wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way;
Through yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest;
Enclaspèd to my faithfu' breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.

*Lassie, wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tend the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?*

6‡ · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ Cunningham comments: “Conjugal love,” says the poet, “is a passion which I deeply feel and highly venerate: but somehow it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion, where love is liberty and nature law. Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet, while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul.” It must be owned that the bard could render very pretty reasons for his rapture about Jean Lorimer.’ Cunningham states that this song ought to be sung to a tune called “Rothemurche’s Rant”, but this seems quite a different one from that which the Almanacker is used to singing.

6†

Tune: Shallow Brown

Fare thee well. I'm bound to leave you.

Shallow, shallow brown.

Fare thee well. I'm bound to leave you.

Shallow, shallow brown.

For my master, he's bound to sell me.

For my master, he wants to sell me.

Sell me for the big dollar.

Sell me for the yankee dollar.

Gonna ship onboard the whaler.

Gonna ship onboard the whaler.

Bound away for old ST GEORGE'S.

Bound away for old ST GEORGE'S.

Fare thee well, my *Juliana*.

Shallow, shallow brown.

Fare thee well, my *Juliana*.

Shallow, shallow brown.

6* There is surely a piece of divinity in us, something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun.

6† · “Shallow Brown” · Anonymous · *Songs from the Attic*. ¶ According to *Sea-Chanty Settings* this exquisitely sad song is a ‘sailor’s sea chanty collected from the singing of Mr John Perring (Dartmouth, England) by H E Piggott and Percy Grainger’, The program note to the same states: ‘the underlying idea of this chanty was that it was supposed to be sung by a woman standing on the quay to Shallow Brown as his ship was weighing anchor. Mr Perring did not know why Brown was called “Shallow” – unless it was that he was shallow in his heart.’ The shanty is certainly West Indian, probably Jamaican; ‘St George’s’ must refer to the capital of Grenada.

6* · Sir Thomas Browne (1605 – 1682) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

7

7‡

Tune: The Birks of Aberfeldy

Now summer blinks on flowery braes,
 And o'er the crystal streamlet plays;
 Come let us spend the lightsome days
 In the birks of ABERFELDY.

*Bonnie lassie, will ye go?
 Will ye go? Will ye go?
 Bonnie lassie, will ye go
 To the birks of ABERFELDY?*

The little birdies blithely sing,
 While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
 Or lightly flit on wanton wing
 In the birks of ABERFELDY.

The braes ascend, like lofty wa's;
 The foamy stream deep-roaring fa's,
 O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
 The birks of ABERFELDY.

The hoary cliffs are crowned wi' flowers,
 White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
 And rising, wets wi' misty showers
 The birks of ABERFELDY.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee;
 They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
 Supremely blest wi' love & thee,
 In the birks of ABERFELDY.

*Bonnie lassie, will ye go?
 Will ye go? Will ye go?
 Bonnie lassie, will ye go
 To the birks of ABERFELDY?*

7‡ · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ Cunningham comments: 'An old strain, called "The Birks of Aberfeldie", was the forerunner of this sweet song: it was written, the poet says, standing under the Falls of Aberfeldy, near Moness, in Perthshire, during one of the tours which he made to the north, in the year 1757.'

7†

Tune: Juliana Farewell

Fare you well, *Juliana*, you know.

Hurrah! Row, roll, my boys!

To the westward we roll, and we're now coming home.

Goodbye. Fare you well. Goodbye. Fare you well.

Fare you well to the fish in the sea.

To the westward we roll, and we're now coming home.

Fare you well. Let us leave and go home.

And here we come in with blackfish & men.

'Fare you well' is a fisherman's song.

And here we come in with cock, cow & men.

Fare you well, and our sails they are set.

And the whales that we leave, well we leave with regret.

Fare you well, *Juliana*, you know.

Hurrah! Row, roll, my boys!

To the westward we roll, and we're now coming home.

Goodbye. Fare you well. Goodbye. Fare you well.

7* To enlarge or illustrate this power and effect of love is to set a candle to the sun.

7† · "Juliana Farewell" · Anonymous · *Deepwater Return*. ℓ8: Given the reference to whales later in the shanty, 'blackfish' probably refers to *Orcinus orca*.

7* · The Rev Robert Burton (1577 – 1640) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

8

8‡

Tune: Cameronian Rant

O cam' ye here the fight to shun,
 Or herd the sheep wi' me, man?
 Or were ye at the SHERRAMUIR,
 And did the battle see, man?
 I saw the battle, sair & tough;
 And reekin' red ran many a sheugh;
 My heart, for fear, gaed sough for sough,
 To hear the thuds, and see the cluds,
 O' clans frae woods, in tartan duds,
 Who glaumed at kingdoms three, man.

 The red-coat lads, wi' black cockades,
 To meet them were na slaw, man;
 They rushed and pushed, and blood out-gushed.
 And many a bouk did fa', man:
 The great *Argyll* led on his files,
 I wat they glanced for 20 miles:
 They houghed the clans like nine-pin kyles,
 They hacked and hashed, while broadsword clashed.
 And through they dashed, and hewed, and smashed,
 Till fey men died awa', man.

 But had you seen the philibegs
 And skyrin tartan trews, man;
 When in the teeth they dared our Whigs
 And covenant true blues, man;
 In lines exten'ed lang & large,
 When bayonets o'erpowered the targe,
 And thousands hastened to the charge,
 Wi' highland wrath, they frae the sheath
 Drew blades o' death, till, out o' breath,
 They fled like frightened doos, man.

 They've lost some gallant gentlemen
 Among the highland clans, man;

8‡ · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ This song describes the Battle of Sheriffmuir (also called Sherramuir), at which a Government force of six thousand under Archibald Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll stood their ground against twelve thousand Jacobites under John Erskine, 23rd Earl of Mar.

I fear my Lord *Panmure* is slain
 Or fallen in Whiggish hands, man:
 Now would ye sing this double fight;
 Some fell for wrong, and some for right;
 And many bade the world goodnight;
 Then ye may tell, how pell & mell,
 By red claymores, & muskets' knell,
 Wi' dying yell, the Tories fell.
 And Whigs to hell did flee, man.

8†

Tune: Boston Harbour

From BOSTON harbour we set sail,
 When it was blowin' a devil of a gale,
 With a ring-tail set all abaft the mizzen peak
 An' the Rule Britannia ploughin' up the deep.

*With a big boe-woe! Toe-roe-roe!
 Fol-dee-rol dee-rye doe-day!*

Then up comes the skipper from down below.
 It's look aloft, lads; look a-low.
 Then it's look a-low, and it's look aloft,
 And coil up your ropes, lads, fore & aft.

Then down to 'is cabin well he quickly crawls,
 An' to 'is poor old steward balls,
 Go an' mix me a glass that'll make me cough,
 For it's better weather here than it is on top.

Now there's one thing that we 'ave to crave:
 That the captain meets with a watery grave.
 So we'll throw 'im down into some dark hole
 Where the sharks'll 'ave 'is body an' the devil 'ave 'is soul.

*With a big boe-woe! Toe-roe-roe!
 Fol-dee-rol dee-rye doe-day!*

8*

Let us have wine & women, mirth & laughter,
 Sermons & soda water the day after.

8† · Anonymous · *Sailors' Songs and Sea Shanties*.

8* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788–1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a couplet from the second canto of *Don Juan*.

9

9†

Tune: Major Graham

O my love's like a red red rose
 That's newly sprung in june!
 O my love's like the melody
 That's sweetly played in tune!
 As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
 So deep in love am I;
 And I will love 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;
 I will love thee still, my dear,
 While the sands o' life shall run.
 And fare thee well, my only love!
 And fare thee well awhile!
 And I will come again, my love,
 Though it were 10,000 mile.

9†

Tune: Lowlands Away

I dreamed a dream the other night.
Lowlands, lowlands away, my John.
 I dreamed a dream the other night.
Lowlands away.

I dreamed I saw my own true love.
 I dreamed I saw my own true love.

I dreamed my love was drowned & dead.
Lowlands, lowlands away, my John.
 I dreamed my love was drowned & dead.
Lowlands away.

9* Happiness is a mystery like religion, and should never be rationalised.

9† · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ James Fenton, in his *Faber Book of Love Poems*, calls the tune “Major Graham”, and this would seem to be the commonly-received name; but Cunningham calls it “Graham’s Strathspey”.

9† · Anonymous · *Sailors’ Songs and Sea Shanties*. ¶ As with all the best short lyrics, a larger narrative is hinted at in this song – a narrative which, sadly, is now lost.

9* · R Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

IO

IO‡

Tune: O Where hae You been, Lord Ronald, My Son?

'O where ha'e you been, Lord *Ronald*, my son?
 O where ha'e you been, Lord *Ronald*, my son?
 'I ha'e been wi' my sweetheart. Mother, mak' my bed soon,
 For I'm weary wi' the hunting, and fain would lie doon.'

'What got ye frae your sweetheart, Lord *Ronald*, my son?
 What got ye frae your sweetheart, Lord *Ronald*, my son?
 'I ha'e got deadly poison. Mother, mak' my bed soon,
 For life is a burden that soon I'll lay doon.'

IO†

Tune: Poor Old Horse

I say, old man, your horse is dead.
And we say so! And we hope so!
 I say, old man your horse is dead.
O poor old man!

One month a rotten life we've lead,
 While you lie on your feather bed.

But now the month is up, old turk.
 Get up, you swine, and look for work.

Get up, you swine, and look for graft,
 While we lays on and yanks you aft.

And yanks you aft to the cabin door,
And we say so! And we hope so!
 And hopes we'll never see you more.
O poor old man!

IO*

He could not die when the trees were green,
 For he loved the time too well.

IO‡ · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Scots Musical Museum*, Vol IV. ¶ In making this short song, Burns has compressed (beautifully) a far longer and older ballad about a young nobleman who is poisoned and killed by his lover.

IO† · "Poor Old Horse" · Anonymous · *Sailors' Songs and Sea Shanties*. ¶ This song was sung during the famous "dead horse" ritual which a crew would undertake after their first month at sea.

IO* · John Clare (1793 – 1864) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ These are two lines from Clare's poem "The Dying Child".

II

II†

Tune: Whistle, and I'll Come to You
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!
Tho' father & mother & a' should go mad,
Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!

But warily tent, when you come to court me.
 And come na unless the back-yett be ajee;
 Syne up the back-stile and let nobody see,
 And come as you were na comin' to me,
 And come as you were na comin' to me.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er you meet me,
 Gang by me as tho' that ye cared na a flie;
 But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'e;
 Yet look as you were na lookin' at me,
 Yet look as you were na lookin' at me.

Ay vow and protest that you care na for me,
 And whiles you may lightly my beauty a wee;
 But court na another, though jokin' you be,
 For fear that she wile your fancy from me,
 For fear that she wile your fancy from me.

O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!
Tho' father and mother and a' should go mad,
Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!

II† · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ Cunningham remarks: 'In one of the variations of this song the name of the heroine is Jeanie: the song itself owes some of the sentiments as well as words to an old favourite Nithsdale chant of the same name. "Is 'Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad'," Burns inquires of Thomson, "one of your airs? I admire it much, and yesterday I set the following verses to it." The poet, two years afterwards, altered the fourth line thus: "Thy Jeany will venture wi' ye, my lad," and assigned this reason: "In fact, a fair dame at whose shrine I, the priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus; a dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with lightning; a fair one, herself the heroine of the song, insists on the amendment, and dispute her commands if you dare."'

II†

Tune: Sally Brown

I shipped onboard of a LIVERPOOL liner.

Way! Hey! Roll & go!

*And we rolled all night and we rolled till the day,
To spend my money along with Sally Brown!*

Sally Brown is a nice young lady.

She's tall and she's dark but she's not too shady.

Her mother doesn't like no tarry sailor.

She wants her to marry a one-legged captain.

Sally wouldn't wed me, so I shipped across the water.

And now I am courting *Sally's* daughter.

Way! Hey! Roll & go!

*And we rolled all night and we rolled till the day,
To spend my money along with Sally Brown!*

II* It doesn't matter what you do in the bedroom as long as you don't do it in the street and frighten the horses.

II† · Anonymous · *Christy Moore and Friends*.

II* · Mrs Beatrice Cornwallis-West (1865 – 1940) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

12

12‡

Tune: For Old Long Sine, My Jo

Should old acquaintance be forgot
 And never brought to min'?
 Should old acquaintance be forgot,
 And auld lang syne?

*For auld lang syne, my jo,
 For auld lang syne,
 We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
 For auld lang syne.*

And surely ye'll be your pint stowp!
 And surely I'll be mine!
 And we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
 For auld lang syne.

We twa ha'e run about the braes,
 And pu'ed the gowans fine;
 But we've wandered many a weary foot
 Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa ha'e paidled i' the burn,
 Frae mornin' sun till dine;
 But seas between us braid ha'e roared
 Sin' auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,
 And gi'e 's a hand o' thine;
 And we'll tak' a right guid-willie-waught
 For auld lang syne.

12†

*Tune: Leave Her, Johnny, Leave Her*12‡ · R "Auld Lang Syne" · Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *The New Faber Book of Love Poems*.

12† · Anonymous · *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*. ¶ Stan Hugill, in his *Shanties from the Seven Seas*, comments: 'And now we come to the "Johnny" song that usually ended the voyage – 'Leave Her, Johnny, Leave Her!' Collectors give pumps and halyards alike as the job it was used for. Terry and Whall call it a hauling song; Miss Colcord and Doerflinger give it for pumps. I think they are all right. It was probably sung at halyards with two solos and refrains, and when a full chorus was added then it was used at the pumps and even capstan. I learnt it partly from my mother's father, and he always sang the full chorus, and partly from an old Irish sailor, who also used the final chorus. It probably came to life about the time of the Irish potato famine, in the forties, and was originally sung in the Western Ocean Packets in this fashion... The later version "Leave Her, Johnnies" or as some sang it "Leave Her, Bullies" was sometimes sung during the voyage

I thought I heard the old man say –
Leave her, Johnny! Leave her!
 Tomorrow ye will get your pay –
And it's time for us to leave her.

Leave her, Johnny! Leave her!
O leave her, Johnny! Leave her!
For the voyage is long and the winds don't blow,
And it's time for us to leave her!

O the wind was foul and the sea ran high;
 She shipped it green and none went by.

I hate to sail on this rotten tub,
 No grog allowed and rotten grub.

We swear by rote for want of more,
Leave her, Johnny! Leave her!
 But now we're through so we'll go on shore.
And it's time for us to leave her.

Leave her, Johnny! Leave her!
O leave her, Johnny! Leave her!
For the voyage is long and the winds don't blow,
And it's time for us to leave her!

12* The proper union of gin and vermouth is a great and sudden glory; it is one of the happiest marriages on earth, and one of the shortest lived.

– at the pumps – but its better-known function was that of airing grievances just prior to the completion of the voyage either when warping the vessel in through the locks or at the final spell of the pumps (in wooden ships) after the vessel had docked. Many unprintable stanzas were sung, directed at the afterguard, the grub, and the owners. Bullen writes that “to sing it before the last day or so was almost tantamount to mutiny.”

12* · Bernard de Voto (1897 – 1955) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

13

13†

Tune: Caledonian Hunt's Delight

Ye banks & braes o' bonnie DOON,
 How can ye bloom sae fresh & fair?
 How can ye chant, ye little birds,
 And I sae weary fu' o' care?
 Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
 That wantons through the flowering thorn:
 Thou 'minds me o' departed joys,
 Departed – never to return.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie DOON,
 To see the rose & woodbine twine:
 And ilka bird sang o' its love,
 And fondly sae did I o' mine;
 Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
 Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
 And my false lover sto' my rose,
 But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

13†

Tune: South Australia

In South Australia I was born,
Heave away! Haul away!
 In South Australia round CAPE HORN.
We're bound for South Australia!

Haul away, you rolling king!
Heave away! Haul away!
Haul away! O hear me sing:
We're bound for South Australia!

As I walked out one morning fair,
 There I met Miss Nancy Blair.

13† · R Robert Burns (1759 – 1796) · *Complete Poems [of Robert Burns]*. ¶ Although Palgrave includes this song, he prefers the first version; whereas the Almanacker prefers the second. Cunningham reports, 'An Ayrshire legend says the heroine of this affecting song was Miss Kennedy, of Dalgarrock, a young creature, beautiful and accomplished, who fell a victim to her love for her kinsman, McDoual, of Logan.'

13† · Anonymous · *Blow Boys Blow*. ¶ The Almanacker read a piece of folklore somewhere – far too poetical to be true – stating that dying sailors used to request this shanty be sung over their deathbeds, so as to pass into the next world feeling happy.

There ain't but one thing grieves my mind:
To leave Miss *Nancy Blair* behind.

I ran her all night; I ran her all day,
Ran her before we sailed away.

I shook her up; I shook her down;
I shook her round & round & round.

O when we lollop around CAPE HORN,
Heave away! Haul away!
You'll wish to God you'd never been born.
We're bound for South Australia!

Haul away, you rolling king!
Heave away! Haul away!
Haul away! O hear me sing:
We're bound for South Australia!

13* We turn not older with years, but newer every day.

14

14†

Tune: Dark Lochnagar

Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses!
 In you let the minions of luxury rove;
 Restore me the rocks where the snow-flake reposes,
 Though still they are sacred to freedom & love.
 Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains,
 Round their white summits though elements war;
 Though cataracts form 'stead of smooth-flowing fountains,
 I sigh for the valley of dark LOCH NA GARR.

Ah there my young footsteps in infancy wandered;
 My cap was the bonnet; my cloak was the plaid.
 On chieftains long perished my memory pondered,
 As daily I strode through the pine-covered glade.
 I sought not my home till the day's dying glory
 Gave place to the rays of the bright polar star;
 For fancy was cheered by traditional story,
 Disclosed by the natives of dark LOCH NA GARR.

Shades of the dead! have I not heard your voices
 Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale?
 Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,
 And rides on the wind, o'er his own highland vale.
 Round LOCH NA GARR while the stormy mist gathers,
 Winter presides in his cold icy car:
 Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers;
 They dwell in the tempests of dark LOCH NA GARR.

Ill-starred, though brave, did no visions foreboding
 Tell you that fate had forsaken your cause?
 Ah! were you destined to die at CULLODEN,
 Victory crowned not your fall with applause:
 Still were you happy in death's earthly slumber,
 You rest with your clan in the caves of BRAEMAR;

14† · "Lachin y Gair" · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Poems and Dramas of Lord Byron*.

¶ Byron notes: 'Lachin y Gair, or, as it is pronounced in the Erse, Loch na Garr, towers proudly pre-eminent in the Northern Highlands, near Invercauld. One of our modern tourists mentions it as the highest mountain, perhaps, in Great Britain. Be this as it may, it is certainly one of the most sublime and picturesque amongst our "Caledonian Alps". Its appearance is of a dusky hue, but the summit is the seat of eternal snows. Near Lachin y Gair I spent some of the early part of my life, the recollection of which has given birth to these stanzas.'

The pibroch resounds to the piper's loud number,
 Your deeds on the echoes of dark LOCH NA GARR.
 Years have rolled on, LOCH NA GARR, since I left you;
 Years must elapse ere I tread you again:
 Nature of verdure & flowers has bereft you,
 Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain.
 England! thy beauties are tame & domestic,
 To one who has roved o'er the mountains afar;
 Oh for the crags that are wild & majestic!
 The steep frowning glories of dark LOCH NA GARR!

14†

Tune: Padstow Farwell

It is time to go now.
Haul away your anchor!
Haul away your anchor!
'Tis our sailing time!

Get some sail upon her.
Haul away your balyards! &c.

Get her on her course now.
Haul away your foresheets! &c.

Waves are surging under.
Haul away down-channel!
Haul away down-channel
On the evening tide!

When your sailing's over:
Haul away for heaven!
Haul away for heaven!
God be by your side!

14* Joy ruled the day, and love the night.

14† · Anonymous · *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*. ¶ Padstow is a fishing village on the north coast of Cornwall.

14* · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631–1700) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from *The Secular Masque*.

15

15†

Tune: Wild Mountain Thyme

O the summer time has come,
 And the trees are sweetly blooming,
 And wild mountain thyme
 Grows around the purple heather.
 Will you go, lassie, go?

*And we'll all go together
 To pull wild mountain thyme
 All around the purple heather.
 Will you go, lassie, go?*

I will build my love a bower
 By yon clear crystal fountain,
 And on it I will pile
 All the flowers of the mountain.
 Will you go, lassie, go?

I will range through the wilds
 And the deep land so dreary
 And return with the spoils
 To the bower o' my dearie.
 Will ye go, lassie, go?

If my truelove she'll not come,
 Then I'll surely find another
 To pull wild mountain thyme
 All around the purple heather.
 Will you go, lassie, go?

*And we'll all go together
 To pull wild mountain thyme
 All around the purple heather.
 Will you go, lassie, go?*

15† · Francis McPeake (1885 – 1971) · *The Corries: In Concert*. ¶ McPeake seems to have been inspired to compose this song by a poem of Robert Tannahill's. Some interpreters of this song (Kate Rusby et al.) have been known to render the first line as, 'O the summer time is coming', which, as a certain learned gentleman pointed out to the Almanacker, shows their ignorance of the natural world. Heather blooms in late summer, and not in the spring.

15†

Tune: Sally Racket

Little *Sally Racket*,
Haul 'im away!
 She pawned my best jacket,
Haul 'im away!
 An' she lost the ticket –
Haul 'im away!
 An' a haul-ee high-O!
Haul 'im away!

Little *Kitty Carson*
 Got off with a parson;
 Now she's got a little barson –
 An' a haul-ee high-O!

Little *Nancy Dawson*,
 She got a notion
 For a poor old boatswain –
 An' a haul-ee high-O!

Little *Susie Skinner*
 She said she's a beginner,
 And she prefers it to 'er dinner,
 So up, lads, an' win 'er –
 An' a haul-ee high-O!

Well, me fighting cocks now,
Haul 'im away!
 Haul an' split 'er blocks now,
Haul 'im away!
 An' we'll stretch a luff, boys,
Haul 'im away!
 An' that'll be enough, boys.
Haul 'im away!

15* No people find each other more absurd than lovers.

15† · Anonymous · *Sailors' Songs and Sea Shanties*.

15* · Prof Clive Lewis (1898 – 1963) · *The Great Divorce*. ¶ This line appears near the beginning of chapter 13, at the crescendo of the confrontation between the Dwarf Ghost and the Lady.

16

16‡

Tune: Will Ye No' Come Back?

Bonny *Charlie's* now awa',
 Safely o'er the friendly main;
 Many a heart will break i' twa,
 Should he no' come back again.

*Will ye no come back again?**Will ye no come back again?**Better lo'ed ye can na be.**Will ye no come back again?*

Many a traitor 'mong the isles
 Brak' the band o' nature's law;
 Many a traitor wi' his wiles
 Sought to wear his life awa'.

Many a gallant soldier fought;
 Many a gallant chief did fa';
 Death itself were dearly bought,
 A' for Scotland's king and law.

Whene'er I hear the blackbird sing
 Unto the evening sinking down,
 Or meryl that makes the wood to ring,
 To me they ha'e no other soun'.

Sweet the laverock's note & long,
 Liling wildly up the glen;
 And aye the o'erworld o' the song:
 Will he no' come back again?

*Will ye no come back again?**Will ye no come back again?**Better lo'ed ye can na be.**Will ye no come back again?*

16‡ · “Bonnie Charlie” · Carolina Nairne, Lady Nairne (1766 – 1845) · *The Jacobite Rebellions*. ¶ Although this song was written several decades after the Jacobite risings, Lady Nairne herself was from a prominent Jacobite family, members of which did actually fight for the House of Stuart.

16†

Tune: Ring Down Shanty

No beef in the market,
Ring down!
 No mutton in the market,
Ring down!
To me way-hey hey-hey hey O!
We're the boys to ring down!

Little *Sally Racket*,
 She shipped in a packet.

Little *Betty Baker*,
 She ran off with a Quaker.

Little *Kitty Carson*,
 She ran off with a parson.

No beef in the market,
Ring down!
 No mutton in the market,
Ring down!
To me way-hey hey-hey hey O!
We're the boys to ring down!

16*

The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
 Though to itself it only live and die.

16† · Anonymous · *The Man from Fiddlers' Green*. ¶ This shanty clearly shares a common ancestor with "Sally Racket".

16* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These lines are taken from Sonnet 44.

17

17‡

Tune: Hey Tuttie Tatie

I'm wearin' awa', *Jean*,
 Like snaw wreaths in thaw, *Jean*;
 I'm wearin' awa'
 To the land o' the leal.

There's nae sorrow there, Jean;
There's neither cold nor care, Jean;
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, *Jean*;
 She was bairth good & fair, *Jean*,
 And we grudged her sair
 To the land o' the leal.

But sorrow's sel' wears past, *Jean*,
 And joy's a-comin' fast, *Jean*,
 The joy that's aye to last
 In the land o' the leal.

O haud ye leal & true, *Jean*;
 Your day it's wearin' through, *Jean*,
 And I'll welcome you
 To the land o' the leal.

Now fare ye well, my ain *Jean*,
 This world's cares are vain, *Jean*,
 We'll meet and be fain
 In the land o' the leal.

There's nae sorrow there, Jean;
There's neither cold nor care, Jean;
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

17‡ · ℞ Carolina Nairne, Lady Nairne (1766 – 1845) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ Leal = loyal. The Almanacker has changed John to Jean, which is how the song is usually sung at the time this collection was compiled.

17†

Tune: Rollicking Randy Dandy

Now we are ready to sail for the HORN –

Way hey! Roll & go!

Our boots & our clothes, boys, are all in the pawn –

To me rollicking randy dandy O!

Heave a pawl! O heave away!

Way hey, roll and go!

The anchor's onboard and the cable's all stored!

To me rollicking randy dandy O!

Soon we'll be warping her out through the locks,
Where the pretty young girls all come down in their frocks.

Come breast the bars, bullies. Heave her away.

Way hey! Roll & go!

Soon we'll be rolling her way down the bay.

To me rollicking randy dandy O!

Heave a pawl! O heave away!

Way hey, roll and go!

The anchor's onboard and the cable's all stored!

To me rollicking randy dandy O!

17* We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.

17† · Anonymous · *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*.

17* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

18

18‡

Tune: The Wauking of the Faulds

My Peggy is a young thing,
 Just entered in her teens,
 Fair as the day, & sweet as may,
 Fair as the day, & always gay.
 My Peggy is a young thing,
 And I'm not very auld,
 Yet well I like to meet her at
 The wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
 When'er we meet alane,
 I wish nae mair to lay my care,
 I wish nae mair of a' that's rare.
 My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
 To a' the lave I'm cauld;
 But she gars a' my spirits glow
 At wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
 Whene'er I whisper love,
 That I look down on a' the town,
 That I look down upon a crown.
 My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
 It makes my blithe & bauld,
 And naithing gi'es me sic delight,
 As wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy sings sae softly,
 When on my pipe I play;
 By a' the rest it is confessed,

18‡ · ℞ “Peggy” · Allan Ramsay (1686 – 1758) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ What exactly ‘wauking of the fauld’ involved remains a bit mysterious. The theory which the Almanacker favours, on the grounds that Ramsay incorporated this song into his pastoral drama *The Gentle Shepherd*, is that the ‘fauld’ in question is a sheepfold; in spring, shepherds in the eighteenth century would have to watch the newly-weaned lambs around the clock, to prevent them from returning to their mothers, and the late nights would provide opportunities for romantic assignations. There is a rival theory, which derives from the fact that the Scots word ‘wauking’ can mean not only *watching*, but also *fulling* (in the sense of fulling a fabric); according to this theory, the ‘fauld’ in the song is a fold of cloth, and indeed women in several countries including Scotland used to full fabric, and used to coordinate their efforts through singing. Perhaps Ramsay intended a double meaning.

By a' the rest, that she sings best.
 My Peggy sings sae saftly,
 And in her songs are tald,
 With innocence the wale of sense,
 At wauking of the fauld.

18†

Tune: Roll the Old Chariot

O a drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any harm!
O a drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any harm!
O a drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any harm!
And we'll all hang on behind!

And we'll roll the old chariot along!
We'll roll the old chariot along!
We'll roll the old chariot along!
And we'll all hang on behind!

O a plate of irish stew wouldn't do us any harm! &c.

O a nice fat cook wouldn't do us any harm! &c.

O a nice watch below wouldn't do us any harm! &c.

O a good night ashore wouldn't do us any harm!
A good night ashore wouldn't do us any harm!
A good night ashore wouldn't do us any harm!
And we'll all hang on behind!

And we'll roll the old chariot along!
We'll roll the old chariot along!
We'll roll the old chariot along!
And we'll all hang on behind!

18* None of us are perfect; I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts.

18† · Anonymous · *Sea Songs and Chanteys*. ¶ There's a story, of dubious authority, that, following his death at Trafalgar, Lord Nelson's body was preserved in brandy (which, in itself is almost certainly true). The sailors onboard the *Victory*, not wanting to waste any intoxicating fluid, gradually siphoned off and drank most of said brandy on the journey back to England. Hence the term 'Nelson's blood' was and is used amongst seamen to refer to any kind of hard liquor.

18* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This a line from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

19

19†

Tune: Westering Home

*Westering home, and a song in the air,
 Light in the eye & it's goodbye to care;
 Laughter o' love, and a welcoming there,
 Isle of my heart, my own one.*

Tell me o' lands o' the orient gay,
 Speak o' the riches & joys o' Cathay;
 Eh, but it's grand to be wakin' ilk day
 To find yourself nearer to ISLAY.

Where are the folk like the folk o' the west,
 Canty & couthy & kindly, the best?
 There I would hie me and there I would rest
 At home wi' my own folk in ISLAY.

Now I'm at home and at home I do lay,
 Dreaming of riches that come from Cathay,
 I'll hop a good ship and be on my way,
 And bring back my fortune to ISLAY.

*Westering home, and a song in the air,
 Light in the eye & it's goodbye to care;
 Laughter o' love, and a welcoming there,
 Isle of my heart, my own one.*

19†

Tune: Homeward Bound

O don't youse hear the old man say –
Goodbye, fare ye well! Goodbye, fare ye well!
 O don't youse hear the old man say –
Hurrah, my boys! We're homeward bound!

We're homeward bound to LIVERPOOL town,
 Where all them *Judies*, they will come down.

19† · Sir Hugh Robertson (1874 – 1952) · *Highland Songs*. ¶ The poet may have been inspired by the Irish folk song “Trasna na dTonnta”. ‘Cathay’ is an archaic name for China, while ‘Islay’ is pronounced to rhyme with ‘tiler’.

19† · Anonymous · *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*.

And when we gets to the WALLASEY gates,
Sally & Oily for their flash-men do wait.

And one to the other ye'll hear them say,
 Here comes *Johnny* with his 14 months' pay!

We meet these fly gals and we'll ring the old bell.
 With them *Judies*, we'll raise merry hell.

We're homeward bound to the gals of the town,
 And stamp up my bullies and heave it around.

And when we gets home, boys, O won't we fly round?
 We'll heave up the anchor to this bully sound.

We're all homeward bound for the old backyard.
 Then heave, my bullies. We're all bound homeward.

O heave with a will boys. O heave long and strong.
 And sing a good chorus for 'tis a good song.

We're homeward bound, we'll have youse to know –
Goodbye, fare ye well! Goodbye, fare ye well!
 And over the water to England must go –
Hurrah, my boys! We're homeward bound!

19* A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.

20

20†

Tune: Jessie the Flower of Dunblane

The sun had gone down o'er the lofty BEN LOMOND,
 And left the red clouds to preside o'er the scene,
 While lonely I strayed in the calm summer gloamin'
 To muse on sweet *Jessie*, the flower o' DUNBLANE.
 How sweet is the brier, wi' its soft folding blossom,
 And sweet is the birch, wi' its mantle o' green;
 Yet sweeter & fairer, & dear to this bosom,
 Is lovely young *Jessie*, the flower o' DUNBLANE:

Is lovely young Jessie,
Lovely young Jessie,
Lovely young Jessie,
The flower o' DUNBLANE.

She's modest as any, and blithe as she's bonny,
 For guileless simplicity marks her its ain;
 And far be the villain, divested o' feeling,
 Who'd blight, in its bloom, the sweet flower o' DUNBLANE.
 Sing on, thou sweet mavis, thy hymn to the evening;
 Thou'rt dear to the echoes of CALDERWOOD GLEN;
 So dear to this bosom, so artless & winning,
 Is charming young *Jessie*, the flower o' DUNBLANE:

Is charming young Jessie, &c.

How lost were my days till I met wi' my *Jessie*,
 The sports o' the city seemed foolish & vain;
 I ne'er saw a nymph I would ca' my dear lassie,
 Till charmed wi' sweet *Jessie*, the flower o' DUNBLANE.
 Though mine were the station o' loftiest grandeur,
 Amidst its profusion I'd languish in pain;
 And reckon as nothing the height o' its splendour,
 If wanting young *Jessie*, the flower o' DUNBLANE:

If wanting young Jessie,
Lovely young Jessie,
Lovely young Jessie,
The flower o' DUNBLANE.

20† · ℞ "Jessie, the Flower o' Dunblane" · Robert Tannahill (1774 – 1810) · *The Poems and Songs of Robert Tannahill*. ¶ The Almanacker has changed the tense in the first sentence from the present to the past.

20†

Tune: Reuben Ranzo

O poor old *Reuben Ranzo*,
Ranzo, me boys! Ranzo!
 O poor old *Reuben Ranzo*,
Ranzo, me boys! Ranzo!

O *Ranzo* was no sailor,
 So 'e shipped aboard a whaler.

O *Ranzo* was no beauty,
 So 'e couldn't do his duty.

O because 'e was so dirty,
 We gave 'im five & 30.

O the skipper's daughter *Susie*,
 Well she begged 'er dad for mercy.

O she gave 'im wine & water,
 And a bit more than she ought t'.

Well 'e got 'is first-mate papers.
 'E's a terror to the whalers.

Now 'e's known wherever them whale-fish blow
Ranzo, me boys! Ranzo!
 As the hardest bastard on the go.
Ranzo, me boys! Ranzo!

20* Hard work is simply the refuge of people who have nothing whatever to do.

20† · Anonymous · *Sailors' Songs and Sea Shanties*.

20* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*.

21

21†

Tune: Turn Ye To Me

The stars are burning
Cheerily, cheerily.

Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.

The sea mew is moaning
Drearly, drearily.

Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.

Cold is the stormwind that ruffles his breast,
But warm are the downy plumes lining his nest.
Cold blows the storm there;
Soft falls the snow there.

Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.

The waves are dancing
Merrily, merrily.

Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.

The seabirds are wailing
Wearily, wearily.

Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.

Hushed be thy moaning, lone bird of the sea;
Thy home on the rocks is a shelter to thee;
Thy home is the angry wave,
Mine but the lonely grave.

Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.

21†

Tune: Santy Anna

O *Santy Anna* gained a day.

Hurray! Santy Ann-O!

O *Santy Anna* gained a day.

All on the plains of Mexico!

O Mexico! Mexico!

O Mexico, where I must go!

Them little girls I do adore,
Their shining eyes & long black hair.

21† · Prof John Wilson (1785 – 1854) · *The Compact Collection*. ¶ ‘Horo Mhairi dhu’ would seem to be a (slightly archaic) Gallic phrase, meaning ‘O black Mary’.

21† · Anonymous · *Sailors’ Songs and Sea Shanties*. ¶ Santy Anna = Gen Antonio López de Santa Anna.

Why do them yellow girls love me so?
Because I don't tell 'em all I know.

When I was a young man in my prime,
I knocked them little girls two at a time.

Them LIVERPOOL girls ain't got no coal.
They comb their hair with a kipper backbone.

Times is hard and the wages low.

Hurray! Santy Ann-O!

It's time for us to roll & go.

All on the plains of Mexico!

21* I can resist everything except temptation.

22

22‡

Tune: The Ettrick Lady

As I gaed down the ETTRICK valley
 At the hour of 12 at night,
 Who did I see but a handsome lassie
 Combing her hair by candlelight?
 ‘Lassie, I have come a-courting,
 Your fine favours for to win;
 And, if you’ll but smile upon me,
 Next sunday night I’ll call again.’

Falla talla-roo! Dumma-roo! Dumma-roo-dum!
Falla talla-roo! Dumma-roo-dum-day!

‘So to me you’ve to come your courting,
 My fine favours for to win,
 But it would give me the greatest pleasure
 If you never did call again.
 What would I do when I go to walking,
 Walking out for the ETTRICK view?
 What would I do when I go to walking,
 Walking out with a laddie like you?’

‘Lassie, I have gold & silver.
 Lassie, I have houses & land.
 Lassie, I have ships in the ocean;
 They’ll be all at your command.’
 ‘What do I care for your ships on the ocean?
 What do I care fpr your houses & land?
 What do I care for your gold & silver
 When all I want is a handsome man?’

‘Did you ever see the grass in the morning
 All bedecked with jewels rare?
 Did you ever see a handsome lassie,
 Diamonds sparkling in her hair?
 Did you ever see a copper kettle
 Mended with an old tin can?
 Did you ever see a handsome lassie
 Married off to an ugly man?’

Falla talla-roo! Dumma-roo! Dumma-roo-dum!
Falla talla-roo! Dumma-roo-dum-day!

22†

Tune: Blow Boys Blow

O was you ever on the CONGO river –

Blow, boys! Blow!

Where fever makes the white man shiver? –

Blow, my bully boys! Blow!

A yankee ship come down the river.

Her mast & yards they shone like silver.

And who do you think was the skipper of her?

Why, *Bully Hayes*, the nigger lover.

Who do you think was first mate of her?

Why, *Shanghai Brown*, the sailor robber.

What do you think she's got for cargo?

Why, black sheep that have run the embargo.

What do you think they've got for dinner?

O monkey hearts and donkey's liver.

Yonder comes the **Arrow** packet.

She fires the gun. Can't you hear the racket?

O blow, my boys, and blow forever.

Blow, boys! Blow!

O blow me down that CONGO river.

Blow, my bully boys! Blow!

22* If one tells the truth, one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out.

22† · Anonymous · *Blow Boys Blow*. ¶ Lloyd comments in the sleeve-notes: "This topsail halyard shanty, "Blow Boys Blow", originated on the West African run, during the days of the slave trade. Later, with the Congo River stanzas dropped, it passed into use aboard Atlantic packets. The skipper's name is given variously as Bully Hayes, Bully Sims, and One-Eyed Kelly. The stanza about the packet-ship firing its gun may date from the Civil War, or may refer to an anti-slavery patrol."

22* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young*.

23

23[‡]*Tune: Whisky in the Jar*

As I was going over
The far-famed Kerry mountains,
I met with Captain *Farrell*
And his money he was counting.
I first produced my pistol
And then produced my rapier
Said, Stand and deliver
For you are a bold deceiver!

Musba-ring dumma-do dumma-da!
Wack-fol the daddy-oh!
Wack-fol the daddy-oh!
There's whisky in the jar!

I counted out his money
And it made a pretty penny.
I put it in my pocket
And brought it home to *Jenny*.
She sighed & she swore
That she never would deceive me.
But the devil take the women
For they never can be easy.

I went up to my chamber
All for to take a slumber.
I dreamt of gold & jewels,
And for sure it was no wonder.
But *Jenny* drew my charges
And she filled them up with water,
And sent for Captain *Farrell*
To ready for the slaughter.

'Twas early in the morning
Just before I rose to travel.
Up comes a band of footmen
And likewise Captain *Farrell*.
I first produced my pistol
For she'd stolen away my rapier.

I couldn't shoot the water,
So a prisoner I was taken.

If anyone can aid me,
'Tis my brother in the army.
If I could find his station
In Cork or in Killarney.
And if he'll come with me
We'll go roamin' in Kilkenny.
And I'm sure he'll treat me better
Than my own misportin' Jenny.

Musba-ring dumma-do dumma-da!
Wack-fol the daddy-oh!
Wack-fol the daddy-oh!
There's whisky in the jar!

23†

Tune: Stormer Longjohn

Stormy's gone, that good ol' man.
Way! Stormer Longjohn!
Stormy's gone, that good ol' man.
Way-hey! Mr Storm-Along!

They dug 'is grave with a silver spade.
A shroud of finest silk was made.

An able sailor, bold & true,
A good ol' boatswain to 'is crew.

I wish I was ol' *Stormy's* son.
I'd build a ship of a 1000 tonne.

I'd fill 'er with New England rope.
My shell-backs they would all 'ave some.

Ol' *Stormy's* dead an' gone to rest.
Way! Stormer Longjohn!
Of all the sailors, 'e was best.
Way-hey! Mr Storm-Along!

23* I have the simplest tastes; I am always satisfied with the best.

23† · Anonymous · *Sailors' Songs and Sea Shanties*.

23* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *Oscar Wilde: An Idler's Impression*.

24

24†

Tune: I'll Tell Me Ma

I'll tell my ma when I get home;
 The boys won't leave the girls alone.
 They pulled my hair; they stole my comb,
 But that's all right till I go home.

She is handsome; she is pretty;
 She is the belle of BELFAST city.
 She is a-courting. One, two, three:
 Pray, won't you tell me, who is she?

Albert Mooney says he loves her.
 All the boys are fighting for her.
 They knock at the door and they ring at the bell,
 Saying, O my true love, are you well?

Out she comes, as white as snow,
 Rings on her fingers, bells on her toes.
 Old *Jenny Morrissey* says she'll die
 If she doesn't get the feller with the roving eye.

Let the wind & the rain & the hail blow high.
 Let the snow come travelling through the sky.
 She's as sweet as apple pie,
 And she'll get her own lad by & by.

When she gets a lad of her own,
 She won't tell her ma when she gets home.
 Let them all come as they will;
 For it's *Albert Mooney* she loves still.

24†

Tune: Haul Away for Rosie

Talk about your harbour girls around the corner, *Sally*,
Away! Haul away! Haul away, me Rosie!

24† · R Anonymous · *At Their Best*. ¶ This nineteenth-century folk song was originally accompanied by a children's game. For largely political reasons, the Dubliners chose to change 'Belfast' to 'Dublin' in their rendition.

24† · Anonymous · *Sailors' Songs and Sea Shanties*. ¶ 'Booble Alley' seems to have been a slang term for one of the roughest parts of town, the slang in question being possibly local to Liverpool (which tells you just how rough it must have been). The term 'old man' refers to the captain. There seem to be many more verses to this song, but these are the only ones that are printable.

Away! Haul away! Haul away, me Johnny-O!
 But they wouldn't go to tea with the girls from Booble Alley.
Away! Haul away! Haul away, me Rosie!
Away! Haul away! Haul away, me Johnny-O!

King *Louis* was the king of France before the revolution,
 But the people cut 'is 'ead off and it spoiled 'is constitution.

Well now we're leaving LIVERPOOL bound for the bay of Mexico,
Away! Haul away! Haul away, me Rosie!
Away! Haul away! Haul away, me Johnny-O!
 I thought I heard the old man say, It's time for us to roll & go.
Away! Haul away! Haul away, me Rosie!
Away! Haul away! Haul away, me Johnny-O!

24* Life is much too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it.

25

25†

Tune: The Auld Orange Flute

In the County Tyrone, near the town of DUNGANNON,
 There was many the ruction that myself had a han' in.
Bob Williamson lived there, a weaver by trade,
 And all of us thought him a stout orange blade.
 On the 12th of july as it yearly did come,
Bob played on his old flute to the sound of the drum.
 You can talk of your harp, your piano or lute,
 But nothing compared with the old orange flute.

*Toora-loo! Toora-loo!**Sure it's six miles from BANGOR to DONAGHADEE!*

Ah but *Bob* the deceiver, sure he took us all in,
 And he married a papist called *Bridget McGinn*,
 Turned papist himself, and forsook the old cause
 That gave us our freedom, religion & laws.
 Now the boys of the place made some comment upon it,
 And *Bob* had to flee to the province of Connaught.
 Well he fled with his wife & his fixings to boot;
 And, along with the latter, his old orange flute.

At the chapel on sundays, to atone for past deeds,
 He said paters & aves and he counted his beads;
 Till after some time, at the priest's own desire,
Bob went with his old flute to play in the choir.
 Well he went with his old flute to play in the mass,
 But the instrument shivered & sighed – O alas –
 And blow as he would, though it made a great noise,
 The flute would play only “The Protestant Boys”.

At the council of priests that was held the next day,
 They decided to banish the old flute away.
 They couldn't knock heresy out of its head,
 So they bought *Bob* a new one to play in its stead.
 Now the old flute it was doomed and its fate was pathetic.
 ’Twas fastened and burned at the stake as heretic.
 As the flames roared around sure they heard a queer noise;
 ’Twas the old flute still playing “The Protestant Boys”.

Toora-loo! Toora-loo!
Sure it's six miles from BANGOR to DONAGHADEE!

25†

Tune: Whup Jamboree

The pilot he looks out ahead,
 With a hand on the chains a-heaving on the lead,
 And the old man roars to wake the dead.
 Come and get your oats, my son!

Whip jamboree! Whip jamboree!
You long-tailed black man, come up behind!
Whip jamboree! Whip jamboree!
Johnny, get your oats, my son!

O now we're past the LIZARD light;
 And the START, my boys, we'll heave in sight;
 We'll soon be abreast of the Isle of Wight.
 Come and get your oats, my son!

O when we get to the BLACKWALL docks,
 Those pretty young girls come down in flocks
 With short-legged drawers & long-tailed frocks.
 Come and get your oats, my son!

Whip jamboree! Whip jamboree!
You long-tailed black man, come up behind!
Whip jamboree! Whip jamboree!
Johnny, get your oats, my son!

25* Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast.

25† · “Whip Jamboree” · Anonymous · *Blow Boys Blow*. ¶ Lizard Point and Start Point are lighthouses on the south coast of England, in Cornwall and Devon respectively; they remain important landmarks for a mariner making his way up the English Channel to this day. The Blackwall docks were an important London dockyard, now, sadly, out of use.

25* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *An Ideal Husband*.

26

26‡

Tune: The Bonnie Hoose o' Airlie

It fell on a day, and a bonny summer's day,
 When the sun shone bright & clearly,
 That there fell out a great dispute
 Atween *Argyll* & *Airlie*.

Argyll, he has mustered a 1000 o' his men;
 He has marched them out right early;
 He has marched them in by the back o' DUNKELD,
 To plunder the bonny house o' *Airlie*.

Lady *Ogilvie*, she looked from her window so high,
 And O but she grat sairly
 To see *Argyll* and a' his men
 Come to plunder the bonny house o' *Airlie*.

'Come down, come down, Lady *Ogilvie*,' he cried.
 'Come down and kiss me fairly,
 Or I swear by the hilt o' my good broadsword
 That I wi' na leave a stan'in' stone in *Airlie*.'

'I wi' na come down, ye cruel *Argyll*;
 I wi' na kiss ye fairly;
 I would na kiss ye, false *Argyll*,
 Though ye should na leave a stan'in' stone in *Airlie*.'

'Come tell me where your dowry is hid;
 Come down and tell me fairly.'
 'I wi' na tell ye where my dowry is hid,
 Though ye should na leave a stan'in' stone in *Airlie*.'

They sought it up & they sought it down;
 I wat they sought it early;
 And it was below yon bowling green
 They found the dowry o' *Airlie*.

26‡ · Anonymous · *Highland Songs*. ¶ This song relates a raid made by 'Argyll' (i.e. the Covenanter Archibald Campbell, 8th Earl of Argyll and Chief of Clan Campbell) on Airlie Castle (seat of the Royalist James Ogilvie, 1st Earl of Airlie and Chief of Clan Ogilvie) in 1640 during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. In spite of the unhappy ending, the listener may take some comfort in the fact that Lord Argyll died on the scaffold, whereas Lord Airlie died in his bed.

'Eleven bairns I ha'e born
 And the 12th ne'er saw his daddy,
 But though I had gotten as many again,
 They should 'a' gang to fetch for *Charlie*.

'Gin my good lord had been at home,
 As he's awa' for *Charlie*,
 There dares na a *Campbell* o' a' *Argyll*
 Set a foot on the bonny house o' *Airlie*.'

He's ta'en her by the milk-white hand,
 But he did na lead her fairly;
 He led her up to the top o' the hill,
 Where she saw the burnin' o' *Airlie*.

The smoke & flame they rose so high;
 The walls they were blackened fairly;
 And the lady laid her down on the green to die
 When she saw the burnin' o' *Airlie*.

26†

Tune: Eliza Lee

The smartest clipper you can find –
Ho-ay ho! Are you most done?!
 Is the **Margaret Evans** on the Blue Star Line –
Clear away the track and let the bulgine run!

To me aye! Rig a jig in a jolting car!
Ho-ay ho! Are you most done?!
 With *Liza Lee* all on my knee,
Clear away the track and let the bulgine run!

O the **Margaret Evans** on the Blue Star Line,
 She's never a day behind the time.

O we're outward bound for NEW YORK town.
 We'll dance them BOWERY girls around.

Well we stowed our freight on the WEST CREEK pier.
 We'll head right back for some LIVERPOOL beer.

O I thought I heard the old man say,
 We'll leave that brig three points away.

And when we're back in LIVERPOOL town –
 Ho-ay ho! Are you most done?!
I'll stand youse whiskys all around –
 Clear away the track and let the bulgine run!

To me aye! Rig a jig in a jolting car!
 Ho-ay ho! Are you most done?!
With Liza Lee all on my knee,
 Clear away the track and let the bulgine run!

26* Out of the strong came forth sweetness.

27

27[‡]*Tune: Off to Dublin in the Green*

O I am a merry plough boy,
 And I plough the fields all day,
 Till a sudden thought came to my head
 That I should a-roam away.
 For I'm sick & tired of slavery
 Since the day that I was born,
 And I'm off to join the IRA
 And I'm off tomorrow morn.

*And we're all off to DUBLIN in the green, in the green,
 Where the helmets glisten in the sun,
 Where the bayonets flash and the rifles crash
 To the rattle of the thompson gun.*

I'll leave aside my pick & spade;
 I'll leave aside my plough.
 I'll leave aside my horse & yoke;
 I no longer need them now.
 I'll leave aside my *Mary* –
 She's the girl that I adore –
 And I wonder if she'll think of me
 When she hears the rifles roar.

And when the war is over,
 And dear old Ireland is free,
 I'll take her to the church to wed
 And a rebel's wife she'll be.
 Well, some men fight for silver,
 And some men fight for gold;
 But the IRA are fighting for
 The land that the saxons stole.

*And we're all off to DUBLIN in the green, in the green,
 Where the helmets glisten in the sun,
 Where the bayonets flash and the rifles crash
 To the rattle of the thompson gun.*

27†

Tune: Hanging Johnny

They call me *Hanging Johnny* –
Away, boys! Away!

But I never hanged nobody –
So hang, boys! Hang!

They says I hanged my graddy,
And then I hanged my family.

They says I hanged my mother.
It is they and my brother.

I hanged a rotten liar,
But I hanged a bloody friar.

They tells I hang for money,
But hanging's so bloody funny.

We all will hang together –
Away, boys! Away!

It's all for better weather –
So hang, boys! Hang!

27* Stolen waters are sweet.

27† · Anonymous · *The Young Tradition Sampler*.

27* · Proverbs 9.17 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

28

28‡

Tune: The Granemore Hare

One fine winter's morn my horn I did blow.
 To the green fields of KEADY for hours we did go.
 We gathered our dogs, and we circled around,
 For none loves the sport better than the boys in the dell.

And when we arrived they were all standing there.
 We set off for the fields, boys, in search of a hare.
 We didn't get far till someone gave the cheer:
 O'er the high hills & valleys the sweet puss did steer.

As we flew o'er the hills, 'twas a beautiful sight:
 There was dogs black & yellow; there was dogs black & white.
 Now she took the black bank for to try them once more.
 O it was her last look o'er the hills of GREENMORE.

In a field of wheat stubble this pussy die lie,
 And Rory & Charmer they did pass her by;
 And there, as we stood at the top of the brae,
 We heard the last words that this sweet puss did say:

'No more o'er the green fields of Keady I'll roam,
 Nor trip through the fields, boys, in sport & in fun,
 Nor hear the long horn that your toner does play,
 Nor go home to my den by the clear light of day.'

You may blame old MacMahon for killing the hare,
 For he's at his old capers this many's a year.

28‡ · "Hills of Greenmore" · Anonymous · *Hark! The Village Wait*. ¶ Alfred Lloyd wrote in the sleeve notes to *The Irish Country Four* (1971): 'The song was written by Owen McMahon of Tassagh, Co Armagh, a great place for hunting the hare. The poet W R Rodgers, himself an Armagh man, says: "In our split community hare-hunting was the only social activity in which both Catholic and Protestant participated. Why? Because it was older than either faith. Its roots ran back to prehistoric times." Arrian of Nicomedia, eighteen centuries ago, wrote: "There would never have been a hare coursed in Greece had not the first hound been brought from Ireland." Beagle hound, no doubt. Hares are chased on foot, with beagles, according to strict ritual, and with no pink-coated snobbery. A common folks' sport, giving rise to common folks' songs, and all the better for it.' However, the song clearly contains elements older than the early twentieth century; compare, for example, the similarities with the English hunting song beginning 'You gentlemen of high renown'. According to an entry in the BBC Programme Catalogue, this song was first collected on 10 Jul 1952, by the folklorist Peter Kennedy, from the singing of one Jimmy McKee. £20: Some sleeve notes give this line as, 'I'll go home to my den by the clear light of day.' While this makes for a tantalising image of the hare glimpsing an afterlife before succumbing to its wounds, it must be, most unfortunately, a simple mishearing of the words.

On saturday & sunday he never gives o'er
With a pack of strange dogs round the hills of GREENMORE.

28†

Tune: Paddy Doyle's Boots

To me, way-ay ay-ay-ay yah!

We'll pay *Paddy Doyle* for 'is boots.

To me, way-ay ay-ay-ay yah!

We'll all drink whisky & gin.

To me, way-ay ay-ay-ay yah!

We'll all shave under the chin.

28* The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

28† · Anonymous · *Sailors' Songs and Sea Shanties*. ¶ Paddy Doyle seems to have been a Liverpoolian boarding master.

28* · 1 John 2.8 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*.

29

29‡

Tune: Finnegan's Wake

Tim Finnegan lived in WALKING STREET,
 A gentleman irish, mighty odd.
 He had a brogue both rich & sweet,
 And to rise in the world he carried a hod.
 Now *Tim* had a bit of a tipling way:
 With a love of the liquor poor *Tim* was born,
 And to help him on with his work each day,
 He'd a drop of the **creatúr** every morn.

Whack! Fol-the-da! Will you dance to your partner?
Round the floor your trotters shake!
Wasn't it the truth I told you?
Lots of fun at Finnegan's wake!

One morning *Tim* was feeling full:
 His head was heavy, and it made him shake.
 He fell off the ladder and broke his skull,
 And they carried him home his corpse to wake.
 They rolled him up in a nice clean sheet,
 And they laid him out upon the bed,
 With a bucket of whisky at his feet
 And a barrel of porter at his head.

Tim's friends assembled at the wake,
 And the widow *Finnegan* called for lunch:
 First she brought in tea & cake;
 Then pipes, tobacco and whisky punch.
Biddy O'Brien began to cry,
 'Such a nice, clean corpse, did you ever see?
 O *Tim*, **mo mhuirnin**, why did you die?'
 'Ara, hold your gob!' said *Paddy McGee*.

29‡ · Anonymous · *Finnegan Wakes*. ¶ James Joyce named one of his infamous emperor's-new-clothes novels after this song. A few Irish words and phrases ought to be explained. The word 'creatúr' is pronounced like the English word 'crater', and means liquor. The phrase 'mo mhuirnin' is pronounced 'mavourneen' as in the Irish folk song 'Kathleen Mavourneen', and it means 'my darling'; whereas 'sail éille' (sometimes semi-anglicised as 'shillelagh') is pronounced to rhyme with 'ukulele', and refers to a kind of blunt weapon typically made from blackthorn wood. 'D'anam don diabhal' is a curse, literally, 'Your soul to the devil', and is pronounced something like 'Denim done dowel'.

Then *Maggie O'Connor* took up the job:
 'O *Biddy*,' says she, 'you're wrong, I'm sure!'
Biddy fetched her a belt in the gob,
 And she left her sprawling on the floor.
 Then war did soon engage:
 'Twas woman to woman and man to man;
Sail rille law was all the rage,
 And a row and a ruction soon began.

Then *Mickey Maloney* ducked his head
 When a noggin of whisky flew at him;
 It missed and landed on the bed,
 And the liquor scattered over *Tim*!
 By God, he revives! See how he rises!
Tim Finnegan rising from the bed,
 Saying, 'Whirl your whisky around like blazes!
Banam don diabhal! Do you think I'm dead?'

Whack! Fol-the-da! Will you dance to your partner?
Round the floor your trotters shake!
Wasn't it the truth I told you?
Lots of fun at Finnegan's wake!

29†

Tune: Outward Bound

To the LIVERPOOL docks we bid adieu,
 To *Suke & Sall & Kitty* too.
 Our anchor's wieghed and our sails unfurled;
 We're off to plough the watery world.

Hurrah! We're outward bound!
Hurrah! We're outward bound!

When the wind it blows from the east-nor'-east,
 Our ship will sail IOKTS at least.
 The purser will our wants supply,
 So while we've rum we'll never say die.

And should we touch at MALABAR
 Or any other port as far,
 Our purser he will tip the chink
 And just like fishes we will drink.

29† · Anonymous · *Ships, Sea Songs and Shanties*. ¶ SSS is only the primary source: there are very many versions of this shanty: the Almanacker has done his best to extract the best of each of them.

One day the man on the look-out
Proclaims a sail with a joyful shout:
'Can you make her out?' 'I think I can.
She's a pilot standing out from the land.'

Hurrah! We're homeward bound!
Hurrah! We're homeward bound!

Now when we get to the BLACKWALL docks,
The pretty young girls come down in flocks;
One to the other you'll hear them say,
'O here comes *Jack* with his 10 months' pay.

And when we get to the DOG AND BELL,
It's there they've got good liquor to sell.
In comes old *Grouse* with a smile,
Saying, 'Drink, my boys. It's worth your while.'

But when the money's all gone & spent,
And there's none to be borrowed and none to be lent,
In comes old *Grouse* with a frown,
Saying, 'Get up, *Jack*. Let *John* sit down.'

Then poor old *Jack* must understand
There's ships in docks all wanting hands;
So he goes onboard as he did before,
And bids adieu to his native shore.

Hurrah! We're outward bound!
Hurrah! We're outward bound!

29* The whole is more than the sum of the parts.

29* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is an ancient English paraphrase of a sumblime truth which Aristotle articulated more awkwardly.

30

30‡

Tune: The Mother's Malison

Willie stands in his stable door
 And clapping at his steed,
 And looking o'er his white fingers
 His nose began to bleed.
 'Gi'e corn to my horse, mother,
 And meat to my young man,
 And I'll awa' to *Maggie's* bower;
 I'll win ere she lie down.'

'O 'bide this night wi' me, Willie,
 O 'bide this night wi' me;
 The best an cock o' a' the roost
 At your supper shall be.'
 'A' your cocks, and a' your roosts,
 I value not a prin,
 For I'll awa' to *Maggie's* bower;
 I'll win ere she lie down.'

'Stay this night wi' me, Willie,
 O stay this night wi' me;
 The best an sheep in a' the flock
 At your supper shall be.'
 'A' your sheep, and a' your flocks,
 I value not a prin,
 For I'll awa' to *Maggie's* bower;
 I'll win ere she lie down.'

'O on ye gang to *Maggie's* bower,
 So sore against my will,
 The deepest pot in CLYDE's water,
 My malison ye's feel.'
 'The good steed that I ride upon
 Cost me thrice £30;
 And I'll put trust in his swift feet
 To ha'e me safe to land.'

30‡ · R Anonymous · *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. ¶ A handful of lines have been removed to make this song singable to the tune with which the Almanacker is familiar.

As he rode o'er yon high, high hill,
And down yon dowie den,
The noise that was in CLYDE's water
Would feared 500 men.
'O roaring CLYDE, ye roar o'er loud,
Your streams seem wondrous strang;
Make me your wreck as I come back,
But spare me as I gang!'

Then he is on to *Maggie's* bower,
And tirlèd at the pin.
'O sleep ye, wake ye, *Maggie*,' he said;
'Ye'll open, let me come in.'
'O who is this at my bower door,
That calls me by my name?'
'It is your first love, sweet *Willie*,
This night newly come hame.'

'I ha'e few lovers thereout, thereout,
As few ha'e I therein;
The best an love that ever I had
Was here jus' late yestreen.'
'The worst an bower in a' your bowers,
For me to lie therin!
My boots are fu' o' CLYDE's water;
I'm shivering at the chin.'

'My barns are fu' o' corn, *Willie*;
My stables are fu' o' hay.
My bowers are fu' o' gentlemen;
They'll not remove till day.'
'O fare ye well, my false *Maggie*!
O farewell, and adieu!
I've got my mother's malison
This night coming to you.'

As he rode o'er yon high, high hill
And down yon dowie den,
The rushing that was in CLYDE's water
Took *Willie's* hat from him.
He leaned him o'er his saddle-bow,
To catch his hat through force;

The rushing that was in CLYDE's water
Took *Willie* from his horse.

His brither stood upo' the bank,
Says, 'Fye, man, will ye drown?
Ye'll turn ye to your high horse head
And learn how to sowm.'
'How can I turn to my horse head
And learn how to sowm?
I've got my mother's malison,
It's here that I must drown.'

The very hour this young man sank
Into the pot so deep,
Up it waked his love *Maggie*
Out o' her drowsy sleep.
'Come here, come here, my mother dear,
And read this dreary dream;
I dreamed my love was at our gates,
And none would let him in.'

'Lie still, lie still now, my *Maggie*,
Lie still & tak' your rest;
Sin' your truelove was at your gates,
It's but two quarters past.'
Nimbly, nimbly raise she up,
And nimbly pat she on,
And the higher that the lady cried,
The louder blew the win'.

The first an step that she stepped in,
She stepped to the queet;
'Ohon! Alas!' said that lady,
'This water's wondrous deep.'
The next an step that she waded in,
She waded to the knee;
Says she, 'I coud wade farther in,
If I my love coud see.'

The next an step that she waded in,
She waded to the chin;
The deepest pot in CLYDE's water
She got sweet *Willie* in.
'You've had a cruel mother, *Willie*,

And I have had another;
But we shall sleep in CLYDE's water
Like sister an' like brother.'

30†

Tune: Whisky Johnny

Whisky is the life of man.

Whisky! Johnny!

O whisky is the life of man.

Whisky for my Johnny-O!

O I drink whisky when I can.

I drink it out from an old tin can.

Whisky gave me a broken nose.

Whisky made me pawn my clothes.

Whisky drove me around CAPE HORN.

It was many a month when I was gone.

I thought I heard the old man say,

I'll treat my crew in a decent way.

A glass of grog for every man –

Whisky! Johnny!

And a bottle for the shantyman –

Whisky for my Johnny-O!

30* You should make a point of trying every experience once, except incest and folk dancing.

30† · Anonymous · *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*.

30* · Anonymous · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

MONTH VI

Grain

I

1†

Tune: O Lud Gals

It's up the rope and down the cable.
Forty horses in the stable.
First an indian then a squaw,
Going away to the ARKANSAS.

O lud, gals!
Give me chaw tobacco!
O lud, gals!
Fetch along the whisky!
Makes my head swim when I get a little tipsy!

It's vinegar shoes & paper stockings,
Says to me Miss *Polly Hopkins*.
My wife's dead, and I'm a widder,
All the way from the rolling river.

If I had wife & a little baby,
I'd support her like a lady.
Gods of war & little fishes,
Earthen plates & pewter dishes.

Cow hide shoes & buck skin breeches:
Give the gal that sews the stitches,
Prettiest thing in all creation:
Yaller gal in the wild goose nation.

1† · Dan Emmett (1815 – 1904) · *Southern Soldier*.

It's all the way from the indian nation:
 A little corn crib on a big plantation.
 My wife's dead; I'll get another,
 Pretty little black gal just like the other.

Blow away, ye gentle breezes,
 Down among them cinammon treeses.
 There I sit long with the muses,
 Mending my old boots & shoeses.

O lud, gals!
Give me chaw tobacco!
O lud, gals!
Fetch along the whisky!
Makes my head swim when I get a little tipsy!

1†

'Tis sweet to hear the tuneful hum of bees,
 Like zephyrs, whisp'ring thro' the trembling trees;
 To see the moonbeams tip, with silvery light,
 The ocean, slumb'ring in the arms of night;
 To hear the music of a murm'ring rill,
 Or tinkling sheepbell, when all else is still;
 For weary pilgrims, when oppress'd with heat,
 To slumber calmly in a cool retreat;
 But sweeter far, the seaman's danger o'er,
 The smile that greets him on his native shore.

1* One Englishman could beat three Frenchmen.

1† · "A Surfeit of Sweets" · Thomas Barlee (1796 – 1860) · *Parnassian Molehill*.

1* · The Rt Hon Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

2

2‡

Tune: Dixie

I wish I was in the land of cotton –

Old times there are not forgotten –

Look away! Look away! Look away, Dixie-land!

In Dixie's land where I was born in,

Early on one frosty mornin'

*Look away! Look away! Look away, Dixie-land!**I wish I was in Dixie!**Hooray! Hooray!**In Dixie's land I'll take my stand**To live and die in Dixie.**Away! Away!**Away down south in Dixie!**Away! Away!**Away down south in Dixie!**Old Missus marry Will the weaver.**William was a gay deceiver,**And when he put his arm around her**He smiled as fierce as a 40 pounder.**His face was sharp as a butcher's cleaver,**But that did not seem to grieve her.**Old Missus acted the foolish part.**She died for a man that broke her heart.**Now here's a health to the next Old Missus**And all the girls that want to kiss us!**Look away! Look away! Look away, Dixie-land!**And if you want to drive away sorrow,**Come back hear our song tomorrow.**Look away! Look away! Look away, Dixie-land!**I wish I was in Dixie!*

2‡ · “Dixie” · Dan Emmett (1815 – 1904) · *Southern Soldier*. ¶ This song served as one of several de facto national anthems for the Confederacy, which provoked one Union songwriter to compose a rather good parody: ‘Away down South in the land of traitors,/ Rattlesnakes and alligators,/ Right away, come away, right away, come away./ Where cotton's king and men are chattels,/ Union boys will win the battles,/ Right away, come away, right away, come away.’ £18: The Rifled Breech-Loading 40 pounder Armstrong gun was first made in 1860, the year this song was first performed.

Hooray! Hooray!
In Dixie's land I'll take my stand
To live and die in Dixie.
Away! Away!
Away down south in Dixie!
Away! Away!
Away down south in Dixie!

2†

Following across the moors a sound of bells,
 We found a church, the smallest that could be,
 Hid in a tamarisk grove beside the sea,
 And graves of shipwrecked men set round with shells.
 We entered when the prayers were almost done:
 The little children nodded on their knees,
 The preacher's voice was drowned in hum of bees
 That danced about the lectern in the sun.

Awhile we knelt I let a pansy glide
 Between her sweet grave face & open book,
 And whispered as she turned with chiding look –
 'Heaven has not willed, dear heart, that aught divide
 Love pure as ours, nor blames if thought of me
 Come like this flower between thy God & thee.'

2* Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris.

2† · "The Pansy and the Prayer-Book" · Miss Matilda Betham-Edwards (1836 – 1919) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ¶ The meanings which have subsequently been attached to the word 'pansy' have cast an unfortunate shadow on this excellent sonnet.

2* · Thomas Appleton (1812 – 1884) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

3

3‡

Tune: Ring Ring de Banjo

O never count the bubbles
 When there's water in the spring.
 A darkie has no troubles
 When he's got a song to sing.
 The beauties of creation
 Will never lose their charm
 While a roam the old plantation
 With my truelove on my arm.

Ring, ring the banjo!
I like that good old song!
Come again, my truelove!
O where you been so long?!

Well the time is never dreary
 If a darkie never groans.
 The ladies never weary
 With a rattle of the bones.
 Then come again, *Susannah*,
 By the gaslight of the moon.
 I'll tum that old piano
 When the banjo's out of tune.

O once I was so lucky
 My mas'er set me free.
 So I went to old Kentucky
 For to see what I could see.
 I could not go no farther,
 And I turned to mas'er's door.
 I'll love him all the harder,
 And I'll go away no more.

Well, early in the morning
 Of a lovely summer's day,
 My mas'er gave me warning
 That he'd like to hear me play.
 On the banjo I was tapping,
 And I come with dulcet string;

My mas'er falled a-napping
And he'll never wake again.

My love, I'll have to leave you
While the river's running high,
But I never can deceive you,
So don't you wipe your eye.
I'se gonna make some money,
But I'll come another day.
I'll come again, my honey,
If I have to work my way.

Ring, ring the banjo!
I like that good old song!
Come again, my truelove!
O where you been so long?!

3†

Never seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind doth move
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah she did depart.

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by;
Silently, invisibly,
He took her with a sigh.

3* Riches are for spending.

3† · “Love’s Secret” · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *Other Men’s Flowers*. ¶ The text given here is simply that given by Lord Wavell. Consulting a facsimile of the relevant manuscript – Blake never published the poem – it is apparent that Lord Wavell’s version includes several significant amendments. The most significant of these changes is in the last line; in the manuscript, ‘He took her with a sigh’ is present but crossed out and replaced with ‘O there was no deny’. But the amendments in Lord Wavell’s version, whoever made them, clearly make for a stronger poem.

3* · Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (1561 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

4

4‡

Tune: Angeline the Baker

Way down on the old plantation,
 That's where I was born;
 I used to beat the whole creation
 Hoeing in the corn.
 O then I work, and then I sing,
 So happy all the day,
 Till *Angelina Baker* come
 And stole my heart away.

Angelina Baker! Angelina Baker's gone!
She left me here
To weep a tear
And beat on the old jawbone.

Early in the morning
 Of a lovely summer's day,
 I ax for *Angelina*
 And they say she's gone away.
 I don't know where to find her
 'Cause I don't know where she's gone.
 She left me here to weep a tear
 And beat on the old jawbone.

I've seen her in the springtime,
 And I've seen her in the fall.
 I've seen her in the cornfield,
 And I've seen her at the ball;
 And every time I seen her
 She was smiling like the sun,
 But now I'm left to weep a tear
 'Cause *Angelina's* gone.

Angelina Baker! Angelina Baker's gone!
She left me here
To weep a tear
And beat on the old jawbone.

4‡ · Stephen Foster (1826 – 1864) · *Gotta Stop Kickin' My Dog Around*. ¶ The folk process is said to have had its way with Foster's original version.

4†

The grey sea & the long black land;
And the yellow half moon large & 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.

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, through its joys & fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each.

4* He did not seem to care which way he travelled providing he was in the driver's seat.

4† · "Meeting at Night" · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

4* · William Beaverbrook, 1st Baron Beaverbrook (1879 – 1964) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

5

5‡

Tune: The Bonnie Blue Flag

We are a band of brothers and native to the soil,
 Fighting for the property we gained by honest toil.
 And when our rights were threatened, the cry rose near & far:
 Hurrah for the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star!

*Hurrah! Hurrah! For southern rights, hurrah!
 Hurrah for the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star!*

As long as the Union was faithful to her trust,
 Like friends and like brethren, kind were we, and just.
 But now, when northern treachery attempts our rights to mar,
 We hoist on high the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star.

First gallant South Carolina nobly made the stand,
 Then came Alabama and took her by the hand.
 Next, quickly Mississippi, Georgia, Florida
 All raised on high the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star.

Ye men of valour gather round the banner of the right.
 Texas & fair Louisiana join us in the fight.
Davis, our lovèd president, and *Stephens* statesmen rare
 Now rally round the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star.

Now here's to brave Virginia, the Old Dominion State,
 With the young Confederacy at last has sealed her fate;
 And spurred by her example, now other states prepare
 To hoist on high the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star.

Then cheer, boys, cheer. Raise a joyous shout.
 For Arkansas and North Carolina now have both gone out;
 And let another rousing cheer for Tennessee be given,
 The single star of the bonnie blue flag has grown to be 11.

Then here's to our Confederacy. Strong we are & brave.
 Like patriots of old we'll fight, our heritage to save.
 And rather than submit to shame, to die we would prefer.
 So cheer for the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star.

*Hurrah! Hurrah! For southern rights, burrah!
Hurrah for the bonnie blue flag that bears a single star!*

5†

Now know I how severe a god is love:
Some lioness sure suckled him, and nursed
His youth amid the thickets, who consumes
And darts his flames within my inmost core.
O lovely to behold, yet all of stone.
O dark-browed maid, embrace thy swain that I
May kiss thee, for there is a sweet delight
Even in an empty kiss. Why wilt thou make
Me tear so soon the garland which I wove
For thee, dear *Amaryllis*, having twined
Ivy & rosebuds with sweet-smelling thyme?

5* Conservative, n. A statesman who is enamoured of existing evils, as distinguished from the liberal, who wishes to replace them with others.

5† · The Rev Charles Marston (1824 – 1876) · *Parnassian Molehill*. ¶ This is a free translation from Theocritus, and from his third *Εἰδύλλιον* specifically.

5* · Ambrose Bierce (1842 – 1914) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

6

6‡

Tune: Big Rock Candy Mountains

One evening as the sun went down
 And the jungle fire was burning,
 Up the track came a hobo hiking,
 And he said, Boys, I'm not turning.
 I'm headed for a land that's far away,
 Besides the crystal fountains.
 So come with me. We'll go and see
 The Big Rock Candy Mountains.

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
 There's a land that's fair & bright,
 Where the handouts grow on bushes,
 And you sleep out every night,
 Where the boxcars all are empty,
 And the sun shines every day
 On the birds & the bees
 And the cigarette trees.
 The lemonade springs
 Where the bluebird sings,
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
 All the cops have wooden legs,
 And the bulldogs all have rubber teeth,
 And the hens lay soft-boiled eggs.
 The farmers' trees are full of fruit,
 And the barns are full of hay.
 O I'm bound to go
 Where there ain't no snow.
 The rain don't fall,
 The wind don't blow,
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
 You never change your socks,

6‡ · Harry McClintock (1882 – 1957) · *O Brother, Where Art Thou? Soundtrack*. ℓ2: In the “Hobo” slang of the worker-vagrants of the United States, a ‘jungle’ is an improvised camp, often located near the freight yard of a railway. ℓ3: In the same slang as above, a ‘hobo’ is distinguished from other kinds of homeless man in that he often gains transitory employment. ℓ36: In the same slang as above, ‘bulls’ are policemen.

And the little streams of alcohol
 Come trickling down the rocks.
 The brakemen have to tip their hats
 And the railroad bulls are blind.
 There's a lake of stew
 And of whiskey too.
 You can paddle all around 'em
 In a big canoe.
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,
 The jails are made of tin,
 And you can walk right out again
 As soon as you are in.
 There ain't no short-handled shovels,
 No axes, saws or picks.
 I'm a-going to stay
 Where you sleep all day,
 Where they hung the turk
 That invented work,
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

I'll see you all
 This coming fall,
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

6†

Whenas the nightingale chanted her vespers,
 And the wild forester couched on the ground,
Venus invited me in th'evening whispers
 Unto a fragrant field with roses crowned,
 Where she before had sent
 My wishes' complement;
 Unto my heart's content
 Played with me on the green.
Never Mark Antony
Dallied more wantonly
With the fair egyptian queen.

First on her cherry cheeks I mine eyes feasted,
 Thence fear surfeiting made me retire;

6† · ℞ "Mark Antony" · John Cleveland (1613 – 1658) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised the third and fourth verses. ℓ1: Where the Almanacker gives 'Whenas', Aldington gives 'When as'.

Next on her warmer lips, which when I tasted
My duller spirits made active as fire.
Then we began to dart
Each at another's heart,
Arrows that knew no smart,
Sweet lips & smiles between.
*Never Mark Antony
Dallied more wantonly
With the fair egyptian queen.*

6* Peace, n. In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

7

7†

Tune: The Battle Cry of Freedom

O we'll rally round the flag, boys, we'll rally once again –

Shouting the battle cry of freedom!

And we'll rally from the hillside; we'll gather from the plain –

Shouting the battle cry of freedom!

The Union forever! Hurrah, boys! Hurrah!

Down with the traitor, and up with the stars!

And we'll rally round the flag, boys, we'll rally once again –

Shouting the battle cry of freedom!

O we're springing to the ranks of our brothers gone before,
And we'll fill their vacant ranks with a 1,000,000 freemen more.

We will welcome to our numbers the loyal, true & brave;
And although he may be poor, he shall never be a slave.

We are springing to the call from the east & from the west –

Shouting the battle cry of freedom!

And we'll hurl the rebel crew from the land we love the best –

Shouting the battle cry of freedom!

The Union forever! Hurrah, boys! Hurrah!

Down with the traitor, and up with the stars!

And we'll rally round the flag, boys, we'll rally once again –

Shouting the battle cry of freedom!

7†

The lowest trees have tops, the ant her gall,
The fly his spleen, the little spark his heat;
The slender hairs cast shadows, though but small,
And bees have stings, although they be not great;
Seas have their source, and so have shallow springs;
And love is love, in beggars & in kings.

Where waters smoothest run, there deepest are the fords;
The dial stirs, yet none perceives it move;
The firmest faith is found in fewest words;
The turtles do not sing, and yet they love;

7† · "The Battle Cry of Freedom" · Dr George Root (1820 – 1895) · *Hard Road*.

7† · "A Silent Love" · Sir Edward Dyer (1543 – 1607) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

True hearts have ears & eyes, no tongues to speak;
They hear and see, and sigh, and then they break.

7* The best of life is but intoxication.

7* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from the second canto of *Don Juan*.

8

8‡

Tune: Deep River

Deep river,
 My home is over JORDAN.
 Deep river, Lord,
 I want to cross over into campground.

O don't you want to go
 To that gospel feast,
 That promised land
 Where all is peace?

Deep river,
 My home is over JORDAN.
 Deep river, Lord,
 I want to cross over into campground.

8†

Lovers, rejoice. Your pains shall be rewarded,
 The god of love himself grieves at your crying:
 No more shall frozen honour be regarded,
 Nor the coy faces of a maid denying.
 No more shall virgins sigh, and say, We dare not,
 For men are false, and what they do they care not.
 All shall be well again; then do not grieve;
 Men shall be true, and women shall believe.

Lovers, rejoice. What you shall say henceforth,
 When you have caught your sweethearts in your arms,
 It shall be accounted oracle & worth:
 No more faint-hearted girls shall dream of harms,
 And cry they are too young. The god hath said
 Fifteen shall make a mother of a maid.
 Then, wise men, pull your roses yet unblown;
 Love hates the too ripe fruit that falls alone.

8*

8‡ · Anonymous · *Simple Gifts*. ¶ In negro spirituals (and elsewhere), crossing the river Jordan is a metaphor for death.

8† · R “Lovers Rejoyce” · John Fletcher (1579 – 1625) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This song is appears in *Cupid's Revenge* l.2. £3: The word ‘regarded’ in this context means something closer to “congealed” in modern English.

Think you, if *Laura* had been *Petrarch's* wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life?

8* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a couplet from the third canto of *Don Juan*.

9

9†

Tune: Jamaica Farewell

Far away where the nights are gay
 And the sun shines daily on the mountain top,
 I took a trip on a sailing ship
 And when I reached Jamaica I made a stop.

*But I'm sad to say, I'm on my way;
 Won't be back for many a day.
 My heart is down; my head is turning around.
 I had to leave a little girl in KINGSTON town.*

Sounds of laughter everywhere,
 And the dancing girls sway to & fro:
 I must declare my heart is there,
 Though I've been from Maine to Mexico.

Down the market you can hear it:
 Ladies cry out while on their heads they bear:
 Ackee, rice, salt fish is nice,
 Though the rum is fine any time of year.

*But I'm sad to say, I'm on my way;
 Won't be back for many a day.
 My heart is down; my head is turning around.
 I had to leave a little girl in KINGSTON town.*

9†

Weep not for little *Leonie*,
 Abducted by a french **marquis**.
 Though loss of honour was a wrench,
 Just think how it's improved her french.

9* Do not merely pull it out and strike it, merely to show that you have one.

9† · Anonymous · *The Spinners*. ℓ15: Ackee and salt fish (the former being a peculiar kind of fruit, and the latter being salted cod) is a classic Jamaican recipe.

9† · "Compensation" · Jocelyn Graham (1874 – 1936) · *101 Sonnets*. ¶ Of course, one's honour cannot be lost without one's consent, but it is probably unwise to probe such a poem too hard.

9* · Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694 – 1773) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ In the original text, 'it' is a pocket watch – used as an analogy for being modest about one's education – although Lord Chesterfield may have had something else in mind.

IO

IO†

Tune: Ole Dan Tucker

I came to town the other night.
 I heard the noise. I saw the fight.
 The watchman he was running around,
 Crying old *Dan Tucker* had come to town.

Get out the way!
Get out the way!
Get out the way, old Dan Tucker!
You're too late to get your supper!

Old *Dan Tucker* was a mighty man.
 He washed his face in a frying pan.
 He combed his hair with a wagon wheel,
 And he died with a toothache in his heel.

Old *Dan Tucker* is back in town,
 Swinging the ladies round & round:
 First to the right, then to the left,
 Then to the girl he liked the best.

Old *Dan Tucker* was a nice old man.
 He used to ride a Derby ram.
 He sent him whizzing down the hill.
 If he hadn't got up, he'd lay there still.

Old *Dan Tucker* & I got drunk,
 Fell in the fire, kicked up a chunk.
 The charcoal got inside his shoe.
 Lord bless me, honey, how the ashes flew!

I went to town to buy some goods.
 I lost myself in a piece of woods.
 The night was dark. I had to suffer.
 I froze to the heel of *Daniel Tucker*.

IO† · Anonymous · *Southern Soldier*. ¶ The origins of this song are unclear, although Dan Emmett claimed he wrote it as a boy. Certain sensitive persons have claimed these lines perpetuate stereotypes about the large appetites of black men for food, alcohol and women; but the Almanacker finds something genuinely noble in Dan Tucker's straightforward lust for life. £18: There is an English folk song – well known on the other side of the Atlantic even in George Washington's day – about a Derby ram which was 'ten yards high', amongst other improbably large proportions.

Tucker was a hardened sinner.
 He never said his grace at dinner.
 The old sow squealed; the pigs did squall.
 He ate whole hog, tail & all.

Get out the way!
Get out the way!
Get out the way, old Dan Tucker!
You're too late to get your supper!

10†

Jenny kissed me when we met,
 Jumping from the chair she sat in;
 Time, you thief, who love to get
 Sweets into your list, put that in!
 Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
 Say that health & wealth have missed me,
 Say I'm growing old, but add
Jenny kissed me.

10*

Had *Cain* been scot, God would have changed his doom:
 Nor forced him wander, but confined him home.

10† · “Rondeau” · Leigh Hunt (1784 – 1859) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ The *Jenny* in question was Mrs Jane Carlyle, wife of the polymath Thomas Carlyle. She kissed the poet – she was married to Carlyle at the time – during an influenza epidemic, when the newly-recovered Hunt made an unexpected visit to the couple's home.

10* · John Cleveland (1613 – 1658) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

II

II†

Tune: Dink's Song

If I had wings
 Like *Noah's* dove,
 I'd fly the river
 To the one I love.

Fare thee well, my honey.
Fare thee well.

I had a man.
 He was long & tall.
 He moved his body
 like a cannonball.

I remember one evening
 In the pouring rain,
 And in my heart
 Was an aching pain.

Muddy river
 Runs muddy & wild.
 Can't give a bloody
 For my unborn child.

Just as sure as a bird
 Flying high above,
 Life ain't worth living
 Without the one you love.

Fare thee well, my honey.
Fare thee well.

II† · Anonymous · *Inside Llewyn Davis Soundtrack*. ¶ John Lomax recorded in his *American Ballads and Folk Songs*: “Dink knows all the songs,” said her companion. But I did not find her helpful until I walked a mile to a farm commissary and bought her a pint of gin. As she drank the gin, the sounds from her scrubbing board increased in intensity and in volume. She worked as she talked: “That little boy there ain’t got no daddy an’ he ain’t got no name. I comes from Mississippi and we never saw these levee niggers, till us got here. I brung along my little boy. My man drives a four-wheel scraper down there where you see the dust risin’. I keeps his tent, cooks his vittles and washes his clothes. Some day Ize goin’ to wrap up his wet breeches and shirts, roll ’em up in a knot, put ’em in the middle of the bed, and tuck down the covers right nice. Then I’m going on up the river where I belong.” She sipped her gin and sang and drank until the bottle was empty.’

II†

The fairy beam upon you,
 The stars to glisten on you;
 A moon of light
 In the noon of night,
 Till the fire drake hath o'ergone you.

The wheel of fortune guide you
 The boy with the bow beside you;
 Run aye in the way
 Till the bird of day,
 And the luckier lot betide you.

To the old, long life and treasure,
 To the young, all health and pleasure;
 To the fair, their face
 With eternal grace,
 And the foul to be loved at leisure.

To the witty, all clear mirrors,
 To the foolish, their dark errors;
 To the loving sprite,
 A secure delight;
 To the jealous, his own false terrors.

II* In every mess I find a friend, in every port a wife

II† · Ben Jonson (1572 – 1637) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ This song is sung by Patrico in Jonson's masque *The Gipsies Metamorphosed*.

II* · Charles Dibdin (1745 – 1814) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* gives 'finds', but at least one broadsheet ballad gives 'find'.

12

12‡

Tune: Jesse James

Jesse James was a lad that killed many a man.
 He robbed the GLENDALE train.
 He stole from the rich and he gave to the poor.
 He'd a hand & a heart & a brain.

Well, it was *Robert Ford*, that dirty little coward,
 I wonder how he feels,
 For he ate of *Jesse's* bread and he slept in *Jesse's* bed,
 And he laid poor *Jesse* in his grave.

Well Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life,
Three children – now they were brave.
That dirty little coward that shot Mr Howard
Has laid Jesse James in his grave.

Jesse was a man, a friend to the poor.
 He'd never rob a mother or a child.
 There never was a man with the law in his hand,
 That could take *Jesse James* when alive.

It was on a saturday night, and the moon was shining bright.
 They robbed the GLENDALE train,
 And people they did say, o'er many miles away,
 It was those outlaws; they're *Frank* and *Jesse James*!

Now the people held their breath when they heard of *Jesse's* death,
 And wondered how he ever came to fall.
Robert Ford – it was a fact – he shot *Jesse* in the back
 While *Jesse* hung a picture on the wall

Now *Jesse* went to rest with his hand on his breast,
 The devil will be upon his knee.
 He was born one day in the County Clay,
 And he came from a solitary race.

Well Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life,

12‡ · Anonymous · *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions*. ¶ *Jesse James* has gone down in folklore as a Confederate guerilla and American Robin Hood. In truth, like all the historical folk heroes – Richard the Lionheart, Joan of Arc, Stalin – James was little more than your common-or-garden murderer. But the truth should never get in the way of a good story. £11: 'Mr Howard' was one of the false names James used whilst on the run.

*Three children – now they were brave.
That dirty little coward that shot Mr Howard
Has laid Jesse James in his grave.*

12†

Glory & loveliness have passed away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathèd incense do we see upborne
Into the east, to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft-voiced & young & gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, & pinks, & violets, to adorn
The shrine of *Flora* in her early may.
But there are left delights as high as these,
And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time, when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please,
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

12* Everybody has won, and all must have prizes

12† · “Dedication” · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is the dedication “To Leigh Hunt, Esq’”, found at the front of Keats’s *Poems* of 1817.

12* · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

13

13†

*Tune: Michael Row de Boat Ashore**Michael, row the boat ashore.**Hallelujah!**Michael, row the boat ashore.**Hallelujah!*

Sister help to trim the sail.

Hallelujah!

Sister help to trim the sail.

Hallelujah!

The RIVER JORDAN is chilly and cold,

Hallelujah!

Chills the body but not the soul.

Hallelujah!

The river is deep and the river is wide.

Hallelujah!

Milk and honey on the other side.

*Hallelujah!**Michael, row the boat ashore.**Hallelujah!**Michael, row the boat ashore.**Hallelujah!*

13†

From you, *Ianthe*, little troubles pass

Like little ripples down a sunny river;

Your pleasures spring like daisies in the grass,

Cut down, & up again as blithe as ever.

13*

13† · Anonymous · *Dumb Angel Rarities, Vol 3*. ¶ According to William Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, this song sprang up among newly-freed slaves who had been stranded on Saint Helena Island, South Carolina, due to the vicissitudes of the American Civil War. The river Jordan has long been a metaphor for death, and the Archangel Michael is often said to be the conductor of the souls of the departed into the afterlife.

13† · "Ianthe's Troubles" · Walter Landor (1775 – 1864) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

13* · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Poet's Tongue*. ¶ This is the opening of "The Mock Turtle's Song", alias "The Lobster Quadrille", from *Alice in Wonderland*.

Will you walk a little faster? said a whiting to a snail.
There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.

14

14‡

Tune: The Bastard King of England

O the minstrels sing of english king,
 Many long years ago,
 Who ruled his land with an iron hand,
 Though his morals were weak & low.
 He loved to hunt the royal stag
 That lived in the royal wood,
 But better than it he loved to sit
 And pound the royal pud.
 He was dirty & lousy & full of fleas!
 His terrible tool hung down to his knees!
 God bless the bastard King of England!

The Queen of Spain was an amorous jane;
 A lascivious wench was she.
 She loved to fool with the bastard's tool,
 So far across the sea;
 So she sent a special letter
 By a special messenger,
 To ask the king if he would spend
 A night or two with her.
 He was wild & woolly & full of fleas!
 He had his women by twos & three!
 God save the bastard King of England!

When *Philip* of France heard of this,
 He summoned the royal court –
 'Because she loves my rival more
 Because my tool is short.'
 He sent the Duke of Zippity-Zap
 To give the queen a dose of the clap,
 To give to the bastard King of England.

When the bastard king he heard of this,
 All in fair WINDSOR's walls,
 He took the oath: by his hairy growth,
 He'd have the frenchman's balls.
 So he offered half his kingdom

14‡ · Anonymous · *The Black Album*. ¶ While the origins of this folk song are elusive, its first appearance in print seems to have been in *Immortalia* (1927).

And a piece of the Queen *Hortense*
 To any man with a cunning plan
 Who'd diddle the King of France.
 A volunteer he soon was found.
 His cries & spies were well renowned.
 Farwell, the bastard King of England!

Then the royal Duke of Buttock
 Betook himself to France.
 For he was a faggot,
 So he took off his pants.
 But at the crucial moment –
 Now here's the best of all –
 As *Philip* left, the duke's right cleft
 Had seized the frenchman's balls.
 Around his dong he slipped a thong,
 Upped on his horse and dragged him along
 Back to the bastard King of England.

Well, when he reached fair England's shore,
 He fainted on the shore,
 For on the ride King *Philip's* pride
 Had stretched out six times more.
 The maids of all the countryside
 Who gathered in the town,
 They took one look at the frenchman's crook
 And denounced the royal crown.
 They set King *Philip* upon the throne.
 His sceptre was his royal bone.
 Farewell, the bastard King of England!

He was dirty & lousy & full of fleas!
 His terrible tool hung down to his knees!
 God damn the bastard King of England.

14[†]

I cannot tell who loves the skeleton
 Of a poor marmoset, naught but bone, bone.
 Give me a nakedness with her clothes on.

14[†] · “La Bella Bona Roba” · Col Richard Lovelace (1617 – 1657) · *Metaphysical Poetry*. ¶ The term *bona roba*, literally “good stuff”, is an Italian idiom for an attractive woman, with the insinuation that her favours may be acquired via a cash arrangement.

Such whose white satin upper coat of skin,
Cut upon velvet rich incarnadine,
Has yet a body (and of flesh) within.

Hard hap unto that huntsman that decrees
Fat joys for all his sweat, whenas he sees,
After his 'ssay, naught but his keeper's fees.

Then, love, I beg, when next thou tak'st thy bow,
Thy angry shafts, and dost hart-chasing go,
Pass rascal deer; strike me the largest doe.

14* Love is like the measles; we can't have it bad but once, and the later in life we have it the tougher it goes with us.

15

15†

Tune: Turkey in the Straw

Old *Zip Coon*, he's a learned scholar.
 Old *Zip Coon*, he's a learned scholar.
 Old *Zip Coon*, he's a learned scholar,
 Sings possum up the gum tree, coonie in the holler.

Possum up the gum tree! Coonie on the stump!
Possum up the gum tree! Coonie on the stump!
Possum up the gum tree! Coonie on the stump!
Then over double trouble Zip Coon will jump!

It's old *Sukie Blueskin*, she is in love with me.
 I went the other afternoon to take a cup of tea.
 Now what do you old *Sukie* had for supper?
 Why chicken foot & possum foot without any butter.

I went down SANDY HOLLOW the other afternoon,
 And the first man I chanced to meet was old *Zip Coon*.
 Old *Zip Coon*, he's a natty scholar,
 For he plays upon the banjo "Coonie in the holler".

Well you heard about the battle of old NEW 'LEANS,
 Where old General *Jackson* gave the british beans.
 The yankees did the redcoats up so slick,
 For they catched old *Pakenham* and rowed him up the creek.

Possum up the gum tree! Coonie on the stump!
Possum up the gum tree! Coonie on the stump!
Possum up the gum tree! Coonie on the stump!
Then over double trouble Zip Coon will jump!

15†

There's much afoot in heaven & earth this year;
 The winds hunt up the sun, hunt up the moon,
 Trouble the dubious dawn, hasten the drear
 Height of a threatening noon.

15† · Anonymous · *Southern Soldier*.

15† · "The Raining Summer" · Mrs Alice Meynell (1847 – 1922) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

No breath of boughs, no breath of leaves, of fronds,
 May linger or grow warm; the trees are loud;
The forest, rooted, tosses in her bonds,
 And strains against the cloud.

No scents may pause within the garden-fold;
 The rifled flowers are cold as ocean-shells;
Bees, humming in the storm, carry their cold
 Wild honey to cold cells.

15*

Here lies the preacher, judge & poet, *Peter*,
Who broke the laws of God & man & metre.

15* · Francis Jeffrey Lord Jeffrey (1773 – 1850) · *The Poet's Tongue*. ¶ This couplet sometimes appears under the title “Epitaph: On Peter Robinson”, but which specific Peter Robinson it lampoons, if any, is unclear.

16

16‡

Tune: The Boatmen's Dance

The boatmen dance; the boatmen sing;
 The boatmen up to ev'rything.
 And when the boatman gets on shore
 He spends his cash and works for more.

*High row! The boatmen row!
 Floatin' down the river the OHIO!
 Then dance! The boatmen dance!
 O dance! The boatmen dance!
 O dance all night till broad daylight!
 Go home with the gals in the mornin'!*

I went on board the other day
 To see what the boatmen had to say.
 There I let my passion loose
 An' they cram me in the calaboose.

The boatman is a thrifty man.
 There's none can do as the boatman can.
 I never see a pretty gal in my life
 But that she was a boatman's wife.

*High row! The boatmen row!
 Floatin' down the river the OHIO!
 Then dance! The boatmen dance!
 O dance! The boatmen dance!
 O dance all night till broad daylight!
 Go home with the gals in the mornin'!*

16†

The time I've lost in wooing,
 In watching and pursuing
 The light that dies
 In woman's eyes,
 Has been my heart's undoing.
 Though wisdom oft has sought me,
 I scorned the lore she brought me;

16‡ · Anonymous · *Old American Songs, Set 1.*

16† · "The Time I've Lost in Wooing" · Thomas Moore (1779 – 1852) · *The Penguin Book of Light Verse.*
 £3: Where the Almanacker, following Ewart, gives 'dies', other sources give 'lies'.

My only books
 Were woman's looks,
 And folly's all they've taught 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.

16* The air of England has long been too pure for a slave, and free is any man who breathes it.

16* · William Murray, 1st Earl of Mansfield (1705 – 1793) · *The Lives of the Chief Justices of England, Vol II.*

¶ Scholars have debated whether or not Lord Mansfield actually uttered these words; but, whatever the truth of the matter, it's a handsome summary of the legal principle which he confirmed in *Somerset's* famous case.

17

17†

Tune: The House of the Rising Sun

There is a house in NEW ORLEANS
 They call THE RISING SUN,
 And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy,
 And, God, I know I'm one.

My mother was a tailor.
 She sewed my new blue jeans.
 My father was a gambling man
 Down in NEW ORLEANS.

Now the only thing a gambler needs
 Is a suitcase & a trunk,
 And the only time that he is satisfied
 Is when he's on a drunk.

O mother, tell your children
 Not to do what I have done,
 Spend your lives in sin & misery
 In THE HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN.

I got one foot on the platform,
 The other foot on the train.
 I'm going back to NEW ORLEANS
 To wear that ball & chain.

There is a house in NEW ORLEANS
 They call THE RISING SUN,
 And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy,
 And, God, I know I'm one.

17†

Gently dip, but not too deep,
 For fear you make the golden beard to weep.
 Fair maiden, white & red,

17‡ · Anonymous · *The Animals*. ¶ Although strongly associated with the Animals' rendition thereof, this song was probably composed in the late nineteenth century, and has roots going back to the seventeenth. The house in question was likely a bordello of some description, though no brothel of that name has been shown to have existed in nineteenth century New Orleans.

17† · "Celanta at the Well of Life" · George Peele (1556 – 1596) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are from Peele's play *The Old Wives' Tale*.

Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
And thou shalt have some cockell bread.

Gently dip, but not too deep,
For fear thou make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maid, white & red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
And every hair a sheaf shall be,
And every sheaf a golden tree.

17*

Here lie two poor lovers, who had the mishap,
Though very chaste people, to die of a clap.

17* · ℝ “Epitaph on the Stanton Harcourt Lovers” · Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) · *The Penguin Book of Unrespectable Verse*. ¶ This couplet was inspired by a pair of lovers killed by lightning. Their monument in Stanton Harcourt churchyard gives the salient details of the tragedy: ‘Near this place lie the bodies of John Hewiy and Sarah Drew, an industrious young man and virtuous young maiden of this parish; who, being at harvest work (with several others), were in one instant killed by lightning, the last day of July, 1718.’ Pope, who was staying with the 1st Viscount Harcourt (first creation), the local landowner, when the tragedy struck, composed the ten-line epitaph chiselled into the aforementioned monument, together with the text given above. Those ten lines are generally held to be unworthy of the poet, and so, in a letter to Teresa Blount (the date of which is disputed), he made this sarcastic – albeit very funny – second attempt. ℓ2: To explain (and thus to ruin) the pun: of the several definitions which Dr Johnson offers for the word ‘clap’, one is ‘An explosion of thunder’, and another ‘A venereal infection’.

18

18‡

Tune: Jine the Cavalry

We're the boys that rode around *McClellian*,
 Rode around *McClellian*, rode around *McClellian*!
 We're the boys that rode around *McClellian*!
Bully boys, hey! Bully boys, ho!

If you want to have a good time –
Join the cavalry!
Join the cavalry! Join the cavalry!
If you want to catch the devil, if you want to have fun,
If you want to smell hell –
Join the cavalry!

O! *Joe Hooker*, won't you come out of the wilderness,
 Come out of the wilderness, come out of the wilderness?
 O! *Joe Hooker*, won't you come out of the wilderness?

We're the boys who crossed the POTOMACICA,
 Crossed the POTOMACICA, crossed the POTOMACICA!
 We're the boys who crossed the POTOMACICA!

We're the boys that rode to Pennsylvania,
 Rode to Pennsylvania, rode to Pennsylvania!
 We're the boys that rode to Pennsylvania!

The big fat dutch gals pass around the breadium,
 Pass around the breadium, hand around the breadium!
 The big fat dutch gals pass around the breadium!
Bully boys, hey! Bully boys, ho!

If you want to have a good time –
Join the cavalry!
Join the cavalry! Join the cavalry!
If you want to catch the devil, if you want to have fun,

18‡ · Anonymous · *Lightning in a Jar*. ¶ This song describes the exploits of Maj Gen James “Jeb” Stuart’s Cavalry Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. £1: ‘McClellian’ = Maj Gen George McClellan. £11: ‘Joe Hooker’ = Maj Gen Joseph Hooker, the Union commander whose decision to take a defensive position in the so called “Wilderness of Spotsylvania” led to the great Confederate victory at Chancellorsville. £14: ‘Potomacica’ = Potomac. £20: The term ‘dutch’ here means Pennsylvania Dutch, and not Netherlandish. The term ‘breadium’ seems just to mean bread.

*If you want to smell hell –
Join the cavalry!*

18†

The turn of noontide has begun.
 In the weak breeze the sunshine yields.
 There is a bell upon the fields.
 On the long hedgerow's tangled run
 A low white cottage intervenes:
 Against the wall a blind man leans,
 And sways his face to have the sun.

Our horses' hoofs stir in the road,
 Quiet & sharp. Light hath a song
 Whose silence, being heard, seems long.
 The point of noon maketh abode,
 And will not be at once gone through.
 The sky's deep colour saddens you,
 And the heat weighs a dreamy load.

18* Queens, with their ladies, work unseemly things.

18† · "A Half-Way Pause" · Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

18* · Richard Savage (1697 – 1743) · *The Penguin Book of Unrespectable Verse*. ¶ This is a line from "The Others of the Town"; the following line illuminates it: 'And boys grow dukes, when catamites to kings.'

19

19‡

Tune: Long Summer Day

Well, a long summer day make a white man lazy.

Long summer day!

Long summer day make a white man lazy.

*Long summer day!**Long summer! Long summer!**Long summer day!**Long summer! Long summer!**Long summer day!*

Well, a long summer day make a nigger run away, sir.

Long summer day make a slave run away, sir.

Well, a-pickin' that cotton in the bottom field.

It's a gath'rin' up the cotton in the bottom field.

Well, the mas'er and the mis'ess is a-sittin' in the parlour,

Just a-fixin' and a-studyin' how to work a slave harder.

Run away to see his *Mary*.

He run away to see his baby.

The mas'er killed his jersey bull to give the bull his bellyful.

Long summer day!

The mas'er killed his jersey bull to give the bull his bellyful.

*Long summer day!**Long summer! Long summer!**Long summer day!**Long summer! Long summer!**Long summer day!*

19†

Water, for anguish of the solstice: nay,

But dip the vessel slowly – nay, but lean

And hark how at its verge the wave sighs in

19‡ · Anonymous · *Puttin' on the Style*. ℓ9: Comparing with Lomax's *Our Singing Country*, it seems that Donegan bowdlerised the word 'nigger' out of his version.

19† · "For a Venetian Pastoral by Giorgione" · Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ The painting in question is the famous *Pastoral Concert*, which in the Almanacker's time is attributed more often than not to Titian, but in the poet's time was attributed to Giorgione.

Reluctant. Hush. Beyond all depth away
The heat lies silent at the brink of day:
Now the hand trails upon the viol string
That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep
And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
Is cool against her naked side? Let be:
Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was;
Life touching lips with immortality.

19* This is the sort of English up with which I will not put.

20

20‡

Tune: Home Sweet Home

'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
 Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
 A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
 Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.

*Home! Home!**Sweet, sweet home!**There's no place like home!**There's no place like home!*

An exile from home, splendour dazzles in vain;
 O give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
 The birds singing gaily, that come at my call –
 Give me them – and the peace of mind, dearer than all!

I gaze on the moon as I tread the drear wild,
 And feel that my mother now thinks of her child,
 As she looks on that moon from our own cottage door
 Through the woodbine, whose fragrance shall cheer me no more.

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
 And the caress of a mother to soothe and beguile!
 Let others delight 'mid new pleasures to roam,
 But give me, O give me, the pleasures of home.

To thee I'll return, overburdened with care;
 The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there;
 No more from that cottage again will I roam;
 Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.

*Home! Home!**Sweet, sweet home!**There's no place like home!**There's no place like home!*

20‡ · "Home! Sweet Home!" · John Payne (1791 – 1852) · *Far Cry: New Dawn*. ¶ Payne wrote the words to this song for his 1823 opera *Clari, or the Maid of Milan*.

20†

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass –
 The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:
 Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams & glooms
 'Neath billowing skies that scatter & amass.
 All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
 Are golden kingcup fields with silver edge
 Where the cow parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge.
 'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
 Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky:
 So this winged hour is dropped to us from above.
 O clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
 This close-companioned inarticulate hour
 When twofold silence was the song of love.

20* Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.

20† · “The Silent Noon” · Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ This is *The House of Life* §19.

20* · Dr William Butler (1535 – 1618) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

21

21†

Tune: The Unclouded Day

O they tell me of a home far beyond the sky.
 O they tell me of a home far away.
 They tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise.
 O they tell me of an uncloudy day.

O the land of cloudless day!
O the land of an uncloudy sky!
O they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise!
O they tell me of an uncloudy day!

O they tell me of a home where my friends have gone.
 O they tell me of that land far away,
 Where the tree of life in eternal bloom
 Sheds its fragrance through the uncloudy day.

O they tell me that he smiles on his children there,
 And his smile drives their sorrows away.
 And they tell me that no tears will ever come again
 In that lovely land of uncloudy day.

O the land of cloudless day!
O the land of an uncloudy sky!
O they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise!
O they tell me of an uncloudy day!

21†

No fame I seek, my *Delia*: if with thee
 I may but live, in glory I'd be poor:
 Thee may I gaze on, till I cease to see;
 Thee clasp till, dying, I can hold no more.

21† · Josiah Alwood (1828 – 1909) · *My All and All*. ¶ Alwood wrote of the circumstances leading to his composition of this song: 'It was a balmy night in August 1879, when returning from a debate in Spring Hill, Ohio, to my home in Morenci, Michigan, about 1:00 a.m. I saw a beautiful rainbow north by northwest against a dense black nimbus cloud. The sky was all perfectly clear except this dark cloud which covered about forty degrees of the horizon and extended about halfway to the zenith. The phenomenon was entirely new to me and my nerves refreshed by the balmy air and the lovely sight. Old Morpheus was playing his sweetest lullaby. Another mile of travel, a few moments of time, a fellow of my size was ensconced in sweet home and wrapped in sweet sleep. A first class know-nothing till rosy-sweet morning was wide over the fields.'

21† · The Rev Dr Samuel Henley (1740 – 1815) · *Parnassian Molehill*. ¶ These verses are taken from a more extensive translation from Tibullus.

Now let us while we may our loves unite;
Death veiled in gloom, will come with stealthy tread:
Surreptive age will numb each dear delight;
Nor suits gay dalliance with a hoary head.

Venus, all frolick, now may be enjoyed,
While a forced door & romp no shame bewray:
Here, a bold soldier, I the storm can guide;
Standard & trumpets, hence ye, far away.

To those who glory covet, bear your wounds;
And bear your wealth; I envy not the prize;
Secure, my wants I stint to narrow bounds,
Despise the rich, and penury despise.

21* A poet can survive everything but a misprint.

22

22†

Tune: Jerusalem

And did those feet in ancient time,
 Walk upon England's mountains green?
 And was the holy Lamb of God
 On England's pleasant pastures seen?
 And did the countenance divine
 Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
 And was JERUSALEM builded here,
 Among these dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold:
 Bring me my arrows of desire:
 Bring me my spear: O clouds, unfold:
 Bring me my chariot of fire!
 I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand:
 Till we have built JERUSALEM,
 In England's green & pleasant Land.

22†

You virgins, that did late despair
 To keep your wealth from cruel men,
 Tie up in silk your careless hair:
 Soft peace is come again.

Now lovers' eyes may gently shoot
 A flame that will not kill;
 The drum was angry, but the lute
 Shall whisper what you will.

Sing, Iö, Iö! for his sake
 That hath restored your drooping heads;

22† · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *Milton: A Poem in Two Books*. ¶ Blake's original poem – actually a snippet from a larger work – is a sarcastic retelling of the (eccentric) theory that Jesus and Mary visited England with Joseph of Arimathea. The stirring, patriotic tune to which Parry set it is thus profoundly incongruous with Blake's intentions – though no less rousing for any English heart. ¶8: Oceans of ink and forests of paper have been expended trying to identify what exactly Blake meant by 'these dark satanic mills'. But it seems impossible that Blake could have been referring to anything other than the factories of the nascent industrial revolution, the coming of which he so dreaded.

22† · "Piping Peace" · James Shirley (1596 – 1666) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ This song is sung in Act I of Shirley's *The Imposture*.

With choice of sweetest flowers make
A garden where he treads;

Whilst we whole groves of laurel bring,
A petty triumph for his brow,
Who is the master of our spring
And all the bloom we owe.

22* A thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

23

23‡

Tune: Monk's Gate

Who would true valor see,
 Let him come hither;
 One here will constant be,
 Come wind, come weather.
 There's no discouragement
 Shall make him once relent
 His first avowed intent
 To be a pilgrim.

Whoso beset him round
 With dismal stories,
 Do but themselves confound;
 His strength the more is.
 No lion can him fright,
 He'll with a giant fight,
 But he will have a right
 To be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
 Can daunt his spirit;
 He knows he at the end
 Shall life inherit.
 Then fancies fly away,
 He'll not fear what men say;
 He'll labour night & day
 To be a pilgrim.

23†

Just as my fingers on these keys
 Make music, so the selfsame sounds
 On my spirit make a music, too.

23‡ · John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) · *Pilgrim's Progress*. ¶ These words can be found towards the end of the second part of Bunyan's magnum opus. A Mr Valiant-for-Truth sings this song to the party after they've left the Delectable Mountains.

23† · Wallace Stevens (1879 – 1955) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is part I of "Peter Quince at the Clavier". ℓ15: '[P]izzicati' means 'pinches' in Italian. To play a stringed instrument (typically a violin) pizzicato means to play it by plucking its strings, rather than by drawing a bow across them.

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
 And thus it is that what I feel,
 Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
 Is music. It is like the strain
 Waked in the elders by *Susanna*:

Of a green evening, clear & warm,
 She bathed in her still garden, while
 The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their beings throb
 In witching chords, and their thin blood
 Pulse **pizzicati** of hosanna.

23* He has fought the good fight and has had to face every difficulty except popularity.

23* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Wilde was describing Dr William Henley.

24

24[†]*Tune: To Canaan's Land*

To Canaan's land I'm on my way.
Where the soul of man never dies.
 My darkest night will turn to day.
Where the soul of man never dies.

*Dear friends, there'll be no sad farewells;
 There'll be no tear-dimmed eyes,
 Where all is peace & joy & love,
 And the soul of man never dies.*

A rose is blooming there for me.
 It blooms for all eternity.

A love light beams across the foam.
 It shines to light the shores of home.

My life will end in deathless sleep,
 And everlasting joys I'll reap.

I'm on my way to that fair land,
Where the soul of man never dies.
 Where there will be no parting hand.
Where the soul of man never dies.

*Dear friends, there'll be no sad farewells;
 There'll be no tear-dimmed eyes,
 Where all is peace & joy & love,
 And the soul of man never dies.*

24[†]

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done
 These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough
 Long worn out, and the roller made of stone:
 Only the elm butt tops the nettles now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most:
 As well as any bloom upon a flower
 I like the dust on the nettles, never lost
 Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

24[†] · William Golden (1878 – 1934) · *Little Lights*.

24[†] · "Tall Nettles" · Edward Thomas (1878 – 1917) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

24* He is really not so ugly after all, provided, of course, that one shuts one's eyes.

25

25†

Tune: Down Ampney

Come down, O love divine.
 Seek thou this soul of mine,
 And visit it with thine own ardour glowing.
 O comforter, draw near;
 Within my heart appear,
 And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn
 Till earthly passions turn
 To dust & ashes in its heat consuming;
 And let thy glorious light
 Shine ever on my sight,
 And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
 Mine outward vesture be,
 And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
 True lowliness of heart,
 Which takes the humbler part,
 And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
 With which the soul will long,
 Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
 For none can guess its grace
 Till he become the place
 Wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

25†

He has not wooed, but he has lost his heart.
 That country dance is a sore test for him;
 He thinks her cold; his hopes are faint & dim;
 But though with seeming mirth she takes her part
 In all the dances & the laughter there,
 And though to many a youth, on brief demand,
 She gives a kind assent & courteous hand,
 She loves but him, for him is all her care.

25† · The Rev Dr Richard Littledale (1833 – 1890) · *New English Hymnal*. ¶ This hymn is a surprisingly faithful translation of a poem by the Italian mystic Bianco da Siena.

25† · “A Country Dance” · The Rev Charles Turner (1808 – 1879) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

With jealous heed her lessening voice he hears
Down that long vista, where she seems to move
Among fond faces & relays of love,
And sweet occasion, full of tender fears:
Down those long lines he watches from above,
Till with the reflux dance she reappears.s

25* If the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them?

25* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This a line from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

26

26†

Tune: New Britain

Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
 That saved a wretch like me!
 I once was lost, but now am found,
 Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 And grace my fears relieved;
 How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils & snares,
 I have already come;
 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
 And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me;
 His word my hope secures;
 He will my shield & portion be
 As long as life endures.

26†

Happy the first of men, ere yet confined
 To smokey cities; who in sheltering groves,
 Warm caves, and deep-sunk valleys lived & loved,
 By cares unwounded; what the sun and showers,
 And genial earth untillaged could produce,

26† · “Faith’s Review and Expectation” · The Rev Dr John Newton (1725 – 1807) · *Olney Hymns*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised the last two verses from the original. A great mass of hagiography surrounds this beautiful hymn, most of it worthless. The Rev Dr Newton’s own note indicates that it was inspired chiefly by II Chronicles 17.16-17, which concerns God’s promises to King David and his descendants. A closing verse is often added to this hymn, which reads: ‘When we’ve been there ten thousand years,/Bright shining as the sun,/We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise/Than when we first begun.’ This verse was not written by Newton, nor is it included in the original *Olney Hymns*. Its first appearance in print was probably in *A Collection of Sacred Ballads* (1790), as one of the verses to “Jerusalem, My Happy Home”. It passed from there into the Black American oral tradition, and its inclusion in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, now transplanted into “Amazing Grace”, cemented it in the popular imagination. £25: This last verse was not written by The Rev Dr Newton, nor is it included in the original *Olney Hymns*. Its first appearance in print was probably in *A Collection of Sacred Ballads* (1790), as one of the verses to “Jerusalem, My Happy Home”. It passed from there into the black American oral tradition, and its inclusion in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, now transplanted into “Amazing Grace”, cemented it in the popular imagination.

26† · ℝ The Rev Joseph Warton (1722 – 1800) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These are lines 87-98 of Warton’s longer poem “The Enthusiast”.

They gathered grateful, or the acorn brown,
Or blushing berry; by the liquid lapse
Of murmuring waters called to slake their thirst,
Or with fair nymphs their sun-brown limbs to bathe;
With nymphs who fondly clasped their favourite youths,
Unawed by shame, beneath the beechen shade,
Nor wiles, nor artificial coyness knew.

26* It is so beautiful that I am sure it has a long Latin name.

26* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. ¶ ‘It’, in the context of the story, is a red rose.

27

27†

Tune: Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

What a fellowship, what a joy divine –

Leaning on the everlasting arms.

What a blessedness, what a peace is mine –

Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning, safe & secure from all alarms;

Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way.

O how bright the path grows from day to day.

What have I to dread? What have I to fear?

Leaning on the everlasting arms.

I have blessed peace with my Lord so near –

Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning, safe & secure from all alarms;

Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

27†

Like a drop of water is my heart

Laid upon her soft & rosy palm,

Turned whichever way her hand doth turn,

Trembling in an ecstasy of calm.

Like mine own dear harp is this my heart,

Dumb without the hand that sweeps its strings;

Though the hand be careless or be cruel,

When it comes my heart breaks forth and sings.

27* Prayer must never be answered: if it is, it ceases to be prayer and becomes correspondence.

27† · Anthony Showalter (1858 – 1924) · *True Grit: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*. ¶ The ‘everlasting arms’ in question are those referred to in Deuteronomy 33.27. This song features prominently in the 2010 version of the film *True Grit*.

27† · “Youth and Maidenhood” · Miss Sarah Williams (1837 – 1868) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ¶ This poem is part of a sequence, “Sospiri Volate”, which is actually a dialogue between two lovers, Gregory and Margaret. Given that this sequence appears in the poet’s second collection of poems, published only after she died from a protracted ordeal with cancer, it seems likely that she wrote these lines knowing she would never experience a physical relationship. The original poem has four verses; the Almanacker has excised the middle two.

27* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Epigrams of Oscar Wilde*.

28

28†

Tune: Cwm Rhondda

Guide me, O thou great redeemer,
 Pilgrim through this barren land;
 I am weak, but thou art mighty;
 Hold me with thy powerful hand:
 Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
 Feed me now & evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain
 Whence the healing stream doth flow;
 Let the fiery cloudy pillar
 Lead me all my journey through:
 Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
 Be thou still my strength & shield.

When I tread the verge of JORDAN
 Bid my anxious fears subside;
 Death of death, and hell's destruction,
 Land me safe on Canaan's side:
 Songs & praises, songs & praises,
 I will ever give to thee.

28†

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky:
 So was it when my life began;
 So is it now I am a man;
 So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die.
 The child is father of the man;
 And I could wish my days to be
 Bound each to each by natural piety.

28* There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.

28† · The Rev William Williams (1717 – 1791) · *New English Hymnal*.

28† · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

28* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

29

29‡

Tune: Swing Low

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home!
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home!*

I looked over JORDAN, and what did I see?
Coming for to carry me home!
A band of angels coming after me.
Coming for to carry me home!

If you get there before I do,
Coming for to carry me home!
Tell all my friends I coming too.
Coming for to carry me home!

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home!
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home!*

29†

Hey diddle diddle,
The cat & the fiddle.
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed
To see such sport
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

29* Let nature be your teacher.

29‡ · Wallace Willis (1820 – 1880) · *Cabin Fever*. ¶ Willis's version has two further verses.

29† · Anonymous · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

29* · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is a line from Dr Wordsworth's "The Tables Turned".

30

30†

Tune: Lafferty

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
 And his righteousness
 And all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Allelui! Allelu alleluia!

Man shall not live by bread alone,
 But by every word
 That proceeds from the mouth of God.

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
 Seek, and ye shall find;
 Knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
Allelu alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Allelui! Allelu alleluia!

30†

There was a young man of ST JOHN'S
 Who wanted to bugger the swans,
 So he went to the porter
 Who said, 'Have my daughter!
 The swans are reserved from the dons.'

30* All animals, except man, know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it.

30† · *Anglican Hymns Old and New*. ¶ Although this song was written in the 1970s, the words are – it hardly needs pointing out – very much older, being drawn more or less as-is from the King James Version. ℓ1: This first verse is drawn verbatim from the KJV Matthew 6.33. ℓ7: This second verse is drawn from the KJV 4.4. ℓ9: The only difference from the KJV in this verse is in this line, with the awkward 'that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' being massaged into the form given here. ℓ10: This third verse is drawn from the KJV Matthew 7.7. The only difference is that an 'unto' has been inserted after 'Ask, and it shall be given'.

30† · Anonymous · *The Penguin Book of Light Verse*. ¶ The reader can only wonder whether the poet intended to lampoon St John's, Oxford or St John's, Cambridge.

30* · Samuel Butler (1835 – 1902) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

MONTH VII

Harvest

I

‡

As withereth the primose by the river,
As fadeth summer's sun from gliding fountains,
As vanisheth the light-blown bubble ever,
As melteth snow upon the mossy mountains:
So melts, so vanisheth, so fades, so withers,
The rose, the shine, the bubble, and the snow,
Of praise, pomp, glory, joy, which short life gathers,
Fair praise, vain pomp, sweet glory, brittle joy.
The withered primrose by the mourning river,
The faded summer's sun from weeping fountains,
The light-blown bubble vanishèd for ever,
The molten snow upon the naked mountains,
Are emblems that the treasures we up-lay
Soon wither, vanish, fade, and melt away.

For as the snow, whose lawn did overspread
Th' ambitious hills, which giant-like did threat
To pierce the heavens with their aspiring head,
Naked & bare doth leave their craggy seat;
Whenas the bubble, which did empty fly,
The dalliance of the undiscernèd wind,
On whose calm rolling waves it did rely,
Hath shipwrack made, where it did dalliance find;
And when the sunshine which dissolved the snow,

‡ · “A Palinode” · Edmund Bolton (1575 – 1633) · *The Book of Elizabethan Verse*. ¶ The title is delightfully obscure. Dr Johnson defines a *palinode* in two words: ‘A recantation.’ The term seems to have originated with the (very) ancient Greek poet Stesichorus, who wrote a poem called the *Παλινῳδία*, wherein he retracted the charge – which he had made in an earlier poem – that Helen was responsible for the horrors of the Trojan War.

Coloured the bubble with a pleasant vary,
 And made the rathe and timely primrose grow,
 Swarth clouds withdrawn, which longer time do tarry:
 O what is praise, pomp, glory, joy, but so
 As shine by fountains, bubbles, flowers, or snow?

1†

Thou fair-haired angel of the evening,
 Now, whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light
 Thy bright torch of love; thy radiant crown
 Put on, and smile upon our evening bed.
 Smile on our loves, and while thou drawest the
 Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew
 On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes
 In timely sleep. Let thy west wing sleep on
 The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,
 And wash the dusk with silver. Soon, full soon,
 Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,
 And the lion glares through the dun forest.
 The fleeces of our flocks are covered with
 Thy sacred dew; protect with them with thine influence.

1* Age appears to be best in four things: old wood best to burn, old wine to drink,
 old friends to trust, and old authors to read.

1† · “To the Evening Star” · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *Cassel’s Anthology of English Poetry*.

1* · Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (1561 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Lord St Alban is here quoting an anecdote about Alfonso X & IV, King of León and Castile.

2

2‡

But do not let us quarrel any more,
 No, my *Lucrezia*; bear with me for once:
 Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
 You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
 I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
 Treat his own subject after his own way,
 Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
 And shut the money into this small hand
 When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
 O I'll content him, but tomorrow, love!
 I often am much wearier than you think,
 This evening more than usual, and it seems
 As if – forgive now – should you let me sit
 Here by the window with your hand in mine
 And look a half hour forth on FIESOLE,
 Both of one mind, as married people use,
 Quietly, quietly the evening through,
 I might get up to-morrow to my work
 Cheerful & fresh as ever. Let us try.
 Tomorrow, how you shall be glad for this!
 Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
 And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
 Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
 For each of the five pictures we require:
 It saves a model. So! keep looking so –
 My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
 How could you ever prick those perfect ears
 Even to put the pearl there?! O so sweet –
 My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
 Which everybody looks on and calls his,
 And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
 While she looks – no one's: very dear, no less.
 You smile? Why, there's my picture ready made,
 There's what we painters call our harmony!
 A common greyness silvers everything,
 All in a twilight, you & I alike

‡ · “Andrea del Sarto” · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Subtitle: ‘Called “The Faultless Painter”’. Andrea del Sarto was an artist of the Italian Renaissance. He was thought to be one of the best painters in the world in his own time, but his reputation has fared less well than those of his contemporaries Michelangelo, da Vinci and Raphael. ℓ12: Fiesole is a small town overlooking Florence.

You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know), but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant FIESOLE.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be & do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example – turn your head –
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
– It is the thing, love! so such things should be –
Behold Madonna! I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep –
Do easily, too – when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of, all their lives,
Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive – you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat –
Yet do much less, so much less, someone says,
(I know his name, no matter) – so much less!
Well, less is more, *Lucrezia*: I am judged.

There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed & stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word –
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-grey,
Placid & perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh,
'Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!' No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The urbinat who died five years ago.
(*'Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.*)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings & popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art – for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put – and there again –
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right – that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch –
(Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to *Rafael*, I & you!
Nay, love, you did give all I asked, I think –

More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you – O with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare –
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged,
'God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with *Agnolo!*
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had *Rafael*, or has *Agnolo*?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat – somewhat, too, the power –
And thus we half men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the PARIS lords.
The best is when they pass & look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That *Francis*, that first time,
And that long festal year at FONTAINEBLEAU!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, *Rafael's* daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look –
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank french eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts –
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,

This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless... but I know –
'Tis done & past: 'twas right, my instinct said:
Too live the life grew, golden and not grey,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was – to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful *Lucrezia* that are mine!
'*Rafael* did this, *Andrea* painted that;
The roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife' –
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, *Lucrezia*, as God lives,
Said one day *Agnolo*, his very self,
To *Rafael*... I have known it all these years...
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for ROME to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it.)
'Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up & down our FLORENCE, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan & execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes & kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!
To *Rafael*! And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare... Yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here – quick, thus, the line should go!
Aye, but the soul! he's *Rafael*! Rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but *Michel Agnolo*?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance, so lost –
Is, whether you're – not grateful – but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?

If you would sit thus by me every night
 I should work better, do you comprehend?
 I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
 See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
 The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
 Come from the window, love; come in, at last,
 Inside the melancholy little house
 We built to be so gay with. God is just.
 King *Francis* may forgive me: oft at nights
 When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
 The walls become illumined, brick from brick
 Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
 That gold of his I did cement them with!
 Let us but love each other. Must you go?
 That cousin here again? He waits outside?
 Must see you? You, and not with me? Those loans?
 More gaming debts to pay? You smiled for that?
 Well, let smiles buy me! Have you more to spend?
 While hand & eye & something of a heart
 Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
 I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
 The grey remainder of the evening out,
 Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
 How I could paint, were I but back in France,
 One picture, just one more – the Virgin's face,
 Not yours this time! I want you at my side
 To hear them – that is, *Michel Agnolo* –
 Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
 Will you? Tomorrow, satisfy your friend.
 I take the subjects for his corridor,
 Finish the portrait out of hand – there, there,
 And throw him in another thing or two
 If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
 To pay for this same cousin's freak. Beside,
 What's better and what's all I care about,
 Get you the 13 *scudi* for the ruff!
 Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
 The cousin? What does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age tonight.
 I regret little; I would change still less.
 Since there my past life lies, why alter it?

The very wrong to *Francis*! It is true
 I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
 And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
 My father & my mother died of want.
 Well, had I riches of my own? You see
 How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
 They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
 And I have laboured somewhat in my time
 And not been paid profusely. Some good son
 Paint my 200 pictures – let him try!
 No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
 You loved me quite enough. it seems to-night.
 This must suffice me here. What would one have?
 In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance –
 Four great walls in the NEW JERUSALEM,
 Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
 For *Leonard*, *Rafael*, *Agnolo* and me
 To cover – the three first without a wife,
 While I have mine! So – still they overcome
 Because there's still *Lucrezia*, as I choose.

Again the cousin's whistle! Go, my love.

2†

Clother of the lily, feeder of the sparrow,
 Father of the fatherless, dear Lord,
 Though thou set me as a mark against thine arrow,
 As a prey unto thy sword,
 As a ploughed-up field beneath thy harrow,
 As a captive in thy cord,
 Let that cord be love; and some day make my narrow
 Hallowed bed according to thy word. Amen.

2* A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy
 bringeth men's minds about to religion.

2† · "A Prayer" · Miss Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*.

2* · Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (1561 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

3

3‡

Before the roman came to RYE or out to SEVERN strode,
 The rolling english drunkard made the rolling english road.
 A reeling road, a rolling road, that rambles round the shire,
 And after him the parson ran, the sexton & the squire;
 A merry road, a mazy road, and such as we did tread
 The night we went to BIRMINGHAM by way of BEACHY HEAD.

I knew no harm of *Bonaparte* and plenty of the squire,
 And for to fight the frenchman I did not much desire;
 But I did bash their bayonets because they came arrayed
 To straighten out the crooked road an english drunkard made,
 Where you & I went down the lane with ale-mugs in our hands,
 The night we went to GLASTONBURY by way of GOODWIN SANDS.

His sins they were forgiven him; or why do flowers run
 Behind him; and the hedges all strengthening in the sun?
 The wild thing went from left to right and knew not which was which,
 But the wild rose was above him when they found him in the ditch.
 God pardon us, nor harden us; we did not see so clear
 The night we went to BANNOCKBURN by way of BRIGHTON PIER.

My friends, we will not go again or ape an ancient rage,
 Or stretch the folly of our youth to be the shame of age,
 But walk with clearer eyes and ears this path that wandereth,
 And see undrugged in evening light the decent inn of death;
 For there is good news yet to hear and fine things to be seen,
 Before we go to paradise by way of KENSAL GREEN.

3†

What is this life if, full of care,
 We have no time to stand and stare;

No time to stand beneath the boughs
 And stare as long as sheep or cows;

No time to see, when woods we pass,
 Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass;

3‡ · "The Rolling English Road" · Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ Anyone with a rudimentary grasp of British geography could tell you that the routes suggested in the last line of each verse are unlikely to be the most direct.

3† · "Leisure" · William Davies (1871 – 1940) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night;

No time to turn at beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance;

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this is if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

3* All colours will agree in the dark.

4

4†

Love lives beyond
 The tomb, the earth, which fades like dew –
 I love the fond,
 The faithful, and the true.

Love lives in sleep;
 'Tis happiness of healthy dreams;
 Eve's dews may weep,
 But love delightful seems.

'Tis seen in flowers,
 And in the even's pearly dew,
 On earth's green hours,
 And in the heaven's eternal blue.

'Tis heard in spring
 When light & sunbeams, warm & kind,
 On angels' wing
 Bring love and music to the wind.

And where is voice,
 So young, so beautiful & sweet
 As nature's choice,
 Where spring and lovers meet?

Love lives beyond
 The tomb, the earth, the flowers, & dew.
 I love the fond,
 The faithful, young & true.

4†

They are not long, the weeping & the laughter,
 Love & desire & hate:
 I think they have no portion in us after
 We pass the gate.

4† · "Song: Love Lives Beyond" · John Clare (1793 – 1864) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

4† · "Vita summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam" · Ernest Dowson (1867 – 1900) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The title is a quotation from Horace, *Odes* 1.4 – 'The shortness of life forbids us any long-term hopes' – the truth of which Dowson, with his short, occasionally brilliant, mostly miserable life, knew all too well.

They are not long, the days of wine & roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

4* We must not let in daylight upon magic.

4* · Walter Bagehot (1826 – 1877) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

5

5†

God moves in a mysterious way
 His wonders to perform;
 He plants his footsteps in the sea
 And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
 Of never-failing skill,
 He treasures up his bright designs
 And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy and shall break
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust him for his grace;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
 Unfolding every hour;
 The bud may have a bitter taste,
 But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
 And scan his work in vain;
 God is his own interpreter,
 And he will make it plain.

5†

Only a man harrowing clods
 In a slow silent walk
 With an old horse that stumbles & nods
 Half asleep as they stalk.

5† · “Light Shining out of Darkness” · William Cowper (1731 – 1800) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

5† · “In Time of ‘The Breaking of Nations’” · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem might well hold the record in the English canon for the longest gestation; for Hardy began working on it in 1870 following the Battle of Sedan, and only finished it in 1915 during the First World War. The title is an allusion to Jeremiah 51.20.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid & her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

5* The devil's most devilish when respectable.

6

6‡

You are old, Father *William*, the young man said,
And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head –
Do you think, at your age, it is right?

In my youth, Father *William* replied to his son,
I feared it might injure the brain;
But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again & again.

You are old, said the youth, as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door –
Pray, what is the reason of that?

In my youth, said the sage, as he shook his grey locks,
I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment – one shilling the box –
Allow me to sell you a couple?

You are old, said the youth, and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones & the beak –
Pray, how did you manage to do it?

In my youth, said his father, I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw,
Has lasted the rest of my life.

You are old, said the youth. One would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose –
What made you so awfully clever?

I have answered three questions, and that is enough,
Said his father; don't give yourself airs!

6‡ · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines have been parodied many times, and yet they themselves were originally intended as a parody of Robert Southey's "The Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them".

Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!

6†

Black beauty, which above that common light,
Whose power can no colours here renew
But those which darkness can again subdue,
Dost still remain unvaried to the sight;
And, like an object equal to the view,
Art neither changed with day, nor hid with night;
When all these colours which the world call bright,
And which old poetry doth so pursue,
Are with the night so perishèd & gone,
That of their being there remains no mark,
Thou still abidest so entirely one,
That we may know thy blackness is a spark
Of light inaccessible, and alone
Our darkness which can make us think it dark.

6* Eternity is in love with the productions of time.

6† · “Sonnet of Black Beauty” · Edward Herbert, 1st Baron Herbert of Cherbury (1582 – 1648) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

6* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake’s ‘Proverbs of Hell’ from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

7

7‡

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall & break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear & disappear,
Stem end & blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were 10,000 thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble

7‡ · “After Apple Picking” · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
 Were he not gone,
 The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
 Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
 Or just some human sleep.

7†

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee;
 The shooting stars attend thee;
 And the elves also,
 Whose little eyes glow
 Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No will-o'-the-wisp mis-light thee,
 Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
 But on, on thy way,
 Not making a stay,
 Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber;
 What though the moon does slumber?
 The stars of the night
 Will lend thee their light,
 Like tapers clear without number.

Then *Julia* let me woo thee,
 Thus, thus to come unto me;
 And when I shall meet
 Thy silv'ry feet,
 My soul I'll pour into thee.

7* If others had not been foolish, we should be so.

7† · “The Night Piece, to Julia” · Robert Herrick (1591 – 1674) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ A ‘will-o'-the-wisp’ is a phenomenon, which appears as a pale patch of light, sometimes seen by travellers walking through the countryside at night. A ‘slow-worm’, meanwhile, is an archaic name for an adder, i.e. *Vipera berus*.

7* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake’s ‘Proverbs of Hell’ from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

8

8‡

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 & 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.
 O 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 & ages hence:
 Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
 I took the one less traveled by,
 And that has made all the difference.

8‡

Glory be to God for dappled things –
 For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
 For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
 Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
 Landscape plotted & pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
 And áll trádés, their gear & tackle & trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
 Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
 With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
 He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
 Praise him.

8‡ · “The Road Not Taken” · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Frost wrote this poem as a kind of parody, based on an in-joke between himself and his friend Edward Thomas (or, at least, Frost used to claim as much, but poets often have mixed feelings towards their most famous works).

8‡ · “Pied Beauty” · Fr Gerard Hopkins (1844 – 1889) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

8* A man may be in as just possession of truth as of a city, and yet be forced to surrender.

9

9‡

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

Now fades the glimm'ring 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 tow'r
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring 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 twitt'ring 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 & simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th'inevitable hour.

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle & 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 flatt'ry 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 page
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 flow'r 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.

Th'applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain & ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry 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 & 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 ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes & shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th'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, ling'ring 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 th'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,
 Mutt'ring 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 & near his fav'rite 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 thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.
 Approach & read (for thou canst read) the lay,
 Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

The Epitaph

*Here rests his head upon the lap of earth,
 A youth to fortune & 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,
 Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
 He gave to mis'ry all he had, a tear,
 He gained from heav'n ('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 & his God.*

9†

I have desired to go
 Where springs not fail,
 To fields where flies no sharp & sided hail
 And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
 Where no storms come,
 Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
 And out of the swing of the sea.

9* We all labour against our own cure, for death is the cure of all diseases.

9† · "Heaven-Haven" · Fr Gerard Hopkins (1844 – 1889) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ Fr Hopkins's own subtitle reads: 'A nun takes the veil'.

9* · Sir Thomas Browne (1605 – 1682) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

IO

IO†

I wish I had the voice of *Homer*
 To sing of rectal carcinoma,
 Which kills a lot more chaps, in fact,
 Than were bumped off when TROY was sacked.

I noticed I was passing blood
 (Only a few drops, not a flood).
 So pausing on my homeward way
 From TALLAHASSEE to BOMBAY
 I asked a doctor, now my friend,
 To peer into my hinder end,
 To prove or to disprove the rumour
 That I had a malignant tumour.
 They pumped in BaSO₄
 Till I could really stand no more,
 And, when sufficient had been pressed in,
 They photographed my large intestine.
 In order to decide the issue
 They next scraped out some bits of tissue.
 (Before they did so, some good pal
 Had knocked me out with pentothal,
 Whose action is extremely quick,
 And does not leave me feeling sick.)
 The microscope returned the answer
 That I had certainly got cancer,
 So I was wheeled into the theatre
 Where holes were made to make me better.
 One set is in my perineum
 Where I can feel, but can't yet see 'em.
 Another made me like a kipper
 Or female prey of *Jack the Ripper*.
 Through this incision, I don't doubt,
 The neoplasm was taken out,
 Along with colon, & lymph nodes
 Where cancer cells might find abodes.
 A third much smaller hole is meant
 To function as a ventral vent:

IO† · "Cancer's a Funny Thing" · Prof John Haldane (1892 – 1964) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. £37: The poem here includes a footnote, also in verse, discussing the deities of India which also have more than one face.

So now I am like two-faced *Janus*
 The only god who sees his anus.
 I'll swear, without the risk of perjury,
 It was a snappy bit of surgery.
 My rectum is a serious loss to me,
 But I've a very neat colostomy,
 And hope, as soon as I am able,
 To make it keep a fixed time-table.

So do not wait for aches & pains
 To have a surgeon mend your drains;
 If he says cancer, you're a dunce
 Unless you have it out at once,
 For if you wait it's sure to swell,
 And may have progeny as well.
 My final word, before I'm done,
 Is: cancer can be rather fun.
 Thanks to the nurses & *Nye Bevan*
 The NHS is quite like heaven
 Provided one confronts the tumour
 With a sufficient sense of humour.
 I know that cancer often kills,
 But so do cars & sleeping pills;
 And it can hurt one till one sweats,
 So can bad teeth & unpaid debts.
 A spot of laughter, I am sure,
 Often accelerates one's cure;
 So let us patients do our bit
 To help the surgeons make us fit.

10†

An old man in a lodge within a park;
 The chamber walls depicted all around
 With portraitures of huntsman, hawk, & hound,
 And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
 Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
 Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
 He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
 Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
 He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
 Made beautiful with song; and as I read

10† · "Chaucer" · Prof Henry Longfellow (1807 – 1882) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*.

I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark & linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

10* Who knows but the world may end tonight?

10* · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ These words are taken from Browning's "Last Ride Together".

II

II†

She stood breast-high amid the corn,
 Clasped by the golden light of morn,
 Like the sweetheart of the sun,
 Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
 Deeply ripened; such a blush
 In the midst of brown was born,
 Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell;
 Which were blackest none could tell,
 But long lashes veiled a light,
 That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
 Made her tressy forehead dim;
 Thus she stood amid the stooks,
 Praising God with sweetest looks:

Sure, I said, heaven did not mean,
 Where I reap thou shouldst but glean;
 Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
 Share my harvest & my home.

II†

Going by *Daly's* shanty I heard the boys within
 Dancing the spanish hornpipe to *Driscoll's* violin;
 I heard the sea-boots shaking the rough planks of the floor,
 But I was going westward, I hadn't heart for more.

All down the windy village the noise rang in my ears;
 Old sea-boots stamping, shuffling, it brought the bitter tears;
 The old tune piped & quavered; the lilts came clear and strong;
 But I was going westward, I couldn't join the song.

There were the grey stone houses, the night wind blowing keen,
 The hill-sides pale with moonlight, the young corn springing green,

II† · "Ruth" · Thomas Hood (1799 – 1845) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

II† · "The Emigrant" · Dr John Masefield, Poet Laureate (1878 – 1967) · *The Poems and Plays of John Masefield: Poems*.

The hearth nooks lit & kindly, with dear friends good to see,
But I was going westward, and the ship waited me.

11* I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown.

11* · Charles, by the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith (1600 – 1649) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

12

12†

Tell me not here; it needs not saying,
 What tune the enchantress plays
 In aftermaths of soft september
 Or under blanching mays,
 For she & I were long acquainted
 And I knew all her ways.

On russet floors, by waters idle,
 The pine lets fall its cone;
 The cuckoo shouts all day at nothing
 In leafy dells alone;
 And traveller's joy beguiles in autumn
 Hearts that have lost their own.

On acres of the seeded grasses
 The changing burnish heaves;
 Or marshalled under moons of harvest
 Stand still all night the sheaves;
 Or beeches strip in storms for winter
 And stain the wind with leaves.

Possess, as I possessed a season,
 The countries I resign,
 Where over elmy plains the highway
 Would mount the hills and shine,
 And full of shade the pillared forest
 Would murmur and be mine.

For nature, heartless, witless nature,
 Will neither care nor know
 What stranger's feet may find the meadow
 And trespass there and go,
 Nor ask amid the dews of morning
 If they are mine or no.

12†

12† · Prof Alfred Housman (1859 – 1936) · *Poems that Make Grown Men Cry*.

12† · “A Quoi Bon Dire” · Miss Charlotte Mew (1869 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ The French title appears to be somewhat untranslatable – the Almanacker only speaks a very broken form of French – but means something like, ‘What good is there to say?’ or, ‘What’s the point of saying?’ Miss Mew’s title, however, is without a question mark; it’s unclear whether this was deliberate or an oversight.

Seventeen years ago you said
Something that sounded like good-by:
And everybody thinks you are dead
But I.

So I as I grow stiff & cold
To this & that say good-by too;
And everybody sees that I am old
But you.

And one fine morning in a sunny lane
Some boy & girl will meet & kiss & swear
That nobody can love their way again
While over there
You will have smiled; I shall have tossed your hair.

12* Speak of the moderns without contempt, and of the ancients without idolatry.

13

13[†]

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
 Conspiring with him how to load & bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
 To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
 Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
 Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook;
 Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, where are they?
 Think not of them; thou hast thy music too,
 While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river shallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
 Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

13†

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
 Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
 Dispraise, or blame – nothing but well & fair,
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

13* To be clever enough to get all that money, one has to be stupid enough to want it.

13† · John Milton (1608 – 1674) · *The Poet's Tongue*. ¶ These lines are spoken by Manoa, the hero's father, near the close of *Samson Agonistes*.

13* · Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

14

14‡

They shut the road through the woods
 Seventy years ago.
 Weather & rain have undone it again,
 And now you would never know
 There was once a road through the woods
 Before they planted the trees.
 It is underneath the coppice & heath,
 And the thin anemones.
 Only the keeper sees
 That, where the ring-dove broods,
 And the badgers roll at ease,
 There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods
 Of a summer evening late,
 When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
 Where the otter whistles his mate
 (They fear not men in the woods,
 Because they see so few),
 You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
 And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
 Steadily cantering through
 The misty solitudes,
 As though they perfectly knew
 The old lost road through the woods...
 But there is no road through the woods.

14†

For want of me the world's course will not fail:
 When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;
 The truth is great, and shall prevail,
 When none cares whether it prevail or not.

14* A good storyteller is a person who has a good memory and hopes other people haven't.

14‡ · "The Way through the Woods" · Rudyard Kipling (1865 – 1936) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ The Almanacker was forced to compose a pastiche of this poem as a small child.

14† · Coventry Patmore (1823 – 1896) · *The Golden Treasury [with a fifth book selected by John Press]*. ¶ These are the closing lines of "Magna Est Veritas". See 1 Esdras 4.41.

14* · Irvin Cobb (1876 – 1944) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

15

15†

Not every man has gentians in his house
In soft september, at slow, sad michaelmas.

Bavarian gentians, big & dark, only dark
Darkening the daytime torch-like with the smoking blueness of *Pluto's* gloom,
Ribbed & torch-like, with their blaze of darkness spread blue
Down flattening into points, flattened under the sweep of white day,
Torch-flower of the blue-smoking darkness, *Pluto's* dark-blue daze,
Black lamps from the halls of *Dis*, burning dark-blue,
Giving off darkness, blue darkness, as *Demeter's* pale lamps
Give off light,
Lead me then; lead me the way.

Reach me a gentian; give me a torch!
Let me guide myself with the blue, forked torch of a flower
Down the darker & darker stairs, where blue is darkened on blueness,
Even where *Persephone* goes, just now, from the frosted september
To the sightless realm where darkness is awake upon the dark
And *Persephone* herself is but a voice
Or a darkness invisible enfolded in the deeper dark
Of the arms plutonic, and pierced with the passion of dense gloom,
Among the splendour of torches of darkness, shedding darkness on the lost bride
& her groom.

15†

I cannot guess her face or form;
But what to me is form or face?
I do not ask the weary worm
To give me back each buried grace
Of glistening eyes or trailing tresses.
I only feel that she is here,
And that we meet, and that we part;
And that I drink within mine ear,
And that I clasp around my heart
Her sweet still voice and soft caresses.

15‡ · "Bavarian Gentians" · David Lawrence (1885 – 1930) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Lawrence wrote this poem only a few months before his own painfully-anticipated death from tuberculosis.

15† · "Mater Desiderata" · Winthrop Praed (1802 – 1839) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ¶ The title means 'desired mother'. The poet's mother died a year after his birth.

Not in the waking thought by day,
Nor in the sightless dream by night,
Do the mild tones & glances play
Of her who was my cradle's light.
But in some twilight of calm weather
She glides by fancy dimly wrought,
A glittering cloud, a darkling beam,
With all the quiet of a thought
And all the passion of a dream
Linked in a golden spell together.

15* I am always of the opinion with the learned, if they speak first.

16

16†

Laugh and be merry: remember, better the world with a song,
 Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.
 Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a span.
 Laugh and be proud to belong to the old proud pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry: remember, in olden time,
 God made heaven & earth for joy he took in a rhyme,
 Made them, and filled them full with the strong red wine of his mirth
 The splendid joy of the stars: the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue cup of the sky,
 Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping by,
 Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the wine outpoured
 In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,
 Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,
 Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music ends.
 Laugh till the game is played; and be you merry, my friends.

16†

If I should die, think only this of me:
 That there's some corner of a foreign field
 That is forever 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 the 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 & sounds; dreams happy as her day;
 And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an english heaven.

16† · “Laugh and Be Merry” · Dr John Masefield, Poet Laureate (1878 – 1967) · *The Dragon Book of Verse*.

16† · “The Soldier” · Rupert Brooke (1887 – 1915) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The Almanacker was encouraged to hate this poem at school as an example of the mindless jingoism that led to the Great War in the first place; and, of course, there is something idiotic about it. But there's something noble and beautiful in it too.

16* I have never killed anyone, but I have read some obituary notices with great satisfaction.

16* · Clarence Darrow (1857 – 1938) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

17

17‡

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more
 Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
 I come to pluck your berries harsh & crude,
 And with forced fingers rude
 Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
 Bitter constraint & sad occasion dear
 Compels me to disturb your season due;
 For *Lycidas* is dead, dead ere his prime,
 Young *Lycidas*, and hath not left his peer.
 Who would not sing for *Lycidas*? he knew
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
 He must not float upon his watery bier
 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin then, sisters of the sacred well
 That from beneath the seat of *Jove* doth spring;
 Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
 Hence with denial vain & coy excuse!
 So may some gentle muse
 With lucky words favour my destined urn,
 And as he passes turn
 And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.

For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,
 Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, & rill;
 Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
 Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
 We drove afield, and both together heard
 What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
 Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
 Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
 Toward heav'n's descent had sloped his westerling wheel.
 Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
 Tempered to th'oaten flute;
 Rough satyrs danced, & fauns with cloven heel,

17‡ · “*Lycidas*” · John Milton (1608 – 1674) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ In his *Poems* of 1645, Milton gave this preface: ‘In this monody the author bewails a learned friend [Edward King], unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637. And by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.’

From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old *Damoetas* loved to hear our song.

But O the heavy change now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return.
Thee, shepherd, thee the woods & desert caves,
With wild thyme & the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes mourn.
The willows & the hazel copses green
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear
When first the white thorn blows:
Such, *Lycidas*, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved *Lycidas*?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of *MONA* high,
Nor yet where *DEVA* spreads her wizard stream.
Aye me! I fondly dream
Had ye been there – for what could that have done?
What could the muse herself that *Orpheus* bore,
The muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When by the rout that made the hideous roar
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift *HEBRUS* to the lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care
To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with *Amaryllis* in the shade,
Or with the tangles of *Neaera's* hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights & live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,

Comes the blind fury with th'abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'
Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears;
'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistening foil
Set off to th'world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives & spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging *Jove*;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heav'n expect thy meed.'

O fountain *ARETHUSE*, and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding *MINCIUS*, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the herald of the sea,
That came in *Neptune's* plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
'What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?'
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage *Hippotades* their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed;
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek *Panope* with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal & perfidious bark,
Built in th'eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next *Camus*, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, & his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
'Ah! who hath reft,' quoth he, 'my dearest pledge?'
Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the galilean lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:
'How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
Creep & intrude, and climb into the fold?

Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And when they list their lean & flashy songs
Grate on their scannell pipes of wretched straw,
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoll'n with wind & the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said,
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.'

Return, *Alpheus*: the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, sicilian muse,
And call the vales & bid them hither cast
Their bells & flowerets of 1000 hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades & wanton winds, & gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, & pale jessamine,
The white pink, & the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, & the well attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where *Lycid* lies.
For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Aye me! Whilst thee the shores & sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide

Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world,
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of *Bellerus* old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward NAMANCOS & BAYONA's hold:
Look homeward angel now, and melt with ruth;
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For *Lycidas*, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So *Lycidas* sunk low, but mounted high
Through the dear might of him that walked the waves;
Where, other groves & other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy & love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, & sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, *Lycidas*, the shepherds weep no more:
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th'oaks & rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray;
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his doric lay;
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay;
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
Tomorrow to fresh woods, & pastures new.

17†

You were glad tonight; and now you've gone away.
 Flushed in the dark, you put your dreams to bed;
 But as you fall asleep I hear you say
 Those tired sweet drowsy words we left unsaid.

Sleep well: for I can follow you, to bless
 And lull your distant beauty where you roam;
 And with wild songs of hoarded loveliness
 Recall you to these arms that were your home.

17* Everything's got a moral, if you can only find it.

17† · Siegfried Sassoon (1886 – 1967) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*. ¶ These lines appear in Cassell under a heading indicating they are taken from *The Heart's Journey*, and indeed they form part V of that sequence. But the poem first appeared in the collection *Picture-Show* under the title of 'The Lovers'; and, while it is present within the *Picture-Show* section in the 1984 *Collected Poems*, it is absent from that volumes section for *The Heart's Journey*.

17* · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

18

18‡

As some fond virgin, whom her mother's care
 Drags from the town to wholesome country air,
 Just when she learns to roll a melting eye,
 And hear a spark, yet think no danger nigh;
 From the dear man unwillingly she must sever,
 Yet takes one kiss before she parts for ever:
 Thus from the world fair *Zephalinda* flew,
 Saw others happy, and with sighs withdrew;
 Not that their pleasures caused her discontent:
 She sighed not that thizzy stayed, but that shzz went.
 She went, to plain-work, and to purling brooks,
 Old-fashioned halls, dull aunts, & croaking rooks;
 She went from opera, park, assembly, play,
 To morning walks, & prayers three hours a day;
 To pass her time 'twixt reading & bohea,
 To muse, and spill her solitary tea,
 Or o'er cold coffee trifle with the spoon,
 Count the slow clock, and dine exact at noon;
 Divert her eyes with pictures in the fire,
 Hum half a tune, tell stories to the squire;
 Up to her godly garret after seven;
 There starve & pray, for that's the way to heaven.
 Some squire, perhaps, you take a delight to rack;
 Whose game is whisk, whose treat a toast in sack,
 Who visits with a gun, presents you birds,
 Then gives a smacking buss, & cries, No words!
 Or with his hound comes hollowing from the stable,
 Makes love with nods, & knees beneath a table;
 Whose laughs are hearty, though his jests are coarse,
 And loves you best of all things – but his horse.
 In some fair evening, on your elbow laid,
 Your dream of triumphs in the rural shade;
 In pensive thought recall the fancied scene,
 See coronations rise on every green;

18‡ · “Epistle to Miss Blount, On Her Leaving the Town, After the Coronation” · Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ The Miss Blount in question must have been one of the two Blount sisters, Teresa and Martha, with whom Pope was friendly. Martha Blount is more likely, since, as Robert Carruthers argued in his *Life* of 1857, Pope and she were particularly close, perhaps even lovers, and indeed Pope made her his principal heir. £24: The word ‘whisk’ as used here is an archaic name for the card-game whist.

Before you pass th'imaginary sights
 Of lords & earls & dukes & gartered knights;
 While the spread fan o'ershades your closing eyes;
 Then give one flirt, and all the vision flies.
 Thus vanish scepters, coronets & balls,
 And leave you in lone woods, or empty walls.
 So when your slave, at some dear, idle time,
 (Not plagued with headaches, or the want of rhyme)
 Stands in the streets, abstracted from the crew,
 And while he seems to study, thinks of you:
 Just when his fancy points your sprightly eyes,
 Or sees the blush of soft *Parthenia* rise,
 Gay pats my shoulder, and you vanish quite;
 Streets, chairs, and coxcombs rush upon my sight;
 Vexed to be still in town, I knit my brow,
 Look sour and hum a tune – as you may now.

18†

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
 Sounds & sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
 Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
 Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
 That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,
 The clouds methought would open and show riches
 Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,
 I cried to dream again.

18*

No spring, nor summer beauty hath such grace
 As I have seen in one autumnal face.

18† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ These famous lines are uttered by Caliban in *The Tempest* III.2.

18* · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These are the opening lines of “The Autumnal”.

19

19‡

So-Kin of Rakubo, ancient friend, I now remember
 That you built me a special tavern,
 By the south side of the bridge at TEN-SHIN.
 With yellow gold & white jewels
 We paid for the songs & laughter,
 And we were drunk for month after month,
 Forgetting the kings & princes.
 Intelligent men came drifting in, from the sea
 And from the west border,
 And with them, & with you especially,
 There was nothing at cross-purpose;
 And they made nothing of sea-crossing
 Or of mountain-crossing,
 If only they could be of that fellowship.
 And we all spoke out our hearts & minds
 And without regret.

19‡ · “Exile’s Letter” · Ezra Pound (1885 – 1972) · *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*. ¶ These lines are based on a poem by Li Bai, also known as Li Po, whom Pound followed the Japanese in calling Rihaku. Indeed, this is not really a translation from the Chinese directly, but a poetical rehash of the notes of Prof Ernest Fenellosa, who was Professor of English Literature at the Tokyo Higher Normal School, which explains the few infelicities in this otherwise miraculous translation. ℓ1: ‘So-Kin’ = Dōng Zāo-qiū, i.e. Dong (or Tung) the Wine Barrel. ‘Rakubo’ = Luoyang in Henan province. ℓ3: ‘Ten-Shin’ = Tianjin. ℓ17: ‘South Wei’ is a butchering of the Chinese characters for the city of Huainan. The name of the city consists of two characters: *huái*, which could also be transliterated as *wei*; and *nán*, which, in isolation, means south. ℓ19: ‘Raku-hoku’ = Luobei. The same Chinese characters which spell the name of the city Luobei could also, if read by a Japanese speaker, be pronounced Raku-hoku. ℓ22: ‘Sen-Go’ = City of the Immortals, i.e. Guangzhou alias Canton. ℓ30: ‘East-of-Kan’ = Hàn-dōng, one of the so-called commanderies of Tàng China. ℓ31: ‘[T]he “true man” of Shi-yo’ = Master Ziyáng. ℓ33: ‘San-Ko’ = Cān-xiá. The phrase ‘Cān-xiá lóu’ occurs in the original Chinese; *lóu* simply means building, and *cān xiá* is an obscure Taoist spiritual practice, which could be translated as ‘breathing the dawn air’; ‘Cān-xiá lóu’ perhaps refers to an obscure Taoist shrine, built by the famous priest Hu Ziyang, in or near the modern city of Suizhou. ℓ34: ‘[S]ennin’ = xian, a Taoist term for an immortal creature. ℓ36: ‘Kan-Chu’ = Hàn-dōng. Above, Pound translates the term as ‘East-of-Kan’, but in the original Chinese the two pairs of characters are identical. ℓ42: ‘So’ is actually *cháo*, a Chinese character meaning nest, but which a Japanese speaker would pronounce *sō*, which means bed. Presumably this nest is a metaphor for the poet’s home. ℓ45: ‘Hei Shu’ = Bingzhou. ℓ72: ‘Layu’ = Yang Xiong, not mentioned by name in the original Chinese, but he was the author of the ‘song’. ‘[T]he “Choyu” song’ = the Zhǎng-yáng fù; Zhǎng-yáng referring to the site which in English is usually called the Changyang palace, and *fù* being a genre which has no obvious equivalent in English literature but which consists of rhymed prose. Yang Xiong famously presented his Changyang *fù* to the Emperor Cheng of Han, in which he criticised the ruler’s extravagance in couched terms, but the admonition was either misunderstood or ignored. In the original Chinese, Li Bai is tacitly comparing himself to Yang Xiong. ℓ76: ‘San palace’ is another butchered translation, muddling Chinese and Japanese for good measure. The characters being translated, *cuó tái*, are likely a reference to the ancient ruins of Zaolutai, part of the larger ruins of Fucheng, near the city of Yongcheng in the province of Henan.

And then I was sent off to SOUTH WEI,
 Smothered in laurel groves,
 And you to the north of RAKU-HOKU,
 Till we had nothing but thoughts & memories between us.
 And when separation had come to its worst
 We met, and travelled together into SEN-GO
 Through all the 36 folds of the turning & twisting waters;
 Into a valley of a thousand bright flowers;
 That was the first valley;
 And on into ten thousand valleys
 Full of voices & pine winds.
 With silver harness & reins of gold,
 Prostrating themselves on the ground,
 Out came the East-of-Kan foreman & his company;
 And there came also the 'true man' of Shi-yo to meet me,
 Playing on a jewelled mouth organ.
 In the storied houses of San-Ko they gave us
 More sennin music;
 Many instruments, like the sound of young phoenix broods.
 And the foreman of Kan-Chu, drunk,
 Danced because his long sleeves
 Wouldn't keep still, with that music playing.
 And I, wrapped in brocade, went to sleep with my head on his lap,
 And my spirit so high that it was all over the heavens.

And before the end of the day we were scattered like stars or rain.
 I had to be off to So, far away over the waters,
 You back to your river bridge.
 And your father, who was brave as a leopard,
 Was governor in Hei Shu and put down the barbarian rabble.
 And one may he had you send for me, despite the long distance;
 And what with broken wheels & so on, I won't say it wasn't hard going,
 Over roads twisted like sheep's guts.
 And I was still going, late in the year,
 In the cutting wind from the north,
 And thinking how little you cared for the cost,
 And you caring enough to pay it.
 Then what a reception:
 Red jade cups, food well set, on a blue jewelled table;
 And I was drunk, and had no thought of returning;
 And you would walk out with me to the western corner of the castle,
 To the dynastic temple, with the water about it clear as blue jade,
 With boats floating, & the sound of mouth organs & drums,

With ripples like dragon scales going grass-green on the water,
 Pleasure lasting, with courtesans going & coming without hindrance,
 With the willow flakes falling like snow,
 And the vermilioned girls getting drunk about sunset,
 And the waters a hundred feet deep reflecting green eyebrows –
 Eyebrows painted green are a fine sight in young moonlight,
 Gracefully painted – & the girls singing back at each other,
 Dancing in transparent brocade,
 And the wind lifting the song, & interrupting it,
 Tossing it up under the clouds.

And all this comes to an end,
 And is not again to be met with.
 I went up to the court for examination,
 Tried *Layu's* luck, offered the 'Choyu' song,
 And got no promotion,
 And went back to the East Mountains white-headed.

And once again we met, later, at the SOUTH BRIDGE head.
 And then the crowd broke up – you went north to SAN palace.
 And if you ask how I regret that parting?
 It is like the flowers falling at spring's end,
 Confused, whirled in a tangle.
 What is the use of talking? And there is no end of talking –
 There is no end of things in the heart.

I call in the boy,
 Have him sit on his knees to write and seal this,
 And I send it a thousand miles, thinking.

19†

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, besmeared 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 & 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.

19* A thing well said will be wit in all languages.

20

20‡

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
 I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
 You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse;
 You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
 And we went on living in the village of CHOKAN:
 Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.
 At 14 I married my lord, you.
 I never laughed, being bashful.
 Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
 Called to, a 1000 times, I never looked back.

At 15 I stopped scowling;
 I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
 Forever & forever & forever.
 Why should I climb the look out?

At 16 you departed
 You went into far KU-TO-YEN, by the river of swirling eddies,
 And you have been gone five months.
 The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went out.
 By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
 Too deep to clear them away!
 The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
 The paired butterflies are already yellow with august
 Over the grass in the west garden;
 They hurt me.
 I grow older.
 If you are coming down through the narrows of the river KIANG,
 Please let me know beforehand,
 And I will come out to meet you
 As far as CHO-FU-SA.

20‡ · “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a Letter” · Ezra Pound (1885 – 1972) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

¶ These lines are based on a poem which is sometimes called “The Song of Chang’an”, by the Chinese king of poets, Li Bai (also called Li Po, and known to Pound and various Japanese scholars as Rihaku). Many of the place-names, e.g. Chokan, Ku-to-yen, seem to be a melange of archaism, misunderstanding and poor transliteration.

20†

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three april perfumes in three hot junes burned,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred:
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

20* By hating vices too much, they come to love men too little.

20† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*.

20* · The Rt Hon Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

21

21†

Some years ago, ere time & taste
 Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
 When DARNEL PARK was DARNEL WASTE,
 And roads as little known as scurvy,
 The man who lost his way between
 ST MARY'S HILL & SANDY THICKET
 Was always shown across the green,
 And guided to the parson's wicket.

Back flew the bolt of lissom lath;
 Fair *Margaret*, in her tidy kirtle,
 Led the lorn traveller up the path
 Through clean-clipped rows of box & myrtle;
 And *Don & Sancho*, *Tramp & Tray*,
 Upon the parlor steps collected,
 Wagged all their tails, and seemed to say,
 Our master knows you; you're expected.

Up rose The Rev Dr *Brown*;
 Up rose the doctor's 'winsome marrow';
 The lady laid her knitting down;
 Her husband clasped his ponderous *Barrow*.
 Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
 Pundit or papist, saint or sinner,
 He found a stable for his steed,
 And welcome for himself, & dinner.

If, when he reached his journey's end,
 And warmed himself in court or college,
 He had not gained an honest friend,
 And 20 curious scraps of knowledge;
 If he departed as he came,
 With no new light on love or liquor,

21† · "The Vicar" · Winthrop Praed (1802 – 1839) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ℓ18: '[W]insome marrow' = young companion, a phrase in the Scots dialect used by Dr Wordsworth in his "Yarrow Unvisited" and "Yarrow Revisited". ℓ20: 'Barrow' = The Rev Prof Isaac Barrow, 1st Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, who also wrote on religious and philosophical topics. ℓ64: 'Sylvanus Urban' = Edward Cave, founder of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, which ran from 1731 to 1922. ℓ84: '*Quae Genus*' is likely a reference to *The History of Johnny Quae Genus, The Little Foundling of the Late Doctor Syntax* (1822) by William Combe. ℓ103: The Latin translates literally as: 'Here lies William Brown, / A man not to be gifted with any laurel.' This sounds a bit harsher than intended, and the sense of it might be closer to: 'A man who had no need of honours.'

Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,
And not the vicarage, nor the vicar.

His talk was like a stream which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses;
It slipped from politicks to puns;
It passed from *Mahomet* to *Moses*;
Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels or shoeing horses.

He was a shrewd & sound divine,
Of loud dissent the mortal terror;
And when, by dint of page & line,
He 'stablished truth or startled error,
The baptist found him far too deep,
The deist sighed with saving sorrow,
And the lean levite went to sleep
And dreamed of tasting pork tomorrow.

His sermon never said or showed
That earth is foul, that heaven is gracious,
Without refreshment on the road
From *Jerome*, or from *Athanasius*;
And sure a righteous zeal inspired
The hand & head that penned and planned them,
For all who understood admired,
And some who did not understand them.

He wrote too, in a quiet way,
Small treatises, & smaller verses,
And sage remarks on chalk & clay,
And hints to noble lords & nurses;
True histories of last year's ghost;
Lines to a ringlet or a turban;
And trifles to the **Morning Post**,
And nothings for *Sylvanus Urban*.

He did not think all mischief fair,
Although he had a knack of joking;
He did not make himself a bear,
Although he had a taste for smoking;
And when religious sects ran mad,

He held, in spite of all his learning,
That, if a man's belief is bad,
It will not be improved by burning.

And he was king, and loved to sit
In the low hut or garnished cottage,
And praise the farmer's homely wit,
And share the widow's homelier pottage.
At his approach complaint grew mild,
And when his hand unbarred the shutter
The clammy lips of fever smiled
The welcome which they could not utter.

He always had a tale for me
Of *Julius Caesar* or of *Venus*;
From him I learned the rule of three,
Cat's cradle, leapfrog, & **Quæ Genus**.
I used to singe his powdered wig,
To steal the staff he put such trust in,
And make the puppy dance a jig
When he began to quote *Augustine*.

Alack, the change! In vain I look
For haunts in which my boyhood trifled;
The level lawn, the trickling brook,
The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled.
The church is larger than before;
You reach it by a carriage entry:
It holds 300 people more,
And pews are fitted for the gentry.

Sit in the vicar's seat: you'll hear
The doctrine of a gentle johnian,
Whose hand is white, whose voice is clear,
Whose tone is very ciceronian.
Where is the old man laid? Look down,
And construe on the slab before you:

Hic jacet *Gulielmus Brown*.
Vir nulla non donandus lauru.

21†

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast & trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
 And wrinkled lip & 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 & bare,
 The lone & level sands stretch far away.

21* We do not look in great cities for our best morality.

21† · “Ozymandias of Egypt” · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ Shelley seems to have written this sonnet as one half of a sonnet-writing competition with his friend Horace Smith, who published a very similar, if clearly inferior, poem in the same journal a month later. £11: Professor Holloway, in his introduction to the *Oxford Book of Local Verses*, highlights the double meaning in this line: ‘Time, the poet intimates, invites the proud of a later age, as they gaze upon the forgotten ruins of that spurious grandeur, to despair in a deeper sense.’

21* · Miss Jane Austen (1775 – 1817) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

22

22†

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
 And ye that on the sands with printless foot
 Do chase the ebbing *Neptune* and do fly him
 When he comes back; you demi-puppets that
 By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
 Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime
 Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
 To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid,
 Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimmed
 The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,
 And 'twixt the green sea & the azured vault
 Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
 Have I given fire and rifted *Jove's* stout oak
 With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
 Have I made shake and by the spurs plucked up
 The pine & cedar: graves at my command
 Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
 By my so potent art. But this rough magic
 I here abjure, and, when I have required
 Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound
 I'll drown my book.

22†

Strong is the lion – like a coal
 His eyeball – like a bastion's mole
 His chest against the foes:
 Strong, the gier eagle on his sail,
 Strong against tide, th'enormous whale
 Emerges as he goes.

But stronger still, in earth & air,
 And in the sea, the man of prayer;

22† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ These lines are uttered by Prospero in *The Tempest* V.1.

22† · Christopher Smart (1722 – 1771) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ¶ These verses are taken from *A Song to David*. ℓ4: The 'gier eagle' is a mysterious beast, mentioned in the King James Version of Leviticus 11.18 and Deuteronomy 14.17. The term is said to refer to the Egyptian vulture, i.e. *Neophron percnopterus*.

And far beneath the tide;
And in the seat to faith assigned,
Where ask is have, where seek is find,
Where knock is open wide.

22* There is delight in singing, though none hear.

22* · Walter Landor (1775 – 1864) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is the opening line of a sonnet “To Robert Browning”.

23

23‡

Here, where the world is quiet;
 Here, where all trouble seems
 Dead winds' & spent waves' riot
 In doubtful dreams of dreams;
 I watch the green field growing
 For reaping folk & sowing,
 For harvest-time & mowing,
 A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears & laughter,
 And men that laugh and weep;
 Of what may come hereafter
 For men that sow to reap:
 I am weary of days & hours,
 Blown buds of barren flowers,
 Desires & dreams & powers
 And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbour,
 And far from eye or ear
 Wan waves & wet winds labour,
 Weak ships and spirits steer;
 They drive adrift, and whither
 They wot not who make thither;
 But no such winds blow hither,
 And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
 No heather-flower or vine,
 But bloomless buds of poppies,
 Green grapes of *Proserpine*,
 Pale beds of blowing rushes
 Where no leaf blooms or blushes
 Save this whereout she crushes
 For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
 In fruitless fields of corn,

23‡ · "The Garden of Proserpine" · Algernon Swinburne (1837 – 1909) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

¶ Proserpine was the consort of Pluto, lord of the underworld.

They bow themselves & slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell & heaven unmated,
By cloud & mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds & closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch & portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times & lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits & corn;
And spring & seed & swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
 And joy was never sure;
 To-day will die to-morrow;
 Time stoops to no man's lure;
 And love, grown faint and fretful,
 With lips but half regretful
 Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
 Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
 From hope and fear set free,
 We thank with brief thanksgiving
 Whatever gods may be
 That no life lives for ever;
 That dead men rise up never;
 That even the weariest river
 Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
 Nor any change of light:
 Nor sound of waters shaken,
 Nor any sound or sight:
 Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
 Nor days nor things diurnal;
 Only the sleep eternal
 In an eternal night.

23†

Under the wide & starry sky,
 Dig the grave and let me lie.
 Glad did I live and gladly die,
 And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you 'grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

23† · "Requiem" · Robert Stevenson (1850 – 1894) · *Poems that Make Grown Men Cry*. ¶ These verses are inscribed, according to Stevenson's wishes, on his tomb on Upolu, an island now part of the Independent State of Samoa. Philip Larkin's infamous "This Be the Verse" is presumably a response to this poem. ℓ8: What has come to be regarded as the standard version of this poem gives the penultimate line as, 'Home is the sailor, home from sea', i.e. without the second "the". However, the Almanacker prefers the version with said "the", and, indeed, this is the version found on the aforementioned tomb.

23* What we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits.

23* · Samuel Butler (1835 – 1902) · *The Way of All Flesh*. ¶ The full quotation is, ‘Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits.’

24

24[†]

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall;
 The vapours weep their burthen to the ground;
 Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
 And after many a summer dies the swan.
 Me only cruel immortality
 Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,
 A white-haired shadow roaming like a dream
 The ever-silent spaces of the east,
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this grey shadow, once a man
 So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he seemed
 To his great heart none other than a god!
 I asked thee, 'Give me immortality.'
 Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
 Like wealthy men, who care not how they give.
 But thy strong hours indignant worked their wills,
 And beat me down & marred & wasted me,
 And though they could not end me, left me maimed
 To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,
 And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
 Thy beauty, make amends, though even now,
 Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
 To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
 Why should a man desire in any way
 To vary from the kindly race of men
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
 Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
 A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.

24[†] · "Tithonus" · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ A figure from Greek mythology, Tithonus was abducted by the goddess of the dawn to be a kind of fancy-man. He was granted everlasting life – but forgot to ask for everlasting youth – cursing him with an eternity of senility. The ancients used to say that the goddess' consequent sexual frustration explained why she rose so early in the morning.

Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renewed.
Thy cheek begins to redden through the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learned,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch – if I be he that watched –
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimsoned all
Thy presence & thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of april, and could hear the lips that kissed
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard *Apollo* sing,
While *ILION* like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine east:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;

Thou seest all things: thou wilt see my grave:
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
 I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
 And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

24†

Sunset & evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the bar
 When I put out to sea,

 But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 Too full for sound & foam,
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep
 Turns again home.

 Twilight & evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark;

 For though from out our bourne of time & place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my pilot face to face
 When I have crossed the bar.

24* You can do very little with faith, but you can do nothing without it.

24† · “Crossing the Bar” · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The ‘bar’ in question refers to the sandbars which often lurk in the waters near to the breakwaters of ports. Lord Tennyson is said to have written this poem while on a ferry to the Isle of Wight. Shortly before his death, he decreed that all editions of his works should close with these verses. ℓ13: Lord Tennyson explained, ‘The pilot has been on board all the while, but in the dark I have not seen him.’

24* · Samuel Butler (1835 – 1902) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

25

25†

As the team's head-brass flashed out on the turn
 The lovers disappeared into the wood.
 I sat among the boughs of the fallen elm
 That strewed an angle of the fallow, and
 Watched the plough narrowing a yellow square
 Of charlock. Every time the horses turned
 Instead of treading me down, the ploughman leaned
 Upon the handles to say or ask a word,
 About the weather, next about the war.
 Scraping the share he faced towards the wood,
 And screwed along the furrow till the brass flashed
 Once more. The blizzard felled the elm whose crest
 I sat in, by a woodpecker's round hole,
 The ploughman said. 'When will they take it away?'
 'When the war's over.' So the talk began –
 One minute & an interval of 10,
 A minute more & the same interval.
 'Have you been out?' 'No.' 'And don't want to, perhaps?'
 'If I could only come back again, I should.
 I could spare an arm. I shouldn't want to lose
 A leg. If I should lose my head, why, so,
 I should want nothing more... Have many gone
 From here?' 'Yes.' 'Many lost?' 'Yes, a good few.
 Only two teams work on the farm this year.
 One of my mates is dead. The second day
 In France they killed him. It was back in march,
 The very night of the blizzard, too. Now if
 He had stayed here we should have moved the tree.'
 'And I should not have sat here. Everything
 Would have been different. For it would have been
 Another world.' 'Ay, & a better, though,
 If we could see all, all might seem good.' Then
 The lovers came out of the wood again:
 The horses started and for the last time
 I watched the clods crumble & topple over
 After the ploughshare and the stumbling team.

25†

The long love, that in my thought doth harbour,
 And in my heart doth keep his residence,
 Into my face presseth with bold pretense,
 And therein campeth, spreading his banner.
 She that me learneth to love & suffer,
 And wills that my trust & lust's negligence
 Be reined by reason, shame and reverence,
 With his hardiness taketh displeasure.
 Wherewithal, unto the heart's forest he fleeth,
 Leaving his enterprise with pain & cry:
 And there him hideth, and not appeareth.
 What may I do when my master feareth
 But in the field with him to live & die?
 For good is the life, ending faithfully.

25* There's no harm done.

25† · Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 – 1542) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem is based on Petrarch's *Rime* 140. Another translation of the same sonnet was made by the Earl of Surrey.

25* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ This is uttered by Prospero in *The Tempest* I.2.

26

26‡

Old man, or lad's love – in the name there's nothing
 To one that knows not lad's love, or old man,
 The hoar-green feathery herb, almost a tree,
 Growing with rosemary & lavender.
 Even to one that knows it well, the names
 Half decorate, half perplex, the thing it is:
 At least, what that is clings not to the names
 In spite of time. And yet I like the names.

The herb itself I like not, but for certain
 I love it, as some day the child will love it
 Who plucks a feather from the door-side bush
 Whenever she goes in or out of the house.
 Often she waits there, snipping the tips and shrivelling
 The shreds at last on to the path, perhaps
 Thinking, perhaps of nothing, till she sniffs
 Her fingers and runs off. The bush is still
 But half as tall as she, though it is as old;
 So well she clips it. Not a word she says;
 And I can only wonder how much hereafter
 She will remember, with that bitter scent,
 Of garden rows, & ancient damson trees
 Topping a hedge, a bent path to a door,
 A low thick bush beside the door, and me
 Forbidding her to pick.

As for myself,
 Where first I met the bitter scent is lost.
 I, too, often shrivel the grey shreds,
 Sniff them and think and sniff again and try
 Once more to think what it is I am remembering,
 Always in vain. I cannot like the scent,
 Yet I would rather give up others more sweet,
 With no meaning, than this bitter one.

I have mislaid the key. I sniff the spray
 And think of nothing; I see and I hear nothing;
 Yet seem, too, to be listening, lying in wait

26‡ · “Old Man” · Edward Thomas (1878 – 1917) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ The scientific name of the plant described is *Artemisia abrotanum*.

For what I should, yet never can, remember:
 No garden appears, no path, no hoar-green bush
 Of lad's love, or old man, no child beside,
 Neither father nor mother, nor any playmate;
 Only an avenue, dark, nameless, without end.

26†

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
 Enwrought with golden and silver light,
 The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
 Of night & light & the half light,
 I would spread the cloths under your feet:
 But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
 I have spread my dreams under your feet;
 Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

26* He hath awakened from the dream of life.

26† · "Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" · William Yeats (1865 – 1939) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*.

26* · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is a line from Shelley's *Adonais*, his elegy for John Keats.

27

27[‡]

I saw eternity the other night,
 Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
 All calm, as it was bright;
 And round beneath it, time in hours, days, years,
 Driven by the spheres
 Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
 And all her train were hurled.
 The doting lover in his quaintest strain
 Did there complain;
 Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights,
 Wit's sour delights,
 With gloves, and knots, the silly snares of pleasure,
 Yet his dear treasure
 All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
 Upon a flower.

The darksome statesman hung with weights & woe,
 Like a thick midnight-fog moved there so slow,
 He did not stay, nor go;
 Condemning thoughts (like sad eclipses) scowl
 Upon his soul,
 And clouds of crying witnesses without
 Pursued him with one shout.
 Yet digged the mole, and lest his ways be found,
 Worked under ground,
 Where he did clutch his prey; but one did see
 That policy;
 Churches & altars fed him; perjuries
 Were gnats & flies;
 It rained about him blood and tears, but he
 Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
 Sate pining all his life there, did scarce trust
 His own hands with the dust,
 Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
 In fear of thieves;
 Thousands there were as frantic as himself,

27[‡] · "The World" · Dr Henry Vaughan (1621 – 1695) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Dr Vaughan affixed a quotation from John's Gospel (2.16-17) to the end of this poem.

And hugged each one his pelf;
 The downright epicure placed heaven in sense,
 And scorned pretence,
 While others, slipped into a wide excess,
 Said little less;
 The weaker sort slight, trivial wares enslave,
 Who think them brave;
 And poor despised truth sate counting by
 Their victory.

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
 And sing, and weep, soar'd up into the ring;
 But most would use no wing.
 O fools (said I) thus to prefer dark night
 Before true light,
 To live in grots & caves, and hate the day
 Because it shows the way,
 The way, which from this dead & dark abode
 Leads up to God,
 A way where you might tread the sun, and be
 More bright than he.
 But as I did their madness so discuss
 One whispered thus,
 This ring the Bridegroom did for none provide,
 But for his bride.

27†

When you are old & grey & full of sleep,
 And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
 And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
 Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
 And loved your beauty with love false or true,
 But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
 And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
 Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
 And paced upon the mountains overhead
 And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

27† · William Yeats (1865 – 1939) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem is based on a sonnet by the French poet Pierre de Ronsard; the Almanacker is not qualified to judge how faithful it is.

27* He that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom

27* · Prof John Tolkien (1892 – 1973) · *The Lord of the Rings*. ¶ Uttered by Gandalf to Saruman in Book II, Chapter 2.

28

28‡

When lilacs last in the door-yard bloomed,
 And the great star early drooped in the western sky in the night,
 I mourned, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
 Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
 And thought of him I love. ♪

O powerful western fallen star!
 O shades of night – O moody, tearful night!
 O great star disappeared – O the black murk that hides the star!
 O cruel hands that hold me powerless – O helpless soul of me!
 O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

In the door-yard fronting an old farm-house near the white-washed
 palings,
 Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich
 green,
 With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong
 I love,
 With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the door-yard,
 With delicate-coloured blossoms & heart-shaped leaves of rich green,

A sprig with its flower I break. ♪

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
 A shy & hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
 The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
 Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
 Death's outlet song of life, (for well, dear brother, I know,
 If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die). ♪

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
 Amid lanes & through old woods, where lately the violets peeped
 from the ground, spotting the gray debris,

28‡ · “When Lilacs Last in the Door-Yard Bloom’d” · Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem is an elegy for Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States.

Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless
 grass,
 Passing the yellow-speared wheat, every grain from its shroud in the
 dark-brown fields uprisen,
 Passing the apple-tree blows of white & pink in the orchards,
 Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
 Night & day journeys a coffin. ❸

Coffin that passes through lanes & streets,
 Through day & night with the great cloud darkening the land,
 With the pomp of the inlooped flags with the cities draped in black,
 With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veiled women
 standing,
 With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
 With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the
 unbared heads,
 With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
 With dirges through the night, with the 1000 voices rising strong &
 solemn,
 With all the mournful voices of the dirges poured around the coffin,
 The dim-lit churches & the shuddering organs – where amid these
 you journey,
 With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
 Here, coffin that slowly passes,
 I give you my sprig of lilac. ❹

(Nor for you, for one alone,
 Blossoms & branches green to coffins all I bring,
 For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you, O sane
 & sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
 O death, I cover you over with roses & early lilies,
 But mostly & now the lilac that blooms the first,
 Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
 With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
 For you and the coffins all of you, O death.) ❺

O western orb sailing the heaven,
 Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walked,
 As I walked in silence the transparent shadowy night,
 As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after
 night,

As you drooped from the sky low down as if to my side, (while the
other stars all looked on,)
As we wandered together the solemn night, (for something I know
not what kept me from sleep,)
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you
were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent
night,
As I watched where you passed and was lost in the nether-ward black
of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you, sad orb,
Concluded, dropped in the night, and was gone. ♪

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer bashful & tender. I hear your notes; I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detained me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me. ♪

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?

And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east & west,
Blown from the eastern sea and blown from the western sea, till there
on the prairies meeting,
These & with these & the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love. ♪

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring & farms & homes,
With the fourth-month eve at sundown, & the grey smoke lucid &
bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking
sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, & the pale green leaves of
the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-
dapple here & there,

With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky,
& shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, & stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life & the workshops, & the workmen home-
ward returning. ❧

Lo, body & soul – this land,
My own MANHATTAN with spires, and the sparkling & hurrying tides,
and the ships,
The varied & ample land, the south and the north in the light, OHIO's
shores and flashing MISSOURI,
And ever the far-spreading prairies covered with grass & corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm & haughty,
The violet & purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfilled noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night & the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land. ❧

Sing on, sing on, you gray-brown bird.
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,

Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid & free & tender!
O wild & loose to my soul – O wondrous singer!
You only I hear – yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me. ❧

Now while I sat in the day and looked forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the
farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes & forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the perturbed winds and the
storms)
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the
voices of children & women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sailed,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy
with labour,

And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its
meals & minutiae of daily usages,
And the streets how their throbbings throbbed, and the cities pent
– lo, then & there,
Falling upon them all & among them all, enveloping me with the
rest,
Appeared the cloud, appeared the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands
of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the
dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest received me,
The grey-brown bird I know received us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come lovely & soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Praised be the fathomless universe,
For life & joy, and for objects & knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?

Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments & feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape & the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,

And the soul turning to thee, O vast & well-veiled death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-packed cities all and the teeming wharves & ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death. ❧

To the tally of my soul,
Loud & strong kept up the grey-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading, filling the night.

Loud in the pines & cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

And I saw askant the armies;
I saw as in noiseless dreams 100s of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierced with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither & yon through the smoke, and torn & bloody,

And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splintered and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the debris & debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest; they suffered not;
The living remained and suffered; the mother suffered;
And the wife & the child & the musing comrade suffered,
And the armies that remained suffered. 5

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,

Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
As low & wailing, yet clear the notes, rising & falling, flooding the
night,
Sadly sinking & fainting, as warning & warning, and yet again burst-
ing with joy,
Covering the earth & filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing
with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the grey-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo aroused in my soul,
With the lustrous & drooping star with the countenance full of woe,

With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine & I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep,
for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days & lands – and this for
his dear sake,

Lilac & star & bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk & dim.

28†

Here quench your thirst, and mark in me
An emblem of true charity,
Who while my bounty I bestow
Am neither seen nor heard to flow;
Repaid by fresh supplies from heaven
For every cup of water given.

28* I have loved the stars too truly to be fearful of the night.

28† · Anonymous · *The Oxford Book of Local Verses*. ¶ ‘Inscribed on a well, Derry Hill, near Chippenham, Wiltshire’. The middle couplet alludes to Matthew 6.3, and the final couplet to Matthew 10.42/Mark 9.41.

28* · Miss Sarah Williams (1837 – 1868) · *Twilight Hours*. ¶ This is a line from “The Old Astronomer”.

29

29†

Why, who makes much of a miracle?
 As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,
 Whether I walk the streets of MANHATTAN,
 Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
 Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water,
 Or stand under trees in the woods,
 Or talk by day with any one I love, or sleep in the bed at night with any one I love,
 Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
 Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
 Or watch honey bees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon,
 Or animals feeding in the fields,
 Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,
 Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet & bright,
 Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;
 These with the rest, one & all, are to me miracles,
 The whole referring, yet each distinct & in its place.

To me every hour of the light & dark is a miracle,
 Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
 Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same,
 Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,
 The fishes that swim – the rocks – the motion of the waves – the ships with men in
 them,
 What stranger miracles are there?

29†

Weep you no more, sad fountains;
 What need you flow so fast?
 Look how the snowy mountains
 Heaven's sun doth gently waste.
 But my sun's heav'nly eyes
 View not your weeping,
 That now lies sleeping,
 Softly, softly, now softly lies
 Sleeping.

29† · "Miracles" · Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*.

29† · Anonymous · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

Sleep is a reconciling,
A rest that peace begets.
Doth not the sun rise smiling
When fair at e'en he sets?
Rest you then, rest, sad eyes;
Melt not in weeping
While she lies sleeping,
Softly, softly, now softly lies
Sleeping.

29* Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

30

30†

The little hedgerow birds,
 That peck along the roads, regard him not.
 He travels on, and in his face, his step,
 His gait, is one expression: every limb,
 His look & bending figure, all bespeak
 A man who does not move with pain, but moves
 With thought. He is insensibly subdued
 To settled quiet: he is one by whom
 All effort seems forgotten; one to whom
 Long patience hath such mild composure given
 That patience now doth seem a thing of which
 He hath no need. He is by nature led
 To peace so perfect that the young behold
 With envy, what the old man hardly feels.
 I asked him whither he was bound, and what
 The object of his journey. He replied,
 Sir, I am going many miles to take
 A last leave of my son, a mariner,
 Who from a seafight has been brought to FALMOUTH,
 And there is dying in an hospital.

30†

When as a child I laughed and wept,
 Time crept.
 When as a youth I dreamed and talked,
 Time walked.
 When I became a full grown man
 Time ran.
 And later as I older grew,
 Time flew.
 Soon I shall find when travelling on
 Time gone.
 Will *Christ* have saved my soul by then?
 Amen.

30† · “Old Man Travelling” · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ Subtitle: ‘Animal Tranquility and Decay, a Sketch’. In later editions of his books, Dr Wordsworth dropped lines 15–20 from this poem.

30† · Anonymous · *The Oxford Book of Local Verses*. ¶ ‘An inscription on the pendulum of the tower clock, St Lawrence’s Church, Bidborough, Kent’.

30*

For hearts of truest mettle
Absence doth join, and time doth settle.

30* · Anonymous · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ This couplet is taken from a longer poem, which Palgrave names “Present in Absence”. The poem is sometimes attributed to the Rev Dr Donne; Prof Sir Herbert Grierson attributes it to John Hoskins.

MONTH VIII

Hunters

I

1† In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

1† The ~~LORD~~ bless thee, and keep thee:

The ~~LORD~~ make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The ~~LORD~~ lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

1* Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

2

2‡ Lord, how are they increased that trouble me; ☞ many are they that rise against me.

Many one there is to say of my soul, ☞ there is no help for him in his God.

But thou, O Lord art my defender; ☞ thou art my worship, and the lifter up of my head.

I did call upon the Lord with my voice, ☞ and he heard me out of his holy hill.

I laid me down and slept, and rose up again, ☞ for the Lord sustained me.

I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people ☞ that have set themselves against me round about.

Up, Lord, and help me, O my God, for thou smitest all mine enemies upon the cheekbone; ☞ thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

Salvation belongeth unto the Lord, ☞ and thy blessing is upon thy people.

2† Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night. Amen.

2* What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put assunder.

3

3† O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, ☞ neither chasten me in thy displeasure.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; ☞ O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.

My soul also is sore troubled; ☞ but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me?

Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my soul; ☞ O save me for thy mercy's sake.

For in death no man remembereth thee, ☞ and who will give thee thanks in the pit?

I am weary of my groaning; every night I wash my bed, ☞ and water my couch with my tears.

My beauty is gone for very trouble, ☞ and worn away because of all my enemies.

Away from me, all ye that work vanity, ☞ for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

The Lord hath heard my petition; ☞ the Lord will receive my prayer.

All my enemies shall be confounded, and sore vexed; ☞ they shall be turned back, and put to shame suddenly.

3† God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest & quietness. Amen.

3* The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

4

4† I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.
My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body.

Yea, young children despised me; I arose, & they spake against me.

All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.

My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

O that my words were now written! O that they were printed in a book!

That they were graven with an iron pen & lead in the rock for ever!

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?

Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.

4† God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity.

Nevertheless, through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it.

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.

In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery,

And their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace.

For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality.

In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to & fro like sparks among the stubble.

They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the peoples, and their Lord shall reign for ever.

4* I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.

5

5† Then the ~~LORE~~ answered *Job* out of the whirlwind, and said,

Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man;

For I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof;

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,

And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Declare if thou knowest it all.

Where is the way where light dwelleth? And as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?

Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? Or because the number of thy days is great?

Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle & war?

By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;

To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

Hath the rain a father? Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

Out of whose womb came the ice? And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

Canst thou bind the sweet influences of *Pleiades*, or loose the bands of *Orion*?

Canst thou bring forth *Mazzaroth* in his season? Or canst thou guide *Arcturus* with his sons?

Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who hath given understanding to the heart?

Who can number the clouds in wisdom? Or who can stay the bottles of heaven,

When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?

Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? Or fill the appetite of the young lions,

When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?

Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?

They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.

Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.

Who hath sent out the wild ass free? Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.

He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

Will the ox be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

Canst thou bind the ox with his band in the furrow? Or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? Or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?

Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? Or wings and feathers unto the ostrich,

Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them?

She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear;

Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.

Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible.

He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off,

The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?

Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.

Moreover, the **LORD** answered *Job*, and said,

Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Then *Job* answered the **LORD**, and said,

Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Then answered the **LORD** unto *Job* out of the whirlwind, and said,

Gird up thy loins now like a man:

I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory & beauty.

Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.

Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

Then will I also confess unto thee yhat thine own right hand can save thee.

Behold now *Behemoth*, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.

He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.

He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.

He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.

The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.

Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up JORDAN into his mouth.

He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.

Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook, or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?

Canst thou put an hook into his nose, or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

Will he make many supplications unto thee? Will he speak soft words unto thee?

Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

Shall the companions make a banquet of him? Shall they part him among the merchants?

Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons, or his head with fish spears?

Lay thine hand upon him; remember the battle, do no more.

Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?

None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

Who can discover the face of his garment? Or who can come to him with his double bridle?

Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about.

His scales are his pride, Shut up together as with a close seal.

One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.

They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.

By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.

Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.

His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.

The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.

The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.

He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.

The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble.

Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.

Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.

He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.

Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

Then *Job* answered the **LORD**, and said,

I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not;

Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

5† Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name. Amen.

5* The **LORD** gave, and the **LORD** hath taken away; blessed be the name of the **LORD**.

6

6† The heavens declare the glory of God, ☿ and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.

One day telleth another, ☿ and one night certieth another.

There is neither speech nor language, ☿ but their voices are heard among them.

Their sound is gone out into all lands, ☿ and their words into the ends of the world.

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, ☿ which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course.

It goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again, ☿ and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul; ☿ the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart; ☿ the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever; ☿ the judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, ☿ sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.

6† God is a righteous judge, strong & patient; ☿ and God is provoked every day.

If a man will not turn, he will whet his sword; ☿ he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

He hath prepared for him the instruments of death; ☿ he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

Behold, the ungodly travaileth with iniquity; ☿ he hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

He hath graven & digged up a pit, ☿ and is fallen himself into the destruction that he made for other.

For his travail shall come upon his own head, ☿ and his wickedness shall fall on his own pate.

6* Great men are not always wise.

7

7† The earth is the **LORE**'s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the **LORE**? Or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the **LORE**, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. **Selah.**

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The **LORE** strong and mighty, the **LORE** mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The **LORE** of hosts, he is the King of glory. **Selah.**

7† Why standest thou so far off, O Lord, ☿ and hidest thy face in the needful time of trouble?

The ungodly, for his own lust, doth persecute the poor; ☿ let them be taken in the crafty wiliness that they have imagined.

For he hath said in his heart, Tush, I shall never be cast down; ☿ there shall no harm happen unto me.

He sitteth lurking in the thievish corners of the streets, ☿ and privily in his lurking dens doth he murder the innocent; his eyes are set against the poor.

For he lieth waiting secretly; even as a lion lurketh he in his den, ☿ that he may ravish the poor.

Arise, O Lord God, and lift up thine hand; ☿ forget not the poor.

Break thou the power of the ungodly & malicious; ☿ search out his ungodliness, until thou find none.

7* The **LORE** is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works.

8

8† Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, ☞ for it becometh well the just to be thankful.

Praise the Lord with harp; ☞ sing praises unto him with the lute, and instrument of ten strings.

Sing unto the Lord a new song; ☞ sing praises lustily unto him with a good courage.

For the word of the Lord is true, ☞ and all his works are faithful.

He loveth righteousness and judgement; ☞ the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, ☞ and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth.

He gathereth the waters of the sea together, as it were upon an heap, ☞ and layeth up the deep, as in a treasure-house.

Let all the earth fear the Lord; ☞ stand in awe of him, all ye that dwell in the world.

For he spake, and it was done; ☞ he commanded, and it stood fast.

The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, ☞ and maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect, and casteth out the counsels of princes.

The counsel of the Lord shall endure for ever, ☞ and the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation.

Blessed are the people, whose God is the Lord, ☞ and blessed are the folk, that he hath chosen to him to be his inheritance.

8† There be many that say, Who will show us any good? ~~LORE~~, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn & their wine increased.

I will both lay me down in peace, & sleep: for thou, ~~LORE~~, only makest me dwell in safety.

8* Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters: and thy footsteps are not known.

9

9† Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, ☞ so longeth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God; ☞ when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?

My tears have been my meat day & night, ☞ while they daily say unto me, Where is now thy God?

Now when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart by myself, ☞ for I went with the multitude, and brought them forth into the house of God;

In the voice of praise & thanksgiving, ☞ among such as keep holy-day.

Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul ☞ and why art thou so disquieted within me?

Put thy trust in God, ☞ for I will yet give him thanks for the help of his countenance.

My God, my soul is vexed within me, ☞ therefore will I remember thee concerning the land of JORDAN, and the little hill of HERMON.

One deep calleth another, because of the noise of the water-pipes, ☞ all thy waves & storms are gone over me.

The Lord hath granted his loving-kindness in the day-time, ☞ and in the night-season did I sing of him, and made my prayer unto the God of my life.

I will say unto the God of my strength, Why hast thou forgotten me? ☞ Why go I thus heavily, while the enemy oppresses me?

My bones are smitten asunder as with a sword, ☞ while mine enemies that trouble me cast me in the teeth;

Namely, while they say daily unto me, ☞ Where is now thy God?

Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, ☞ and why art thou so disquieted within me?

O put thy trust in God, ☞ for I will yet thank him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God.

9† In the Lord put I my trust; ☞ how say ye then to my soul, that she should flee as a bird unto the hill?

For lo, the ungodly bend their bow, and make ready their arrows within the quiver, ☞ that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart.

If the foundations be destroyed, ☞ what hath the righteous done?

The Lord is in his holy temple; ☞ the Lord's seat is in heaven.

His eyes consider the poor, ☞ and his eyelids try the children of men.

Upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire & brimstone, storm and tempest: ☞ this shall be their portion to drink.

For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; ☞ his countenance will behold the thing that is just.

9* Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

IO

10† God is our refuge & strength, ☞ a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, ☞ and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though the waters thereof roar & be troubled, ☞ though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. **Selah.**

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, ☞ the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: ☞ God shall help her, and that right early.

The heathen raged; the kingdoms were moved; ☞ he uttered his voice; the earth melted.

The Lord of hosts is with us; ☞ the God of Jacob is our refuge. **Selah.**

Come, behold the works of the Lord, ☞ what desolations he hath made in the earth.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; ☞ he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

Be still, and know that I am God: ☞ I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us; ☞ the God of Jacob is our refuge. **Selah.**

10† The **LORD** is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod & thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the **LORD** for ever.

10* Keep me as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

II

¶ Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; ☩ according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, ☩ and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults, ☩ and my sin is ever before me.

Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, ☩ that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged.

Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, ☩ and in sin hath my mother conceived me.

But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts, ☩ and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.

Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; ☩ thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Thou shalt make me hear of joy & gladness, ☩ that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Turn thy face from my sins, ☩ and put out all my misdeeds.

Make me a clean heart, O God, ☩ and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence, ☩ and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

O give me the comfort of thy help again, ☩ and stablish me with thy free Spirit.

Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, ☩ and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health, ☩ and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord, ☩ and my mouth shall shew thy praise.

For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee, ☩ but thou delightest not in burnt offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; ☩ a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.

¶ The Lord is king for ever & ever, ☩ and the heathen are perished out of the land.

Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the poor; ☩ thou preparest their heart, and thine ear hearkeneth;

To help the fatherless & poor unto their right, ☩ that the man of the earth be no more exalted against them.

II* Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

12

12† Bless the **LORD**, O my soul. O **LORD** my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of the **LORD** are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.

The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

O **LORD**, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

So is this great & wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

The glory of the **LORD** shall endure for ever: the **LORD** shall rejoice in his works.

He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

I will sing unto the **LORD** as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the **LORD**.

Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.

Bless thou the **LORD**, O my soul. Praise ye the **LORD**.

12† Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee:

For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge:

Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried:

The **LORD** do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee & me.

12* Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

13

13† O Lord, thou hast searched me out & known me; ☞ thou knowest my down-sitting & mine up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts long before.

Thou art about my path, & about my bed, ☞ and spiest out all my ways.

For lo, there is not a word in my tongue, ☞ but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

Thou hast fashioned me behind & before, ☞ and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful & excellent for me; ☞ I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit, ☞ or whither shall I go then from thy presence?

If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; ☞ If I go down to hell, thou art there also.

If I take the wings of the morning, ☞ and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there also shall thy hand lead me, ☞ and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me, ☞ then shall my night be turned to day.

Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day; ☞ the darkness & light to thee are both alike.

For my reins are thine; ☞ thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

I will give thanks unto thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; ☞ marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

My bones are not hid from thee, ☞ though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth.

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, ☞ and in thy book were all my members written.

How dear are thy counsels unto me, O God! ☞ O how great is the sum of them!

If I tell them, they are more in number than the sand; when I wake up I am present with thee.

Wilt thou not slay the wicked, O God? ☞ Depart from me, ye blood-thirsty men.

For they speak unrighteously against thee, ☞ and thine enemies take thy name in vain.

Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, ☞ and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

Yea, I hate them right sore, ☞ even as though they were mine enemies.

Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; ☞ prove me, and examine my thoughts.

Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, ☞ and lead me in the way everlasting.

13† O ~~Lord~~ our governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babes & sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies that thou mightest still the enemy & the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon & the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory & honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep & oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

The fowl of the air, & the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O ~~Lord~~ our governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.

13* The truth shall make you free.

14

14† Praise ye the **LORD**: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

The **LORD** doth build up JERUSALEM: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

Great is our **LORD**, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.

The **LORD** lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Sing unto the **LORD** with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:

Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.

He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

The **LORD** taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

14† Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, ☉ or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?

Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, ☉ and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.

He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour, ☉ and hath not slandered his neighbour.

He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes, ☉ and maketh much of them that fear the Lord.

He that sweareth unto his neighbour, and disappointeth him not, ☉ though it were to his own hindrance.

He that hath not given his money upon usury, ☉ nor taken reward against the innocent.

Whoso doeth these things ☉ shall never fall.

14* The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

15

15† O praise the Lord of heaven; ☉ praise him in the height.

Praise him, all ye angels of his; ☉ praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun & moon; ☉ praise him, all ye stars & light.

Praise him, all ye heavens, ☉ and ye waters that are above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord; ☉ for he spake the word, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created.

He hath made them fast for ever & ever; ☉ he hath given them a law which shall not be broken.

Praise the Lord upon earth, ☉ ye dragons, and all deeps;

Fire & hail, snow & vapours, ☉ wind & storm, fulfilling his word;

Mountains & all hills, ☉ fruitful trees & all cedars;

Beasts & all cattle; ☉ worms & feathered fowls;

Kings of the earth & all people, ☉ princes & all judges of the world;

Young men & maidens, old men & children, praise the name of the Lord, ☉ for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven & earth.

15† Praise ye the **LORD**. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery & harp.

Praise him with the timbrel & dance: praise him with stringed instruments & organs.

Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Let every thing that hath breath praise the **LORD**. praise ye the **LORD**.

15* Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

16

16† Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, & her adulteries from between her breasts;

Let I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.

And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms.

For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread & my water, my wool & my flax, mine oil & my drink.

Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

For she did not know that I gave her corn, & wine, & oil, and multiplied her silver & gold, which they prepared for *Baal*.

Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, & my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool & my flax given to cover her nakedness.

And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand.

I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, & her sabbaths, & all her solemn feasts.

And I will destroy her vines & her fig trees, whereof she hath said, 'These are my rewards that my lovers have given me:' and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.

And I will visit upon her the days of *Baalim*, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings & her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the **LORD**.

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

And I will give her her vineyards from thence, & the valley of *ACHOR* for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, & as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

And it shall be at that day, saith the **LORD**, that thou shalt call me *Isbi*; and shalt call me no more *Baali*.

For I will take away the names of *Baalim* out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.

And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field & with the fowls of heaven, & with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow & the sword & the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, & in judgment, & in lovingkindness, & in mercies.

I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the **LORD**.

And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the **LORD**, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;

And the earth shall hear the corn, & the wine, & the oil; and they shall hear JEZREEL.

And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

16† Come, and let us return unto the **LORD**: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the **LORD**: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter & former rain unto the earth.

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

16* No man can serve two masters.

I7

17† My soul doth magnify the Lord, ☉ and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.

For he hath regarded: ☉ the lowliness of his hand-maiden.

For, behold, from henceforth ☉ all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me, ☉ and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him ☉ throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm; ☉ he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, ☉ and hath exalted the humble & meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: ☉ and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering of his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: ☉ as he promised to our forefathers, *Abraham* & his seed, for ever.

17† Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, ☉ according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen ☉ thy salvation,

Which thou hast prepared ☉ before the face of all peoples;

To be a light to lighten the gentiles, ☉ and the glory of thy people Israel.

17* **Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.**

18

18† Blessèd be the Lord God of Israel: ☞ for he hath visited and redeemed his people;

And he hath raised up a mighty salvation for us ☞ in the house of his servant *David*;
As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets ☞ which have been since the world began;

That we should be saved from our enemies ☞ and from the hand of all that hate us;

To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, ☞ and to remember his holy covenant;

To perform the oath which he sware to our forefather *Abraham* ☞ that he would give us;

That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies: ☞ might serve him without fear;

In holiness & righteousness before him ☞ all the days of our life.

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: ☞ for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people ☞ for the remission of their sins,

Through the tender mercy of our God, ☞ whereby the day spring from on high hath visited us;

To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: ☞ to guide our feet into the way of peace.

18† Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever & ever. Amen.

18* Judge not, that ye be not judged.

19

19† Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger & thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

19† Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me:

I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

19* A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country.

20

20† Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Love suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

20†

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing spirit art,
Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dullness of our blinded sight.

Anoint & cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of thy grace.

20† · “Veni Creator Spiritus” · John Cosin, Bishop of Durham (1594 – 1672) · *The Book of Common Prayer*.

¶ The hymn is ancient, being composed by a Frankish monk, Rabanus Maurus, in the ninth century, and translated into English by the Bishop of Durham. The original hymn concludes with a further verse and a half.

Keep far from foes, give peace at home:
Where thou art guide, no ill can come.

20* Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

21

21† Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Praying always with all prayer & supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

21† Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Every good gift & every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

21* It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

22

22[†] In the year that King *Uzziah* died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high & lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the **LORD** of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the **LORD** of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

22[†] The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of *David*, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the **LORD** of hosts will perform this.

22* Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

23

23† Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds & rushes.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

And the ransomed of the **LORD** shall return, and come to ZION with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy & gladness, and sorrow & sighing shall flee away.

23† But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the **LORD** shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the **LORD**, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of ZION, and the word of the **LORD** from JERUSALEM.

And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the **LORD** of hosts hath spoken it.

23* If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.

24

24† Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to JERUSALEM, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the **LORD**'s hand double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the **LORD**, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

And the glory of the **LORD** shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the **LORD** hath spoken it.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the **LORD** bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

O ZION, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O JERUSALEM, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Behold, the Lord **GOD** will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Who hath directed the Spirit of the **LORD**, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.

Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the **LORD**, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the **LORD**, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

But they that wait upon the **LORD** shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

24† Thus saith God the **LORD**, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

I the **LORD** have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles;

To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

I am the **LORD**: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

24* God is no respecter of persons.

25

25† Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the **LORD** revealed?

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the **LORD** hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the **LORD** to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the **LORD** shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

25† But now thus saith the **LORD** that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

For I am the **LORD** thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

25* God is love.

26

26† Seek ye the **LORD** while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the **LORD**, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the **LORD**.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the **LORD** for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

26† How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto ZION, Thy God reigneth!

Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the **LORD** shall bring again ZION.

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of JERUSALEM: for the **LORD** hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed JERUSALEM.

The **LORD** hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

26* Some have entertained angels unawares.

27

27† For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create JERUSALEM a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

And I will rejoice in JERUSALEM, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an 100 years old; but the sinner being an 100 years old shall be accursed.

And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the **LORD**, and their offspring with them.

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the **LORD**.

27† Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the **LORD** is risen upon thee.

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the **LORD** shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the gentiles shall come unto thee.

27* The love of money is the root of all evil.

28

28† Behold, I will make JERUSALEM a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against JERUSALEM.

And in that day will I make JERUSALEM a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

In that day, saith the **LORD**, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of JERUSALEM shall be my strength in the **LORD** of hosts their God.

In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand & on the left: and JERUSALEM shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in JERUSALEM.

The **LORD** also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of *David* and the glory of the inhabitants of JERUSALEM do not magnify themselves against Judah.

In that day shall the **LORD** defend the inhabitants of JERUSALEM; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as *David*; and the house of *David* shall be as God, as the angel of the **LORD** before them.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against JERUSALEM.

And I will pour upon the house of *David*, and upon the inhabitants of JERUSALEM, the spirit of grace & of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

In that day shall there be a great mourning in JERUSALEM, as the mourning of HADADRIMMON in the valley of MEGIDDON.

And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of *David* apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of *Nathan* apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of *Levi* apart, and their wives apart; the family of *Shimei* apart, and their wives apart;

All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

Behold, the day of the **LORD** cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

For I will gather all nations against JERUSALEM to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then shall the **LORD** go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the MOUNT OF OLIVES, which is before JERUSALEM on the east, and the MOUNT OF OLIVES shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto AZAL: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of *Uzziah*, King of Judah: and the **LORD** my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:

But it shall be one day which shall be known to the **LORD**, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from JERUSALEM; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

And the **LORD** shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one **LORD**, and his name one.

All the land shall be turned as a plain from GEBA to RIMMON south of JERUSALEM: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from BENJAMIN'S GATE unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the TOWER OF HANANEEL unto the king's winepresses.

And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but JERUSALEM shall be safely inhabited.

And this shall be the plague wherewith the **LORD** will smite all the people that have fought against JERUSALEM; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

28† The Spirit of the Lord **GOD** is upon me; because the **LORD** hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the **LORD**, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

To appoint unto them that mourn in ZION, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the **LORD**, that he might be glorified.

And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

28* How great a matter a little fire kindleth.

29

29† Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the **LORD** of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

And he shall sit as a refiner & purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of *Levi*, and purge them as gold & silver, that they may offer unto the **LORD** an offering in righteousness.

Then shall the offering of Judah & JERUSALEM be pleasant unto the **LORD**, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

And I will come near to you to judgement; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the **LORD** of hosts.

For I am the **LORD**, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the **LORD** of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes & offerings.

Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the **LORD** of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the **LORD** of hosts.

And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the **LORD** of hosts.

Your words have been stout against me, saith the **LORD**. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?

Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the **LORD** of hosts?

And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

Then they that feared the **LORD** spake often one to another: and the **LORD** hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the **LORD**, and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the **LORD** of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the **LORD** of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the **LORD** of hosts.

Remember ye the law of *Moses* my servant, which I commanded unto him in HOREB for all Israel, with the statutes & judgments.

Behold, I will send you *Elijah* the prophet before the coming of the great & dreadful day of the **LORD**:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

29† Thus saith the **LORD**: the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the **LORD**: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

29* We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

30

30† And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I *John* saw the holy city, NEW JERUSALEM, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy JERUSALEM, descending out of heaven from God,

Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

30† These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

30* Unto the pure all things are pure.

30* · Titus 1.15 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*. ¶ The verse continues: 'but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.'

MONTH IX

Frost

I

1†

At QUINCEY'S MOAT the squandering village ends,
And there in the almshouse dwell the dearest friends
Of all the village, two old dames that cling
As close as any trueloves in the spring.
Long, long ago they passed threescore-and-ten,
And in this doll's house lived together then;
All things they have in common, being so poor,
And their one fear, death's shadow at the door.
Each sundown makes them mournful, each sunrise
Brings back the brightness in their failing eyes.

How happy go the rich fair-weather days
When on the roadside folk stare in amaze
At such a honeycomb of fruit & flowers
As mellows round their threshold; what long hours
They gloat upon their steeping hollyhocks,
Bee's balsams, feathery southernwood, & stocks,
Fiery dragon's-mouths, great mallow leaves
For salves, & lemon-plants in bushy sheaves,
Shagged *Esau's*-hands with five green finger-tips.
Such old sweet names are ever on their lips.
As pleased as little children where these grow
In cobbled pattens & worn gowns they go,
Proud of their wisdom when on gooseberry shoots
They stuck eggshells to fright from coming fruits
The brisk-billed rascals; pausing still to see

1† · "Almswomen" · Prof Edmund Blunden (1896 – 1974) · *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. 11: 'Quincey's Moat' was almost certainly inspired by Wardes Moat, a large house in the village of Spalding in Kent, a village in which the poet spent a creatively-formative portion of his childhood.

Their neighbour owls saunter from tree to tree,
 Or in the hushing half light mouse the lane
 Long-winged & lordly.
 But when those hours wane,
 Indoors they ponder, scared by the harsh storm
 Whose pelting saracens on the window swarm,
 And listen for the mail to clatter past
 And church clock's deep bay withering on the blast;
 They feed the fire that flings a freakish light
 On pictured kings & queens grotesquely bright,
 Platters & pitchers, faded calendars
 And graceful hourglass trim with lavenders.

Many a time they kiss and cry, and pray
 That both be summoned in the selfsame day,
 And wiseman linnet tinkling in his cage
 End too with them the friendship of old age,
 And all together leave their treasured room
 Some bell-like evening when the may's in bloom.

1†

Lonely, save for a few faint stars, the sky
 Dreams; and lonely, below, the little street
 Into its gloom retires, secluded and shy.
 Scarcely the dumb roar enters this soft retreat;
 And all is dark, save where come flooding rays
 From a tavern-window; there, to the brisk measure
 Of an organ that down in an alley merrily plays,
 Two children, all alone and no one by,
 Holding their tattered frocks, through an airy maze
 Of motion lightly threaded with nimble feet
 Dance sedately; face to face they gaze,
 Their eyes shining, grave with a perfect pleasure.

1* Youth would be an ideal state if it came a little later in life.

1† · "The Little Dancers" · Prof Laurence Binyon (1869 – 1943) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

1* · Herbert Asquith, 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith (1852 – 1928) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

2

2‡

Here they went with smock & crook,
 Toiled in the sun, lolled in the shade;
 Here they mudded out the brook
 And here their hatchet cleared the glade:
 Harvest supper woke their wit;
 Huntsmen's moon their wooings lit.

From this church they led their brides,
 From this church themselves were led
 Shoulder-high; on these waysides
 Sat to take their beer & bread.
 Names are gone – what men they were
 These their cottages declare.

Names are vanished, save the few
 In the old brown Bible scrawled;
 These were men of pith & thew,
 Whom the city never called;
 Scarce could read or hold a quill,
 Built the barn, the forge, the mill.

On the green they watched their sons
 Playing till too dark to see,
 As their fathers watched them once,
 As my father once watched me;
 While the bat & beetle flew
 On the warm air webbed with dew.

Unrecorded, unrenowned,
 Men from whom my ways begin,
 Here I know you by your ground
 But I know you not within –
 There is silence, there survives
 Not a moment of your lives.

Like the bee that now is blown
 Honey-heavy on my hand,
 From his toppling tansy-throne
 In the green tempestuous land –

I'm in clover now, nor know
Who made honey long ago.

2†

Ah sunflower, weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun:
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done.

Where the youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow:
Arise from their graves and aspire,
Where my sunflower wishes to go.

2* Houses are built to live in and not to look on.

2† · "Ah! Sun-Flower" · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*.

2* · Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (1561 – 1626) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

3

3‡

With coat like any mole's, as soft & black,
 And hazel bows bundled beneath his arm,
 With long-helved spade & rush bag on his back,
 The trapper plods alone about the farm:
 And spies new mounds in the ripe pasture land,
 And where the lob worms writhe up in alarm
 And easy sinks the spade, he takes his stand
 Knowing the moles' dark highroad runs below:
 Then sharp & square he chops the turf, and day
 Gloats on the opened turnpike through the clay.

Out from his wallet hurry pin & prong,
 And trap, & noose to tie it to the bow;
 And then his grand arcanum, oily & strong,
 Found out by his forefather years ago
 To scent the peg and witch the moles along.
 The bow is earthed and arched ready to shoot
 And snatch the death knot fast round the first mole
 Who comes and snuffs well pleased and tries to root
 Past the sly nose peg; back again is put
 The mould, and death left smirking in the hole.
 The old man goes and tallies all his snares
 And finds the prisoners there and takes his toll.

And moles to him are only moles; but hares
 See him afield and scarcely cease to nip
 Their dinners, for he harms not them; he spares
 The drowning fly that of his ale would sip
 And throws the ant the crumbs of comradeship.
 And every time he comes into his yard
 Grey linnet knows he brings the groundsel sheaf,
 And clatters round the cage to be unbarred,
 And on his finger whistles twice as hard.
 What his old vicar says, is his belief,
 In the side pew he sits and hears the truth;
 And never misses once to ring his bell
 On sundays night & morn, nor once since youth

3‡ · "Mole Catcher" · Prof Edmund Blunden (1896 – 1974) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*. ℓ6: A lob worm (or lobworm) is a kind of earthworm, reputedly the largest sort of earthworm found in England and the only deep-burrowing one.

Has heard the chimes afield, but has heard tell
There's not a peal in England sounds so well.

3†

My walk home was lengthened by a diversion in the direction of the kirk. When beneath its walls, I perceived decay had made progress, even in seven months: many a window showed black gaps deprived of glass; and slates jutt'd off here & there, beyond the right line of the roof, to be gradually worked off in coming autumn storms.

I sought, and soon discovered, the three headstones on the slope next the moor: the middle one grey, and half buried in the heath; *Edgar Linton's* only harmonized by the turf and moss creeping up its foot; *Heathcliff's* still bare.

I lingered round them, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath & harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

3* Nothing matters very much and very few things matter at all.

3† · Miss Emily Brontë (1818 – 1848) · *Wuthering Heights*.

3* · Arthur Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour (1848 – 1930) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

4

4‡

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these:
A crimson touch on the hard-wood trees;

A vagrant's morning wide & blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks too;

A shadowy highway cool & brown,
Alluring up and enticing down

From rippled water to dappled swamp,
From purple glory to scarlet pomp;

The outward eye, the quiet will,
And the striding heart from hill to hill;

The tempter apple over the fence;
The cobweb bloom on the yellow quince;

The palish asters along the wood,
A lyric touch of solitude;

An open hand, an easy shoe,
And a hope to make the day go through,

Another to sleep with, and a third
To wake me up at the voice of a bird;

A scrap of gossip at the ferry;
A comrade neither glum nor merry,

Who never defers and never demands,
But, smiling, takes the world in his hands,

Seeing it good as when God first saw
And gave it the weight of his will for law.

And O the joy that is never won,
But follows and follows the journeying sun,

By marsh & tide, by meadow & stream,
A will-o'-the-wind, a light-o'-dream,

The racy smell of the forest loam,
When the stealthy sad-heart leaves go home;

The broad gold wake of the afternoon;
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;

The sound of the hollow sea's release
From stormy tumult to starry peace;

With only another league to wend;
And two brown arms at the journey's end.

These are the joys of the open road –
For him who travels without a load.

4†

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head & sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools. For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour & sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

4* Never complain and never explain.

4† · “The Donkey” · Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Dragon Book of Verse*. ℓ11: While the last verse clearly alludes to the Palm Sunday narratives of the gospels, this is perhaps an allusion the story of Balaam's donkey in Numbers 22.

4* · Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804 – 1881) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Many individuals have been claimed as the origin of this maxim, but, as far as the Almanacker has been able to ascertain, Lord Beaconsfield's utterance was the earliest. Elbert Hubbard provides an amusing gloss: ‘Never explain – your friends do not need it and your enemies will not believe you anyway.’

5

5‡

Smile at us; pay us; pass us; but do not quite forget;
 For we are the people of England, that never have spoken yet.
 There is many a fat farmer that drinks less cheerfully;
 There is many a free french peasant who is richer & sadder than we.
 There are no folk in the whole world so helpless or so wise.
 There is hunger in our bellies; there is laughter in our eyes;
 You laugh at us and love us; both mugs & eyes are wet:
 Only you do not know us. For we have not spoken yet.

The fine french kings came over in a flutter of flags & dames.
 We liked their smiles & battles, but we never could say their names.
 The blood ran red to BOSWORTH and the high french lords went down;
 There was naught but a naked people under a naked crown.
 And the eyes of the king's servants turned terribly every way,
 And the gold of the king's servants rose higher every day.
 They burned the homes of the shaven men, that had been quaint & kind,
 Till there was no bed in a monk's house, nor food that man could find.
 The inns of God where no man paid, that were the wall of the weak,
 The king's servants ate them all. And still we did not speak.

And the face of the king's servants grew greater than the king:
 He tricked them, and they trapped him, and stood round him in a ring.
 The new grave lords closed round him, that had eaten the abbey's fruits,
 And the men of the new religion, with their bibles in their boots,
 We saw their shoulders moving, to menace or discuss,
 And some were pure and some were vile; but none took heed of us.
 We saw the king as they killed him, and his face was proud & pale;
 And a few men talked of freedom, while England talked of ale.

A war that we understood not came over the world and woke
 Americans, frenchmen, irish; but we knew not the things they spoke.
 They talked about rights & nature & peace & the people's reign:
 And the squires, our masters, bade us fight; and scorned us never again.
 Weak if we be for ever, could none condemn us then;
 Men called us serfs & drudges; men knew that we were men.
 In foam & flame at TRAFALGAR, on ALBUERA plains,
 We did & died like lions, to keep ourselves in chains;
 We lay in living ruins; firing & fearing not

5‡ · R "The Secret People" · Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

The strange fierce face of the frenchmen who knew for what they fought,
 And the man who seemed to be more than a man we strained against & broke;
 And we broke our own rights with him. And still we never spoke.

Our patch of glory ended; we never heard guns again.
 But the squire seemed struck in the saddle; he was foolish, as if in pain;
 He leaned on a staggering lawyer; he clutched a cringing jew;
 He was stricken; it may be, after all, he was stricken at WATERLOO.
 Or perhaps the shades of the shaven men, whose spoil is in his house,
 Come back in shining shapes at last to spoil his last carouse:
 We only know the last sad squires rode slowly towards the sea,
 And a new people takes the land: and still it is not we.

They have given us into the hand of new unhappy lords,
 Lords without anger or honour, who dare not carry their swords.
 They fight by shuffling papers; they have bright dead alien eyes;
 They look at our labour & laughter as a tired man looks at flies.
 And the load of their loveless pity is worse than the ancient wrongs,
 Their doors are shut in the evening; and they know no songs.

We hear men speaking for us of new laws strong & sweet,
 Yet is there no man speaketh as we speak in the street.
 It may be we shall rise the last as frenchmen rose the first,
 Our wrath come after Russia's wrath and our wrath be the worst.
 It may be we are meant to mark with our riot & our rest
 God's scorn for all men governing. It may be beer is best.
 But we are the people of England; and we have not spoken yet.
 Smile at us; pay us; pass us. But do not quite forget.

5†

The wild duck startles like a sudden thought,
 And heron slow as if it might be caught.
 The flopping crows on weary wings go by
 And grey-beard jackdaws noising as they fly.
 The crowds of starnels whizz and hurry by,
 And darken like a clod the evening sky.
 The larks like thunder rise and suthy round,
 Then drop and nestle in the stubble ground.
 The wild swan hurries high and noises loud
 With white neck peering to the evening cloud.
 The weary rooks to distant woods are gone.
 With lengths of tail the magpie winnows on

To neighbouring tree, and leaves the distant crow
While small birds nestle in the edge below.

5* The palace is not safe when the cottage is not happy.

6

6‡

My pensive *Sara*, thy soft cheek reclined
 Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
 To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown
 With white-flowered jasmine, & the broad-leaved myrtle,
 (Meet emblems they of innocence & love)
 And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
 Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
 Serenely brilliant (such would wisdom be)
 Shine opposite. How exquisite the scents
 Snatched from yon bean field. And the world só hushed.
 The stilly murmur of the distant sea
 Tells us of silence. And that simplest lute,
 Placed length-ways in the clasping casement, hark.
 How by the desultory breeze caressed,
 Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,
 It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
 Tempt to repeat the wrong. And now, its strings
 Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
 Over delicious surges sink & rise,
 Such a soft floating witchery of sound
 As twilight elfins make, when they at eve
 Voyage on gentle gales from fairy land,
 Where melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
 Footless & wild, like birds of paradise,
 Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing.
 O the one life within us & abroad,
 Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
 A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
 Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere –
 Methinks, it should have been impossible
 Not to love all things in a world so filled;
 Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
 Is music slumbering on her instrument.

6‡ · ℞ “The Eolian Harp” · Samuel Coleridge (1772 – 1834) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ An Aeolian harp is a kind of stringed instrument, designed so that it can be played entirely by the wind. Coleridge’s own note indicates that this poem was written at Clevedon in Somerset. ℓ1: The Sara in question is generally accepted as being the poet’s (future) wife. Confusingly, he also had a crush (Sara Hutchnison) and a daughter of that name.

And thus, my love, as on the midway slope
 Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
 Whilst through my half-closed eyelids I behold
 The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
 And tranquil muse upon tranquility:
 Full many a thought uncalled and undetained,
 And many idle flitting phantasies,
 Traverse my indolent & passive brain,
 As wild & various as the random gales
 That swell & flutter on this subject lute.

And what if all of animated nature
 Be but organic harps diversely framed,
 That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
 Plastic & vast, one intellectual breeze,
 At once the soul of each, and God of all?

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
 Darts, O beloved woman, nor such thoughts
 Dim & unhallowed dost thou not reject,
 And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
 Meek daughter in the family of *Christ*,
 Well hast thou said and holily dispraised
 These shapings of the unregenerate mind;
 Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
 On vain philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
 For never guiltless may I speak of him,
 The incomprehensible, save when with awe
 I praise him, and with faith that inly feels;
 Who with his saving mercies healèd me,
 A sinful & most miserable man,
 Wildered & dark, and gave me to possess
 Peace, & this cot, & thee, heart-honoured maid.

6†

The ring so worn, as you behold,
 So thin, so pale, is yet of gold:
 The passion such it was to prove;
 Worn with life's care, love yet was love.

6* The same principles which at first view lead to scepticism, pursued to a certain point bring men back to common sense.

6† · The Rev George Crabbe (1754 – 1832) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

6* · George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne (1685 – 1753) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

7

7‡

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
 And whisper to their souls to go,
 Whilst some of their sad friends do say
 The breath goes now, 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 & 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
 Absence, because it doth remove
 Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,
 That our selves know not what it is,
 Inter-assured of the mind,
 Care less, eyes, lips, & 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 airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
 As stiff twin compasses are two;
 Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,
 Yet when the other far doth roam,
 It leans & hearkens after it,
 And grows erect, as that comes home.

7‡ · "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

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.

7†

Let others sing of knights & paladins
 In agè accents & untimely words;
 Paint shadows in imaginary lines
 Which well the reach of their high wits records:
 But I must sing of thee, and those fair eyes
 Authentic shall my verse in time to come,
 When yet th' unborn shall say, 'Lo where she lies
 Whose beauty made him speak that else was dumb.'
 These are the arks, the trophies I erect,
 That fortify thy name against old age;
 And these thy sacred virtues must protect
 Against the dark, and time's consuming rage.
 Though th' error of my youth they shall discover,
 Suffice they show I lived and was thy lover.

7* Fear God, and take your own part.

7† · Samuel Daniel (1562 – 1619) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

7* · George Borrow (1803 – 1881) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

8

8‡

Sweetest love, I do not go,
 For weariness of thee,
 Nor in hope the world can show
 A fitter love for me;
 But since that I
 Must die at last, 'tis best
 To use myself in jest
 Thus by feigned deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
 And yet is here today;
 He hath no desire nor sense,
 Nor half so short a way:
 Then fear not me,
 But believe that I shall make
 Speedier journeys, since I take
 More wings & spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power,
 That if good fortune fall,
 Cannot add another hour,
 Nor a lost hour recall.
 But come bad chance,
 And we join to't our strength,
 And we teach it art & length,
 Itself o'er us to'advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind,
 But sigh'st my soul away;
 When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
 My life's blood doth decay.
 It cannot be
 That thou lov'st me, as thou say'st,
 If in thine my life thou waste,
 That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
 Forethink me any ill;

Destiny may take thy part,
 And may thy fears fulfil;
 But think that we
 Are but turned aside to sleep;
 They who one another keep
 Alive, ne'er parted be.

8†

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
 Mighty & 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 & 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, & soul's delivery.
 Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, & desperate men,
 And dost with poison, war, & 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.

8* I am reminded of a blind man in a dark room – looking for a black hat – which isn't there.

8† · Holy Sonnet 10 · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

8* · Charles Bowen, Baron Bowen (1835 – 1894) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

9

9‡

Let us go then, you & I,
 When the evening is spread out against the sky
 Like a patient etherised 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...
 O do not ask, What is it?
 Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come & 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 & create,
 And time for all the works & days of hands
 That lift & drop a question on your plate;
 Time for you & time for me,
 And time yet for a 100 indecisions,
 And for a 100 visions & revisions,
 Before the taking of a toast & tea.

9‡ · ℝ “The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock” · Prof Thomas Eliot (1888 – 1965) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Prof Eliot begins this poem with a lengthy quotation from Dante, which bears no obvious relation to the text itself – but that’s Eliot.

In the room the women come & 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 & modest, but asserted by a simple pin
(They will say, But how his arms & legs are thin!)
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions & 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 & ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all –
Arms that are braceleted & white & 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 & me.
Should I, after tea & cakes & ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept & fasted, wept & 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 & 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 & the dooryards & 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 & black.
 We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
 By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red & brown
 Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

9†

Upon the downs when shall I breathe at ease,
 Have nothing else to do but what I please,
 In a fresh cooling shade upon the brink
 Of Arden's spring, have time to read and think,
 And stretch, and sleep, when all my care shall be
 For health, and pleasure my philosophy?
 When shall I rest from business, noise, & strife,
 Lay down the soldier & the courtier's life,
 And in some little melancholy seat
 Begin at last to live and to forget
 The nonsense and the farce of what the fools call great?

9* But how shall we expect charity towards others when we are so uncharitable to ourselves?

9† · Sir George Etherege (1636 – 1691) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ In his *Letterbook*, Sir George appears to attribute this poem to one Colonel Ashton, and states that it is a free translation of Horace's *Saturae* II.6.60–62.

9* · Sir Thomas Browne (1605 – 1682) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

IO

IO†

I have seen old ships like swans asleep
 Beyond the village which men call TYRE,
 With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
 For FAMAGUSTA & the hidden sun
 That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire;
 And all those ships were certainly so old
 Who knows how oft with squat & noisy gun,
 Questing brown slaves or syrian oranges,
 The pirate genoese
 Hell-raked them till they rolled
 Blood, water, fruit & corpses up the hold.
 But now through friendly seas they softly run,
 Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
 Still patterned with the vine & grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
 Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
 And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
 A drowsy ship of some yet older day;
 And, wonder's breath indrawn,
 Thought I – who knows – who knows – but in that same
 (Fished up beyond Aeaea, patched up new,
 Stern painted brighter blue)
 That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
 (Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
 From TROY's doom-crimson shore,
 And with great lies about his wooden horse
 Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship – who knows, who knows? –
 And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
 To see the mast burst open with a rose,
 And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

IO†

IO† · “The Old Ships” · James Flecker (1884 – 1915) · *The Dragon Book of Verse*. ℓ21: According to Homer (see, for instance, *Ὀδυσσεύς* IX.32), Aeaea was the home of the sorceress Circe.

IO† · “Spring and Fall” · Fr Gerard Hopkins (1844 – 1889) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ There are several places in England and Wales known as Golden Grove (or some variation thereupon), the most famous of which is the Golden Grove estate in Camarthenshire. It's unclear, at least to the Almanacker, which Golden Grove Fr Hopkins had in mind.

Márgarét, áre you gríeving
Over GOLDENGROVE unleaving?
Leáves like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Ah ás the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By & by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wan-wood leaf-meal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sórrów's springs áre the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is *Margaret* you mourn for.

10* Generations will pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks.

II

II†

My sorrow, when she's here with me,
 Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
 Are beautiful as days can be;
 She loves the bare, the withered tree;
 She walks the sodden pasture lane.

Her pleasure will not let me stay.
 She talks and I am fain to list:
 She's glad the birds are gone away,
 She's glad her simple worsted grey
 Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate, deserted trees,
 The faded earth, the heavy sky,
 The beauties she so truly sees,
 She thinks I have no eye for these,
 And vexes me for reason why.

Not yesterday I learned to know
 The love of bare november days
 Before the coming of the snow,
 But it were vain to tell her so,
 And they are better for her praise.

II†

All people that on earth do dwell,
 Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
 Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell;
 Come ye before him, and rejoice.

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;
 Without our aid he did us make;
 We are his flock, he doth us feed,
 And for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,
 Approach with joy his courts unto;

II† · "My November Guest" · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

II† · "Old Hundredth" · The Rev William Kethe (1530 – 1594) · *The Psalms in English*. ¶ This is based on Psalm 100.

Praise, laud, and bless his name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why, the Lord our God is good;
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

II* Leave *now* for dogs and apes. Man has forever.

12

12‡

The lonely season in lonely lands, when fled
 Are half the birds, and mists lie low, and the sun
 Is rarely seen, nor strayeth far from his bed;
 The short days pass unwelcomed one by one.

Out by the ricks the mantled engine stands
 Crestfallen, deserted – for now all hands
 Are told to the plough – and ere it is dawn appear
 The teams following & crossing far & near,
 As hour by hour they broaden the brown bands
 Of the striped fields; and behind them firk and prance
 The heavy rooks, and daws grey-pated dance:
 As awhile, surmounting a crest, in sharp outline
 (A miniature of toil, a gem's design)
 They are pictured, horses & men, or now nearby
 Above the lane they shout lifting the share,
 By the trim hedgerow bloomed with purple air;
 Where, under the thorns, dead leaves in huddle lie
 Packed by the gales of autumn, and in & out
 The small wrens glide
 With a happy note of cheer,
 And yellow amoretts flutter above & about,
 Gay, familiar in fear.

And now, if the night shall be cold, across the sky
 Linnets & twites, in small flocks helter-skelter,
 All the afternoon to the gardens fly,
 From thistle pastures hurrying to gain the shelter
 Of american rhododendron or cherry laurel:
 And here & there, near chilly setting of sun,
 In an isolated tree a congregation
 Of starlings chatter & chide,
 Thickset as summer leaves, in garrulous quarrel:
 Suddenly they hush as one –
 The tree top springs –
 And off, with a whirr of wings,
 They fly by the score
 To the holly thicket, and there with myriads more
 Dispute for the roosts; and from the unseen nation

A babel of tongues, like running water unceasing,
 Makes live the wood, the flocking cries increasing,
 Wrangling discordantly, incessantly,
 While falls the night on them self-occupied;
 The long dark night, that lengthens slow,
 Deepening with winter to starve grass & tree,
 And soon to bury in snow
 The earth, that, sleeping 'neath her frozen stole,
 Shall dream a dream crept from the sunless pole
 Of how her end shall be.

12†

I have seen flowers come in stony places
 And kind things done by men with ugly faces,
 And the gold cup won by the worst horse at the races,
 So I trust, too.

12*

Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things:
 The honest thief, the tender murderer,
 The superstitious atheist.

12† · “An Epilogue” · Dr John Masefield, Poet Laureate (1878 – 1967) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

12* · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ These words are from Browning's “Bishop Blougram's Apology”.

13

13[†]

When I survey the bright
 Celestial sphere;
 So rich with jewels hung, that night
 Doth like an ethiop bride appear:

My soul her wings doth spread
 And heavenward flies,
 Th'Almighty's mysteries to read
 In the large volumes of the skies.

For the bright firmament
 Shoots forth no flame
 So silent, but is eloquent
 In speaking the Creator's name.

No unregarded star
 Contracts its light
 Into so small a character,
 Removed far from our human sight,

But if we steadfast look
 We shall discern
 In it, as in some holy book,
 How man may heavenly knowledge learn.

It tells the conqueror
 That far-stretched power,
 Which his proud dangers traffic for,
 Is but the triumph of an hour:

That from the farthest north,
 Some nation may,
 Yet undiscovered, issue forth,
 And o'er his new-got conquest sway:

Some nation yet shut in
 With hills of ice

13[†] · ☞ "Nox Nocti Indicat Scientiam" · William Habington (1605 – 1654) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ The title is a quotation from the Vulgate, Psalm 19.2 (or 18.2, using the Vulgate numbering of the Psalms), which means, 'Night to night shows knowledge.'

May be let out to scourge his sin,
Till they shall equal him in vice.

And then they likewise shall
Their ruin have;
For as yourselves your empires fall,
And every kingdom hath a grave.

Thus those celestial fires,
Though seeming mute,
The fallacy of our desires
And all the pride of life confute:

For they have watched since first
The world had birth:
And found sin in itself accursed,
And nothing permanent on earth.

13†

We saw the swallows gathering in the sky,
And in the osier isle we heard them noise.
We had not to look back on summer joys,
Or forward to a summer of bright dye:
But in the largeness of the evening earth
Our spirits grew as we went side by side.
The hour became her husband & my bride.
Love that had robbed us so, thus blessed our dearth.
The pilgrims of the year waxed very loud
In multitudinous chatterings, as the flood
Full brown came from the west, and like pale blood
Expanded to the upper crimson cloud.
Love that had robbed us of immortal things,
This little moment mercifully gave,
Where I have seen across the twilight wave
The swan sail with her young beneath her wings.

13* Truth is always strange; stranger than fiction.

13† · George Meredith (1828 – 1909) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is taken from *Modern Love*, Meredith's sequence of poems describing the breakdown of his first marriage.

13* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ These words are taken from the fourteenth canto of *Don Juan*.

14

14‡

'Is my team ploughing,
 That I was used to drive
 And hear the harness jingle
 When I was man alive?'

Ay, the horses trample,
 The harness jingles now;
 No change though you lie under
 The land you used to plough.

'Is football playing
 Along the river shore,
 With lads to chase the leather,
 Now I stand up no more?'

Ay, the ball is flying;
 The lads play heart & soul;
 The goal stands up, the keeper
 Stands up to keep the goal.

'Is my girl happy,
 That I thought hard to leave,
 And has she tired of weeping
 As she lies down at eve?'

Ay, she lies down lightly;
 She lies not down to weep.
 Your girl is well contented.
 Be still, my lad, and sleep.

'Is my friend hearty,
 Now I am thin & pine,
 And has he found to sleep in
 A better bed than mine?'

Yes, lad, I lie easy;
 I lie as lads would choose;
 I cheer a dead man's sweetheart;
 Never ask me whose.

14†

Up to the bed by the window, where I be lyin',
 Comes bells & bleat of the flock wi' they two children's clack.
 Over, from under the eaves there's the starlings flyin',
 And down in yard, fit to burst his chain, yapping out at *Sue* I do hear young *Mac*.

Turning around like a falled-over sack
 I can see team ploughin' in WHITHY-BUSH field & meal carts startin' up road to
 CHURCH-TOWN;
 Saturday afternoon the men goin' back
 And the women from market, trapin' home over the down.

Heavenly Master, I would like to wake to they same green places
 Where I be knowed for breakin' dogs & follerin' sheep.
 And if I may not walk in th'old ways and look on th'old faces
 I would sooner sleep.

14* In matters of religion and matrimony I never give any advice; because I will not have anybody's torments in this world or the next laid to my charge.

14† · "Old Shepherd's Prayer" · Miss Charlotte Mew (1869 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ There is a Withybush in Haverfordwest (or Hwlfordd) in Pembrokeshire, and perhaps Church-Town could be St David's? But this is pure speculation. There is nothing especially Welsh – other than the profession of sheep-farming itself – about the shepherd and his dialect, and the place-names are probably just invented.

14* · Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694 – 1773) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

15

15†

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
 Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
 Sat grey-haired *Saturn*, quiet as a stone,
 Still as the silence round about his lair;
 Forest on forest hung about his head
 Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
 Not so much life as on a summer's day
 Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,
 But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
 A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
 By reason of his fallen divinity
 Spreading a shade: the naiad 'mid her reeds
 Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin and large foot-marks went,
 No further than to where his feet had strayed,
 And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
 His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
 Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;
 While his bowed head seemed listening to the earth,
 His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

15†

A small white cap on honey-coloured hair;
 Grey eyes as bright as morning; a red face;
 A bosom worthy of some goddess fair
 Greeks dreamed in marble; yet too grand to grace
 Such a small woman; plump & ruddy arms
 That work from dawn till even, bare to view –
 And one may briefly note her other charms
 To my bucolic fancy far from few.
 She scorns a waist; she's deep & broad in thigh;
 Short, massive, merry, always glad to aid.
 And that's all I shall tell you about my –
 I wish she was my – little chambermaid.

15† · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These are the opening lines of Keats's *Hyperion: A Fragment*.

15† · "Teresette" · Eden Phillpotts (1862 – 1960) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

Before we part I rather hope to get
But she is knocking. ~~Entre~~, *Teresette*.'

15* In scandal, as in robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief.

15* · Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694 – 1773) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

16

16‡

O goddess, hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
 Even into thine own soft-conchèd ear:
 Surely I dreamt today, or did I see
 The winged *Psyche* with awakened eyes?
 I wandered in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
 Saw two fair creatures, couchèd side by side
 In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
 A brooklet, scarce espied:
 Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
 Blue, silver-white, and budded tyrian,
 They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass;
 Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
 Their lips touched not, but had not bade adieu,
 As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber
 At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love:
 The wingèd boy I knew;
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
 His *Psyche* true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far
 Of all OLYMPUS' faded hierarchy!
 Fairer than *Phoebe's* sapphire-regioned star,
 Or *Vesper*, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
 Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
 Nor altar heaped with flowers;
 Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
 Upon the midnight hours;
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

16‡ · "Ode to Psyche" · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Psyche was a minor goddess of the Greco-Roman mythological tradition, whose marriage to Cupid ('Love') and subsequent elevation to immortality were most famously related by Apuleius.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
 Yet even in these days so far retired
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
 Fluttering among the faint olympians,
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours;
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
 From swungèd censer teeming;
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
 Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees
 Fledge the wild-ridgèd mountains steep by steep;
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain dryads shall be lulled to sleep;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm *Love* in!

16†

If in the fight my arm was strong
 And forced my foes to yield,
 If conquering & unhurt I come
 Back from the battlefield –
 It is because thy prayers have been
 My safeguard & my shield.

16† · “The Warrior to His Dead Bride” · Miss Anne Procter (1825 – 1864) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ¶ There are two further verses, which the Almanacker has excised.

16* Bigotry may be roughly defined as the anger of men who have no opinions.

17

17‡

Then the tall shade, in drooping linens veiled,
 Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her breath
 Stirred the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung
 About a golden censer from her hand
 Pendent; and by her voice I knew she shed
 Long-treasured tears. 'This temple, sad & lone,
 Is all spared from the thunder of a war
 Foughten long since by giant hierarchy
 Against rebellion: this old image here,
 Whose carved features wrinkled as he fell,
 Is *Saturn's*; I, *Moneta*, left supreme
 Sole priestess of this desolation.'
 I had no words to answer, for my tongue,
 Useless, could find about its roofed home
 No syllable of a fit majesty
 To make rejoinder to *Moneta's* mourn.
 There was a silence, while the altar's blaze
 Was fainting for sweet food: I looked thereon,
 And on the paved floor, where nigh were piled
 Faggots of cinnamon, and many heaps
 Of other crisped spice wood – then again
 I looked upon the altar, and its horns
 Whitened with ashes, and its lang'rous flame,
 And then upon the offerings again;
 And so by turns till sad *Moneta* cried,
 'The sacrifice is done, but not the less
 Will I be kind to thee for thy good will.
 My power, which to me is still a curse,
 Shall be to thee a wonder; for the scenes
 Still swooning vivid through my globed brain
 With an electal changing misery
 Thou shalt with those dull mortal eyes behold,
 Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not.'
 As near as an immortal's sphered words
 Could to a mother's soften, were these last:
 And yet I had a terror of her robes,
 And chiefly of the veils, that from her brow

17‡ · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These are lines 216–71 of Keats's *Fall of Hyperion*.

Hung pale, and curtained her in mysteries
 That made my heart too small to hold its blood.
 This saw that goddess, and with sacred hand
 Parted the veils. Then saw I a wan face,
 Not pined by human sorrows, but bright blanched
 By an immortal sickness which kills not;
 It works a constant change, which happy death
 Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
 To no death was that visage; it had passed
 The lily & the snow; and beyond these
 I must not think now, though I saw that face
 But for her eyes I should have fled away.
 They held me back, with a benignant light
 Soft mitigated by divinest lids
 Half closed, and visionless entire they seemed
 Of all external things; they saw me not,
 But in blank splendour beamed like the mild moon,
 Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
 What eyes are upward cast.

17†

Give me my scallop shell of quiet,
 My staff of faith to walk upon,
 My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
 My bottle of salvation,
 My gown of glory, hope's true gage,
 And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

17* Democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death.

17† · Sir Walter Raleigh (1552 – 1618) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ¶ These are the opening lines of “A Passionate Man's Pilgrimage”, which is generally interpreted as a dramatic monologue giving the words of a dying man.

17* · Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

18

18‡

If I were Lord of Tartary,
 Myself & me alone,
 My bed should be of ivory,
 Of beaten gold my throne;
 And in my court should peacocks flaunt,
 And in my forests tigers haunt,
 And in my pools great fishes slant
 Their fins athwart the sun.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
 Trumpeters every day
 To all my meals should summon me,
 And in my courtyards bray;
 And in the evening lamps should shine,
 Yellow as honey, red as wine,
 While harp, & flute, & mandoline
 Made music sweet & gay.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
 I'd wear a robe of beads,
 White, & gold, & green they'd be –
 And clustered thick as seeds;
 And ere should wane the morning star,
 I'd don my robe & scimitar.
 And zebras seven should draw my car
 Through Tartary's dark glades.

Lord of the fruits of Tartary.
 Her rivers silver-pale.
 Lord of the hills of Tartary.
 Glen, thicket, wood, & dale.
 Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,
 Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,
 Her bird-delighting citron trees,
 In every purple vale.

18†

She has finished & sealed the letter
At last, which he so richly has deserved,
With characters venomous & hatefully curved,
And nothing could be better.

But even as she gave it
Saying to the blue-capped functioner of doom,
'Into his hands,' she hoped the leering groom
Might somewhere lose & leave it.

Then all the blood
Forsook the face. She was too pale for tears,
Observing the ruin of her younger years.
She went and stood

Under her father's vaunting oak
Who kept his peace in wind & sun and glistened
Stoical in the rain; to whom she listened
If he spoke.

And now the agitation of the rain
Rasped his sere leaves, and he talked low & gentle
Reproaching the wan daughter by the lintel;
Ceasing & beginning again.

Away went the messenger's bicycle;
His serpent's track went up the hill forever,
And all the time she stood there hot as fever
And cold as any icicle.

18* We make our friends; we make our enemies; but God makes our next-door neighbour.

18† · "Parting, without a Sequel" · John Ransom (1888 – 1974) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

18* · Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

19

19‡

O love, turn from the changing sea and gaze,
 Down these grey slopes, upon the year grown old,
 A-dying 'mid the autumn-scented haze
 That hangeth o'er the hollow in the wold,
 Where the wind-bitten ancient elms infold
 Grey church, long barn, orchard, and red-roofed stead,
 Wrought in dead days for men a long while dead.

Come down, O love; may not our hands still meet,
 Since still we live today, forgetting june,
 Forgetting may, deeming october sweet?
 O hearken, hearken: through the afternoon
 The grey tower sings a strange old tinkling tune.
 Sweet, sweet, & sad, the toiling year's last breath,
 To satiate of life, to strive with death.

And we too – will it not be soft & kind,
 That rest from life, from patience, & from pain,
 That rest from bliss we know not when we find,
 That rest from love which ne'er the end can gain?
 Hark: how the tune swells, that erewhile did wane.
 Look up, love. Ah cling close, and never move.
 How can I have enough of life & love?

19†

This feast-day of the sun, his altar there
 In the broad west has blazed for vesper-song;
 And I have loitered in the vale too long
 And gaze now a belated worshipper.
 Yet may I not forget that I was 'ware,
 So journeying, of his face at intervals
 Transfigured where the fringed horizon falls
 A fiery bush with coruscating hair.
 And now that I have climbed & won this height,
 I must tread downward through the sloping shade
 And travel the bewildered tracks till night.
 Yet for this hour I still may here be stayed

19‡ · William Morris (1834 – 1896) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These are the opening lines of Morris' poem "October".

19† · "The Hill Summit" · Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

And see the gold air & the silver fade
And the last bird fly into the last light.

19* The greatest fool may ask more than the wisest man can answer.

20

20‡

In these deep solitudes & awful cells,
 Where heav'nly-pensive contemplation dwells,
 And ever-musing melancholy reigns;
 What means this tumult in a vestal's veins?
 Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?
 Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?
 Yet, yet I love! From *Abelard* it came,
 And *Eloisa* yet must kiss the name.

Dear fatal name, rest ever unrevealed,
 Nor pass these lips in holy silence sealed.
 Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
 Where mixed with God's, his loved idea lies:
 O write it not, my hand – the name appears
 Already written – wash it out, my tears!
 In vain lost *Eloisa* weeps and prays,
 Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.

Relentless walls, whose darksome round contains
 Repentant sighs, & voluntary pains:
 Ye rugged rocks, which holy knees have worn;
 Ye grotts & caverns shagged with horrid thorn!
 Shrines, where their vigils pale-eyed virgins keep,
 And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!
 Though cold like you, unmoved, and silent grown,
 I have not yet forgot myself to stone.
 All is not heav'n's while *Abelard* has part,
 Still rebel nature holds out half my heart;
 Nor pray'rs nor fasts its stubborn pulse restrain,
 Nor tears, for ages, taught to flow in vain.

Soon as thy letters trembling I uncloset,
 That well-known name awakens all my woes.
 O name for ever sad, for ever dear,
 Still breathed in sighs, still ushered with a tear.
 I tremble too, where'er my own I find,
 Some dire misfortune follows close behind.
 Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow,

20‡ · “Eloisa to Abelard” · Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ This poem plays a significant part in the plot of *Sharpe's Enemy*.

Led through a sad variety of woe:
Now warm in love, now with'ring in thy bloom,
Lost in a convent's solitary gloom!
There stern religion quenched th'unwilling flame;
There died the best of passions, love & fame.

Yet write, O write me all, that I may join
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.
Nor foes nor fortune take this pow'r away;
And is my *Abelard* less kind than they?
Tears still are mine, and those I need not spare,
Love but demands what else were shed in prayer;
No happier task these faded eyes pursue;
To read and weep is all they now can do.

Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief;
Ah, more than share it; give me all thy grief.
Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banished lover, or some captive maid;
They live; they speak; they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires;
The virgin's wish without her fears impart;
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart;
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
And waft a sigh from INDUS to the POLE.

Thou know'st how guiltless first I met thy flame,
When love approached me under friendship's name;
My fancy formed thee of angelic kind,
Some emanation of th'all-beauteous mind.
Those smiling eyes, attempt'ring every day,
Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day.
Guiltless I gazed; heav'n listened while you sung;
And truths divine came mended from that tongue.
From lips like those what precept failed to move?
Too soon they taught me 'twas no sin to love.
Back through the paths of pleasing sense I ran,
Nor wished an angel whom I loved a man.
Dim & remote the joys of saints I see;
Nor envy them, that heav'n I lose for thee.

How oft, when pressed to marriage, have I said,
'Curse on all laws but those which love has made!'

Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies;
Let wealth, let honour, wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
Before true passion all those views remove.
Fame, wealth & honour, what are you to love?
The jealous God, when we profane his fires,
Those restless passions in revenge inspires;
And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,
Who seek in love for aught but love alone.
Should at my feet the world's great master fall,
Himself, his throne, his world, I'd scorn 'em all:
Not Caesar's empress would I deign to prove;
No, make me mistress to the man I love;
If there be yet another name more free,
More fond than mistress, make me that to thee!
Oh happy state, when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty, and nature, law:
All then is full, possessing, & possessed,
No craving void left aching in the breast:
Ev'n thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart.
This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be)
And once the lot of *Abelard* & me.

Alas, how changed! What sudden horrors rise!
A naked lover bound & bleeding lies!
Where, where was Eloise? Her voice, her hand,
Her poniard, had opposed the dire command.
Barbarian, stay! That bloody stroke restrain;
The crime was common; common be the pain.
I can no more; by shame, by rage suppressed;
Let tears, & burning blushes speak the rest.

Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn day,
When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?
Canst thou forget what tears that moment fell,
When, warm in youth, I bade the world farewell?
As with cold lips I kissed the sacred veil,
The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew pale:
Heav'n scarce believed the conquest it surveyed,
And saints with wonder heard the vows I made.
Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew,

Not on the cross my eyes were fixed, but you:
Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,
And if I lose thy love, I lose my all.
Come, with thy looks, thy words, relieve my woe;
Those still at least are left thee to bestow.
Still on that breast enamoured let me lie;
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be pressed;
Give all thou canst – and let me dream the rest.
Ah no! Instruct me other joys to prize;
With other beauties charm my partial eyes;
Full in my view set all the bright abode,
And make my soul quit *Abelard* for God.

Ah, think at least thy flock deserves thy care,
Plants of thy hand, & children of thy prayer.
From the false world in early youth they fled,
By thee to mountains, wilds, & deserts led.
You raised these hallowed walls; the desert smiled,
And paradise was opened in the wild.
No weeping orphan saw his father's stores
Our shrines irradiate, or emblaze the floors;
No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,
Here bribed the rage of ill-requited heav'n:
But such plain roofs as piety could raise,
And only vocal with the maker's praise.
In these lone walls (their days eternal bound)
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crowned,
Where awful arches make a noonday night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light;
Thy eyes diffused a reconciling ray,
And gleams of glory brightened all the day.
But now no face divine contentment wears,
'Tis all blank sadness, or continual tears.
See how the force of others' prayers I try,
(O pious fraud of am'rous charity!)
But why should I on others' prayers depend?
Come thou, my father, brother, husband, friend!
Ah let thy handmaid, sister, daughter move,
And all those tender names in one, thy love!
The darksome pines that o'er yon rocks reclined
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
The wand'ring streams that shine between the hills,

The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze;
No more these scenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to rest the visionary maid.
But o'er the twilight groves & dusky caves,
Long-sounding aisles, & intermingled graves,
Black melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence, & a dread repose:
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades ev'ry flower, and darkens ev'ry green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.

Yet here for ever, ever must I stay;
Sad proof how well a lover can obey!
Death, only death, can break the lasting chain;
And here, ev'n then, shall my cold dust remain,
Here all its frailties, all its flames resign,
And wait till 'tis no sin to mix with thine.

Ah wretch, believed the spouse of God in vain,
Confessed within the slave of love & man.
Assist me, heav'n! But whence arose that prayer?
Sprung it from piety, or from despair?
Ev'n here, where frozen chastity retires,
Love finds an altar for forbidden fires.
I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought;
I mourn the lover, not lament the fault;
I view my crime, but kindle at the view,
Repent old pleasures, and solicit new;
Now turned to heav'n, I weep my past offence,
Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.
Of all affliction taught a lover yet,
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget!
How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the sense,
And love th'offender, yet detest th'offence?
How the dear object from the crime remove,
Or how distinguish penitence from love?
Unequal task, a passion to resign,
For hearts so touched, so pierced, so lost as mine.
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love, how often hate!

How often hope, despair, resent, regret,
Conceal, disdain – do all things but forget.
But let heav'n seize it, all at once 'tis fired;
Not touched, but rapt; not wakened, but inspired!
O come, O teach me nature to subdue,
Renounce my love, my life, myself – & you.
Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he
Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.

How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot.
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resigned;
Labour & rest, that equal periods keep;
'Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep;'
Desires composed, affections ever ev'n,
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heav'n.
Grace shines around her with serenest beams,
And whisp'ring angels prompt her golden dreams.
For her th'unfading rose of EDEN blooms,
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes,
For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring;
For her white virgins hymeneals sing;
To sounds of heav'nly harps she dies away,
And melts in visions of eternal day.

Far other dreams my erring soul employ,
Far other raptures, of unholy joy:
When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,
Fancy restores what vengeance snatched away,
Then conscience sleeps, and leaving nature free,
All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee.
O cursed, dear horrors of all-conscious night!
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!
Provoking demons all restraint remove,
And stir within me ev'ry source of love.
I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy charms,
And round thy phantom glue my clasping arms.
I wake – no more I hear; no more I view;
The phantom flies me, as unkind as you.
I call aloud; it hears not what I say;
I stretch my empty arms; it glides away.
To dream once more I close my willing eyes;

Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise!
Alas, no more – methinks we wand'ring go
Through dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe,
Where round some mould'ring tower pale ivy creeps,
And low-browed rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.
Sudden you mount; you beckon from the skies;
Clouds interpose, waves roar and winds arise.
I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,
And wake to all the griefs I left behind.

For thee the fates, severely kind, ordain
A cool suspense from pleasure & from pain;
Thy life a long, dead calm of fixed repose;
No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows.
Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,
Or moving spirit bade the waters flow;
Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiv'n,
And mild as opening gleams of promised heav'n.

Come, *Abelard*, for what hast thou to dread?
The torch of *Venus* burns not for the dead.
Nature stands checked; religion disapproves;
Ev'n thou art cold – yet *Eloisa* loves.
Ah hopeless, lasting flames, like those that burn
To light the dead, and warm th'unfruitful urn!

What scenes appear where'er I turn my view?
The dear ideas, where I fly, pursue,
Rise in the grove, before the altar rise,
Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes.
I waste the matin lamp in sighs for thee,
Thy image steals between my God & me,
Thy voice I seem in ev'ry hymn to hear,
With ev'ry bead I drop too soft a tear.
When from the censer clouds of fragrance roll,
And swelling organs lift the rising soul,
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,
Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight:
In seas of flame my plunging soul is drowned,
While altars blaze, and angels tremble round.

While prostrate here in humble grief I lie,
Kind, virtuous drops just gath'ring in my eye,

While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,
And dawning grace is op'ning on my soul:
Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou art!
Oppose thyself to heav'n; dispute my heart;
Come, with one glance of those deluding eyes
Blot out each bright idea of the skies;
Take back that grace, those sorrows, & those tears;
Take back my fruitless penitence & prayers;
Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest abode;
Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!

No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole;
Rise alps between us, and whole oceans roll!
Ah, come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;
Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.
Fair eyes, & tempting looks (which yet I view!)
Long loved, adored ideas, all adieu!
O grace serene! O virtue heav'nly fair!
Divine oblivion of low-thoughted care!
Fresh blooming hope, gay daughter of the sky!
And faith, our early immortality!
Enter, each mild, each amicable guest;
Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest!

See in her cell sad *Eloisa* spread,
Propped on some tomb, a neighbour of the dead.
In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,
And more than echoes talk along the walls.
Here, as I watched the dying lamps around,
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound.
'Come, sister, come!' it said, or seem'd to say.
'Thy place is here, sad sister; come away!
Once like thyself, I trembled, wept, and prayed,
Love's victim then, though now a sainted maid:
But all is calm in this eternal sleep;
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep,
Ev'n superstition loses ev'ry fear:
For God, not man, absolves our frailties here.'

I come; I come! Prepare your roseate bow'rs,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs.

Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refined in breasts seraphic glow:
Thou, *Abelard*, the last sad office pay,
And smooth my passage to the realms of day;
See my lips tremble, and my eyeballs roll;
Suck my last breath, and catch my flying soul!
Ah no – in sacred vestments may'st thou stand,
The hallowed taper trembling in thy hand;
Present the cross before my lifted eye;
Teach me at once, and learn of me to die.
Ah then, thy once-loved *Eloisa* see!
It will be then no crime to gaze on me.
See from my cheek the transient roses fly!
See the last sparkle languish in my eye!
Till ev'ry motion, pulse, & breath be o'er;
And ev'n my *Abelard* be loved no more.
O death all-eloquent, you only prove
What dust we dote on, when 'tis man we love.

Then too, when fate shall thy fair frame destroy,
(That cause of all my guilt, & all my joy)
In trance ecstatic may thy pangs be drowned,
Bright clouds descend, and angels watch thee round;
From op'ning skies may streaming glories shine,
And saints embrace thee with a love like mine.

May one kind grave unite each hapless name,
And graft my love immortal on thy fame!
Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,
When this rebellious heart shall beat no more;
If ever chance two wand'ring lovers brings
To Paraclete's white walls & silver springs,
O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,
And drink the falling tears each other sheds;
Then sadly say, with mutual pity moved,
'Oh may we never love as these have loved!'

From the full choir when loud hosannas rise,
And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,
Amid that scene if some relenting eye
Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,
Devotion's self shall steal a thought from heav'n;
One human tear shall drop and be forgiv'n.

And sure, if fate some future bard shall join
 In sad similitude of griefs to mine,
 Condemned whole years in absence to deplore,
 And image charms he must behold no more;
 Such if there be, who loves so long, so well;
 Let him our sad, our tender story tell;
 The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost;
 He best can paint 'em, who shall feel 'em most.

20†

Look not thou on beauty's charming;
 Sit thou still when kings are arming;
 Taste not when the wine cup glistens;
 Speak not when the people listens;
 Stop thine ear against the singer;
 From the red gold keep thy finger;
 Vacant heart & hand & eye,
 Easy live and quiet die.

20*

For virtue now is neither more or less,
 And vice is only varied in the dress.

20† · Sir Walter Scott, 1st Baronet (1771 – 1832) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ¶ These lines are spoken by Lucy Ashton in "The Bride of Lammermoor".

20* · William Congreve (1670 – 1729) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ This couplet is taken from a verse epistle to Richard Temple, 1st Viscount Cobham.

21

21†

You tell me you're promised a lover,
 My own *Araminta*, next week;
 Why cannot my fancy discover
 The hue of his coat & his cheek?
 Alas, if he look like another,
 A vicar, a banker, a beau,
 Be deaf to your father & mother,
 My own *Araminta*, say no!

Miss *Lane*, at her temple of fashion,
 Taught us both how to sing and to speak,
 And we loved one another with passion,
 Before we had been there a week:
 You gave me a ring for a token;
 I wear it wherever I go;
 I gave you a chain – is it broken?
 My own *Araminta*, say no!

O think of our favourite cottage,
 And think of our dear ~~Lalla~~ *Rookh*,
 How we shared with the milkmaids their pottage,
 And drank of the stream from the brook;
 How fondly our loving lips faltered
 'What further can grandeur bestow?'
 My heart is the same; is yours altered?
 My own *Araminta*, say no!

Remember the thrilling romances
 We read on the bank in the glen;
 Remember the suitors our fancies
 Would picture for both of us then.

21† · "A Letter of Advice" · Winthrop Praed (1802 – 1839) · *The Penguin Book of Light Verse*. ¶ Subtitled: 'From Miss Medora Trevilian, at Padua, to Miss Araminta Vavasour, in London'. Inscribed with a quotation from *L'Héritière*, scene 2, by the French playwright Eugène Scribe: 'Enfin, monsieur, un homme aimable;/ Voilà pourquoi je ne saurais l'aimer', which means, 'Finally, sir, a lovable man; that's why I can't love him'. £18: *Lalla Rookh* is an oriental romance by Thomas Moore. £55: This Orlando must be Rosalind's lover from *As You Like It*. £71: This Wether must be the protagonist of von Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*. £102: Turning out one's toes while walking seems to have been viewed, in the nineteenth century at least, as a sign of good breeding. For example, John Poole wrote – albeit this appears to be fiction – in his *Extracts from a Journal Kept During a Residence in Little-Pedlington* of 1835: 'In walking, he turned out his toes in a most exemplary style, and trod as lightly as if the streets of Little-Pedlington had been paved with burning coals.'

They wore the red cross on their shoulder,
They had vanquished and pardoned their foe –
Sweet friend, are you wiser or colder?
My own *Araminta*, say no!

You know when Lord *Rigmarole's* carriage
Drove off with your cousin *Justine*,
You wept, dearest girl, at the marriage,
And whispered, 'How base she has been!'
You said you were sure it would kill you,
If ever your husband looked so;
And you will not apostatise, will you?
My own *Araminta*, say no!

When I heard I was going abroad, love,
I thought I was going to die;
We walked arm-in-arm to the road, love,
We looked arm-in-arm to the sky;
And I said, 'When a foreign postilion
Has hurried me off to the Po,
Forget not *Medora Trevilian*:
My own *Araminta*, say no!

We parted; but sympathy's fetters
Reach far over valley & hill;
I muse o'er your exquisite letters,
And feel that your heart is mine still;
And he who would share it with me, love,
The richest of treasures below,
If he's not what *Orlando* should be, love,
My own *Araminta*, say no!

If he wears a top-boot in his wooing,
If he comes to you riding a cob,
If he talks of his baking or brewing,
If he puts up his feet on the hob,
If he ever drinks port after dinner,
If his brow or his breeding is low,
If he calls himself *Thompson* or *Skinner*,
My own *Araminta*, say no!

If he studies the news in the papers
While you are preparing the tea,
If he talks of the damp or the vapours

While moonlight lies soft on the sea,
If he's sleepy while you are capricious,
If he has not a musical 'O!'
If he does not call ~~Werther~~ delicious,
My own *Araminta*, say no!

If he ever sets foot in the city
Among the stockbrokers & jews,
If he has not a heart full of pity,
If he don't stand six feet in his shoes,
If his lips are not redder than roses,
If his hands are not whiter than snow,
If he has not the model of noses,
My own *Araminta*, say no!

If he speaks of a tax or a duty,
If he does not look grand on his knees,
If he's blind to a landscape of beauty,
Hills, valleys, rocks, water, & trees,
If he dotes not on desolate towers,
If he likes not to hear the blast blow,
If he knows not the language of flowers,
My own *Araminta*, say no!

He must walk – like a god of old story
Come down from the home of his rest;
He must smile – like the sun in his glory
On the bud, he loves ever the best;
And O from its ivory portal
Like music his soft speech must flow;
If he speak, smile, or walk like a mortal,
My own *Araminta*, say no!

Don't listen to tales of his bounty,
Don't hear what they say of his birth,
Don't look at his seat in the county,
Don't calculate what he is worth;
But give him a theme to write verse on,
And see if he turns out his toe;
If he's only an excellent person,
My own *Araminta*, say no!

21†

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits and
 Are melted into air, into thin air:
 And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on, and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vexed...
 If you be pleased, retire into my cell
 And there repose: a turn or two I'll walk,
 To still my beating mind.

21* God made the country, and man made the town.

21† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ These famous lines are uttered by Prospero in *The Tempest* IV.1. The Almanacker has excised two lines after ‘Sir, I am vexed...’

21* · William Cowper (1731 – 1800) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is a line from Book I of Cowper’s *The Task*.

22

22[†]

Ancient person, for whom I
 All the flattering youth defy,
 Long be it ere thou grow old,
 Aching, shaking, crazy, cold;
 But still continue as thou art,
 Ancient person of my heart.

On thy withered lips & dry,
 Which like barren furrows lie,
 Brooding kisses I will pour
 Shall thy youthful heat restore
 (Such kind showers in autumn fall,
 And a second spring recall);
 Nor from thee will ever part,
 Ancient person of my heart.

Thy nobler part, which but to name
 In our sex would be counted shame,
 By age's frozen grasp possessed,
 From his ice shall be released,
 And soothed by my reviving hand,
 In former warmth & vigour stand.
 All a lover's wish can reach
 For thy joy my love shall teach,
 And for thy pleasure shall improve
 All that art can add to love.
 Yet still I love thee without art,
 Ancient person of my heart.

22[†]

Come, sleep, O sleep, the certain knot of peace,
 The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
 The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
 Th'indifferent judge between the high & low.
 With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
 Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw:

22[†] · "A Song of a Young Lady to Her Ancient Lover" · John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647 – 1680) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ℓ10: Other sources give 'heart' instead of 'heat'. ℓ18: Other sources give 'their' instead of 'his'.

22[†] · Sir Philip Sidney (1554 – 1586) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is Sonnet XXXIX of *Astrophel and Stella*.

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 & blind to light,
A rosy garland & 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.

22* The good of subjects is the end of kings.

23

23‡

In a coign of the cliff between lowland & highland,
 At the sea-down's edge between windward & lee,
 Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
 The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
 A girdle of brushwood & thorn encloses
 The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
 Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
 Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt & broken,
 To the low last edge of the long lone land.
 If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
 Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
 So long have the grey bare walks lain guestless,
 Through branches & briars if a man make way,
 He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
 Night & day.

The dense hard passage is blind & stifled
 That crawls by a track none turn to climb
 To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
 Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
 The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
 The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.
 The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
 These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not;
 As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
 From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,
 Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
 Over the meadows that blossom & wither
 Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
 Only the sun & the rain come hither
 All year long.

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
 One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
 Only the wind here hovers & revels

In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, 'Look thither,'
Did he whisper? 'Look forth from the flowers to the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die – but we?'
And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end—but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses & lovers,
Not known of the cliffs & the fields & the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping & laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again for ever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left nought living to ravage & rend.
Earth, stones, & thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun & the rain live, these shall be;
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace & meadow the deep gulfs drink,

Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
 The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
 Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
 Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
 As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
 Death lies dead.

23†

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?

23* To find a friend one must close one eye.

23† · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is “Ode to the West Wind” §5.

23* · Norman Douglas (1868 – 1952) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ The quotation continues: ‘To keep him, two.’

24

24[‡]

And slowly answered *Arthur* from the barge:
 The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done
 May he within himself make pure, but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night & day.
 For what are men better than sheep or goats
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
 Both for themselves & those who call them friend?
 For so the whole round earth is every way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long way
 With these thou seest – if indeed I go
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt) –
 To the island-valley of AVILION;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
 Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
 And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.

So said he, and the barge with oar & sail
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir *Bedivere*
 Revolving many memories, till the hull
 Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

24[‡] · R Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These are lines 407-440 of “The Passing of Arthur”.

24†

If thou didst feed on western plains of yore;
 Or waddle wide with flat & flabby feet
 Over some cambrian mountain's plashy moor;
 Or find in famer's yard a safe retreat
 From gypsy thieves, & foxes sly & fleet;
 If thy grey quills, by lawyer guided, trace
 Deeds big with ruin to some wretched race,
 Or lovesick poet's sonnet, sad & sweet,
 Wailing the rigour of his lady fair;
 Or if, the drudge of housemaid's daily toil,
 Cobwebs & dust thy pinions white besoil,
 Departed goose, I neither know nor care.
 But this I know, that we pronounced thee fine,
 Seasoned with sage & onions, & port wine.

24* Religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition.

24† · ℝ "To a Goose" · Robert Southey, Poet Laureate (1774 – 1843) · *The Penguin Book of Light Verse*.

24* · The Rt Hon Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

25

25[‡]

There is sweet music here that softer falls
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
 Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
 Here are cool mosses deep,
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
 While all things else have rest from weariness?
 All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
 We only toil, who are the first of things,
 And make perpetual moan,
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
 Nor ever fold our wings,
 And cease from wanderings,
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
 Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
 'There is no joy but calm!'
 Why should we only toil, the roof & crown of things?

Lo, in the middle of the wood,
 The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
 With winds upon the branch, and there
 Grows green & broad, and takes no care,
 Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo, sweetened with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days

25[‡] · "Choric Song of the Lotos-Eaters" · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ The lotus-eaters form a famous subplot in Homer's *Ὀδύσσεια*, Book IX.

The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions & parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half dream.
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh bush on the height;
To hear each other's whispered speech;
Eating the lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts & spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffered change:
For surely now our household hearths are cold,
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold

Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in TROY,
And our great deeds, as half forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot stars.

But, propped on beds of amaranth & moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half dropped eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark & holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill –
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine –
To watch the emerald-coloured water falling
Through many a wov'n acanthus wreath divine.
Only to hear and see the far off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

The lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Through every hollow cave & alley lone
Round & round the spicy downs the yellow lotos dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly-curved
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight & famine, plague & earthquake, roaring deeps & fiery sands,
Clanging fights, & flaming towns, & sinking ships, & praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
 Steaming up, a lamentation & an ancient tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning though the words are strong;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, & wine & oil;
 Till they perish and they suffer – some, 'tis whispered – down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in elysian valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
 Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind & wave & oar;
 O, rest ye, brother mariners; we will not wander more.

25†

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.
 The firefly wakens; waken thou with me.

Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the earth all *Danaë* to the stars,
 And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
 And slips into the bosom of the lake.
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.

25* Man is by his constitution a religious animal.

25† · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

¶ This sonnet is taken from a larger work, *The Princess*. It has been set to music by a number of famous composers.

25* · The Rt Hon Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

26

26†

Our God, our help in ages past,
 Our hope for years to come,
 Our shelter from the stormy blast,
 And our eternal home:

Under the shadow of thy throne
 Thy saints have dwelt secure;
 Sufficient is thine arm alone,
 And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood
 Or earth received her frame,
 From everlasting thou art God,
 To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight
 Are like an evening gone,
 Short as the watch that ends the night
 Before the rising sun.

Thy word commands our flesh to dust;
 Return, ye sons of men.
 All nations rose from earth at first
 And turn to earth again.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
 Bears all its sons away;
 They fly forgotten as a dream
 Dies at the opening day.

Our God, our help in ages past,
 Our hope for years to come,
 Be thou our guard while troubles last,
 And our eternal home.

26†

26† · Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem is a paraphrase of Psalm 90. It is often sung as ‘O God, our help in ages past’, and this may be a slight improvement.

26† · “If I Should Ever by Chance” · Edward Thomas (1878 – 1917) · *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. ¶ The poet’s ‘elder daughter’ was called Bronwen; she is also likely the girl mentioned in “Old Man”. ‘Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch’ are villages in historic Essex; ‘Pyrgo, and Lapwater’ are old estates in the same county – Pyrgo was once one of Henry VIII’s many royal residences, while Arthur Morrison wrote a short

If I should ever by chance grow rich
 I'll buy CODHAM, COCKRIDDEN, & CHILDERDITCH,
 ROSES, PYRGO, and LAPWATER,
 And let them all to my elder daughter.
 The rent I shall ask of her will be only
 Each year's first violets, white & lonely,
 The first primroses & orchises –
 She must find them before I do, that is.
 But if she finds a blossom on furze
 Without rent they shall all for ever be hers,
 CODHAM, COCKRIDDEN, & CHILDERDITCH,
 ROSES, PYRGO & LAPWATER –
 I shall give them all to my elder daughter.

26* Most vices may be committed very genteelly.

story about the “Legend of Lapwater Hall”; extrapolating from the others, ‘Roses’ was perhaps another such estate.

26* · Dr Samuel Johnson (1709 – 1784) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

27

27‡

Here is the place; right over the hill
Runs the path I took;
You can see the gap in the old wall still,
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
And the poplars tall;
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-yard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
Heavy & slow;
And the same rose blows, and the same sun glows,
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There's the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze;
And the june sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over FERNside farm.

I mind me how with a lover's care
From my sunday coat
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed –
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now: the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves,

27‡ · “Telling the Bees” · John Whittier (1807 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ It is ancient custom for a beekeeper to tell his bees of significant events in his life, for fear that they might otherwise migrate.

The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward & back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, My *Mary* weeps
For the dead today:
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away.

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:
Stay at home, pretty bees; fly not hence!
Mistress *Mary* is dead & gone!

27†

Like the touch of rain she was
On a man's flesh & hair & eyes
When the joy of walking thus
Has taken him by surprise:

With the love of the storm he burns;
He sings; he laughs; well I know how,
But forgets when he returns
As I shall not forget her 'Go now'.

Those two words shut a door
Between me and the blessed rain
That was never shut before
And will not open again.

27* History repeats itself; historians repeat one another.

28

28‡

Behold her, single in the field,
 Yon solitary highland lass,
 Reaping and singing by herself.
 Stop here, or gently pass!
 Alone she cuts & 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 today?
 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 & still;
 And, as I mounted up the hill,
 The music in my heart I bore,
 Long after it was heard no more.

28‡ · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The poet needs someone to interpret the song for him because the girl is singing in Gallic.

28†

How can she catch the sunlight
And bind it in her hair?
Where is the golden apple
Whose core is not despair?
How shall one cull the honey
And yet not rob the flower?
And how can man, being happy,
Still keep his happy hour?

28* He that dies pays all debts.

28† · “Questions” · Christopher Thomson, 1st Baron Thomson (1875 – 1930) · *Other Men's Flowers*.

28* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ This is uttered by Stephano in *The Tempest* III.2.

29

29‡

Five years have passed; 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 & lofty cliffs,
 That on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
 Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
 Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
 The hermit sits alone. These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
 And passing even into my purer mind
 With tranquil restoration: feelings too
 Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
 As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

29‡ · "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798" · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: that serene and blessed mood,
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, O! 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, not 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 & 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. O! 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; O! 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 – O! 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!

29†

Thin little leaves of wood fern, ribbed & toothed,
 Long curved sail needles of the green pitch pine,
 With common sandgrass, skirt the horizon line,
 And over these the incorruptible blue!
 Here let me gently lie and softly view
 All world asperities, lightly touched & smoothed
 As by his gracious hand, the great Bestower.
 What though the year be late? some colors run
 Yet through the dry, some links of melody.
 Still let me be, by such, assuaged & soothed
 And happier made, as when, our schoolday done,
 We hunted on from flower to frosty flower,
 Tattered and dim, the last red butterfly,
 Or the old grasshopper molasses-mouthed.

29* Some kinds of baseness are nobly undergone.

29† · Frederick Tuckerman (1821 – 1873) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

29* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ This is uttered by Ferdinand in *The Tempest* III.1.

30

30†

I wandered lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales & 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 & 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.

30†

Ah what a weary race my feet have run,
 Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,
 And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
 Beneath thy azure sky & golden sun,
 Where first my muse to lisp her notes begun.
 While pensive memory traces back the round,
 Which fills the varied interval between,
 Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.
 Sweet native stream, those skies & suns so pure

30† · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

30† · "Sonnet, to the River Loddon" · Thomas Warton, Poet Laureate (1728 – 1790) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

No more return to cheer my evening road.
Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flowed,
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature,
Nor with the muse's laurel unbestowed.

30* Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.

30* · The Rt Hon Sir Winston Spencer-Churchill (1874 – 1965) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

¶ These famous words are from a speech in the House of Commons in 1947.

MONTH X

Long Night

I

1†

Farewell, too little & too lately known,
Whom I began to think & call my own;
For sure our souls were near allied; and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves & fools we both abhorred alike:
To the same goal did both our studies drive,
The last set out the soonest did arrive.
Thus *Nisus* fell upon the slippery place,
While his young friend performed and won the race.
O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more?
It might (what nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.
A noble error, and but seldom made,
When poets are by too much force betrayed.
Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere their prime
Still showed a quickness; and maturing time
But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of rhyme.
Once more, hail & farewell; farewell thou young,

1† · “To the Memory of Mr Oldham” · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ℓ10: Nisus is a character from the *Aeneid*, who, having slipped and fallen during a race, and seeing that he can’t recover his lead, tackles one of the other competitors to ensure his friend’s victory. ℓ23: The name Marcellus refers to a number of figures from Roman history, although Dryden is probably referring here to Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the nephew and proposed heir of Augustus, whose death at nineteen years of age is a good example of a man who died before his youthful promise could be realised – just like John Oldham, the subject of this elegy.

But ah too short, *Marcellus* of our tongue;
 Thy brows with ivy, & with laurels bound;
 But fate & gloomy night encompass thee around.

1†

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 & dance & sing,
 They think they have done me no injury,
 And are gone to praise God & his priest & king,
 Who make up a heaven of our misery.

1* All men would be tyrants if they could.

1† · “The Chimney Sweeper” · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*.

¶ The Almanacker has omitted the first verse.

1* · Abigail Adams, First Lady of the United States (1744 – 1818) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

2

2‡

What then is *Merlyn's* message, his word to thee weary of pain,
 Man, on thy desolate march, thy search for an adequate cause, for a
 thread, for a guiding rein,
 Still in the maze of thy doubts & fears, to bring thee thy joy again?

Thou hast tried to climb to the sky; thou hast called it a firmament;
 Thou hast found it a thing infirm, a heaven which is no haven, a
 bladder punctured & rent,
 A mansion frail as the rainbow mist, as thy own soul impotent.

Thou hast clung to a dream in thy tears; thou hast stayed thy rage
 with a hope;
 Thou hast anchored thy wreck to a reed, a cobweb spread for thy sail,
 with sand for thy salvage rope;
 Thou hast made thy course with a compass marred, a toy for thy
 telescope.

What hast thou done with thy days? Bethink thee, man, that alone,
 Thou of all sentient things, hast learned to grieve in thy joy, hast
 earned thee the malison
 Of going sad without cause of pain, a weeper & woe-begone.

Why? For the dream of a dream of another than this fair life
 Joyous to all but thee, by every creature beloved in its spring time of
 passion rife,
 By every creature but only thee, sad husband with sadder wife,

Scared at thought of the end, at the simple logic of death,
 Scared at the old earth's arms outstretched to hold thee again, thou
 child of an hour, of a breath,
 Seeking refuge with all but her, the mother that comforteth.

Merlyn's message is this: he would bid thee have done with pride.
 What has it brought thee but grief, thy parentage with the gods, thy
 kinship with beasts denied?
 What thy lore of a life to come in a cloud word deified?

‡ · Wilfrid Blunt (1840 – 1922) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These are the closing lines from the poet's longer poem "The Wisdom of Merlyn".

O thou child which art man, distraught with a shadow of ill,
 O thou fool of thy dreams, thou gatherer rarely of flowers but of
 fungi of evil smell,
 Poison growths of the autumn woods, rank mandrake & mort-morell.

Take thy joy with the rest, the bird, the beast of the field,
 Each one wiser than thou, which frolick in no dismay, which seize
 what the seasons yield,
 And lay thee down when thy day is done content with the unrevealed.

Take the thing which thou hast. Forget thy kingdom unseen.
 Lean thy lips on the earth; she shall bring new peace to thy eyes with
 her healing vesture green.
 Drink once more at her fount of love, the one true HIPPOCRENE.

O thou child of thy fears. Nay, shame on thy childish part
 Weeping when called to thy bed. Take cheer. When the shadows
 come, when the crowd is leaving the mart,
 Then shalt thou learn that thou needest sleep, death's kindly arms
 for thy heart.

2†

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.

2* Beware of too much explaining, lest we end by too much excusing.

2† · "The Sick Rose" · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

2* · John Dalberg-Acton, 1st Baron Acton (1834 – 1902) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

3

3‡

She lay all naked in her bed,
And I myself lay by;
No veil but curtains about her spread,
No covering but I:
Her head upon her shoulders seeks
To hang in careless wise,
And full of blushes was her cheeks,
And of wishes were her eyes.

Her blood still fresh into her face,
As on a message came,
To say that in another place
It meant another game;
Her cherry lip moist, plump & fair,
Millions of kisses crown,
Which ripe & uncropped dangle there,
And weigh the branches down.

Her breasts, that welled so plump & high,
Bred pleasant pain in me;
For all the world I do defy
The like felicity;
Her thighs & belly, soft & fair,
To me were only shown:
To have seen such meat, and not to have eat,
Would have angered any stone.

Her knees lay upward gently bent,
And all lay hollow under,
As if on easy terms, they meant
To fall unforced asunder;
Just so the cyprian queen did lie,
Expecting in her bower;
When too long stay had kept the boy
Beyond his promised hour.

Dull clown, quoth she, why dost delay
Such proffered bliss to take?
Canst thou find out no other way

Similitudes to make?
 Mad with delight I thundering
 Throw my arms about her,
 But – pox upon't – 'twas but a dream;
 And so I lay without her.

3[†]

Long neglect has worn away
 Half the sweet enchanting smile;
 Time has turned the bloom to grey;
 Mould & damp the face defile.

But that lock of silky hair,
 Still beneath the picture twined,
 Tells what once those features were,
 Paints their image on the mind.

Fair the hand that traced that line,
 'Dearest, ever deem me true';
 Swiftly flew the fingers fine
 When the pen that motto drew.

3* Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

3[†] · Miss Emily Brontë (1818 – 1848) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

3* · John Dalberg-Acton, 1st Baron Acton (1834 – 1902) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

4

4‡

Come, leave this sullen state, and let not wine
 And precious wit lie dead for want of thine.
 Shall the dull market-landlord with his rout
 Of sneaking tenants dirtily swill out
 This harmless liquor? Shall they knock and beat
 For sack, only to talk of rye & wheat?
 O let not such prepost'rous tippling be
 In our metropolis; may I ne'er see
 Such tavern sacrilege, nor lend a line
 To weep the rapes & tragedy of wine.
 Here lives that chymick, quick fire which betrays
 Fresh spirits to the blood, and warms our lays.
 I have reserv'd 'gainst thy approach a cup
 That were thy muse stark dead, shall raise her up,
 And teach her yet more charming words and skill
 Than ever *Celia*, *Chloris*, *Astrophil*,
 Or any of the threadbare names inspired
 Poor rhyming lovers with a mistress fired.
 Come then, and while the slow icicle hangs
 At the stiff thatch, and winter's frosty pangs
 Benumb the year, blithe – as of old – let us
 'Midst noise & war of peace & mirth discuss.
 This portion thou wert born for: why should we
 Vex at the time's ridiculous misery?
 An age that thus hath fooled itself, and will –
 Spite of thy teeth & mine – persist so still.
 Let's sit then at this fire, and, while we steal
 A revel in the town, let others seal,
 Purchase or cheat, and who can, let them pay,
 Till those black deeds bring on the darksome day.
 Innocent spenders we, a better use
 Shall wear out our short lease, and leave th'obtuse
 Rout to their husks; they & their bags at best
 Have cares in earnest; we care for a jest.

4‡ · R Dr Henry Vaughan (1621 – 1695) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These are the concluding lines of “To His Retired Friend”.

4†

The sheep get up and make their many tracks
And bear a load of snow upon their backs,
And gnaw the frozen turnip to the ground
With sharp quick bite, and then go noising round
The boy that pecks the turnips all the day
And knocks his hands to keep the cold away
And laps his legs in straw to keep them warm
And hides behind the hedges from the storm.
The sheep, as tame as dogs, go where he goes
And try to shake their fleeces from the snows.
Then leave their frozen meal and wander round
The stubble stack that stands beside the ground,
And lie all night and face the drizzling storm
And shun the hovel where they might be warm.

4* Bureaucrats will care more for routine than results.

4† · John Clare (1793 – 1864) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

4* · Walter Bagehot (1826 – 1877) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

5

5†

Now, solitary, and in pensive guise,
 Oft, let me wander o'er the russet mead,
 Or through the pining grove; where scarce is heard
 One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil:
 Sad *Philomel*, perchance, pours forth her 'plaint,
 Far, through the withering copse. Meanwhile, the leaves,
 That, late, the forest clad with lively green,
 Nipped by the drizzly night, and sallow-hued,
 Fall, wavering, through the air; or shower amain,
 Urged by the breeze, that sobs amid the boughs.
 Then listening hares forsake the rustling woods,
 And, starting at the frequent noise, escape
 To the rough stubble, and the rushy fen.
 Then woodcocks, o'er the fluctuating main,
 That glimmers to the glimpses of the moon,
 Stretch their long voyage to the woodland glade:
 Where, wheeling with uncertain flight, they mock
 The nimble fowler's aim. Now nature droops;
 Languish the living herbs, with pale decay:
 And all the various family of flowers
 Their sunny robes resign. The falling fruits,
 Thro' the still night, forsake the parent bough,
 That, in the first grey glances of the dawn,
 Looks wild, and wonders at the wintry waste.

5†

Remember me when I am gone away,
 Gone far away into the silent land;
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,
 Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
 Remember me when no more day by day
 You tell me of our future that you planned:
 Only remember me; you understand
 It will be late to counsel then or pray.
 Yet if you should forget me for a while
 And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
 For if the darkness & corruption leave

5† · James Thomson (1700 – 1748) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are from poet's longer poem "Winter", which seems to exist in several versions.

5† · Miss Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget, and smile
Than that you should remember & be sad.

5* If it could weep, it could arise and go.

5* · Mrs Elizabeth Browning (1806 – 1861) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is the final line of Mrs Browning's sonnet "Grief"; 'it' is a statue.

6

6‡

Late in the lowering sky red fiery streaks
 Begin to flush about; the reeling clouds
 Stagger with dizzy aim, as doubting yet
 Which master to obey: while rising, slow,
 Sad, in the leaden-coloured east, the moon
 Wears a black circle round her sullied orb.
 Then issues forth the storm, with loud control,
 And the thin fabrick of the pillared air
 O'erturns, at once. Prone, on th'uncertain main,
 Descends th'ethereal force, and ploughs its waves,
 With dreadful rift: from the mid-deep appears
 Surge after surge, the rising watery war.
 Whitening, the angry billows rowl immense,
 And roar their rerrors, through the shuddering soul
 Of feeble man, amidst their fury caught,
 And dashed upon his fate: then, o'er the cliff,
 Where dwells the sea-mew, unconfined, they fly,
 And, hurrying, swallow up the sterile shore.

The mountain growls; and all its sturdy sons
 Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade:
 Lone on its midnight side, and all aghast,
 The dark wayfaring stranger, breathless, toils
 And climbs against the blast –
 Low waves the rooted forest, vexed, and sheds
 What of its leafy honours yet remains.
 Thus, struggling through the dissipated grove,
 The whirling tempest raves along the plain;
 And, on the cottage thatched, or lordly dome,
 Keen-fastening, shakes 'em to the solid base.
 Sleep, frightened, flies; the hollow chimney howls,
 The windows rattle, and the hinges creak.

6‡

Care-charmer sleep, son of the sable night,
 Brother to death, in silent darkness born:

6‡ · James Thomson (1700 – 1748) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are from poet's longer poem "Winter", which seems to exist in several versions.

6‡ · R Samuel Daniel (1562 – 1619) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is one of Daniel's sonnets "To Delia". Beaumont and Fletcher borrowed heavily from these lines in writing one of the songs in their play *Valentinian*.

Relieve my languish, and restore the light,
With dark forgetting of my cares, return;
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease dreams, th'imagery of our day desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

6* Come away; poverty's catching.

7

7†

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
 How restlessly they speed, & gleam, & quiver,
 Streaking the darkness radiantly – yet soon
 Night closes round, and they are lost forever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings
 Give various response to each varying blast,
 To whose frail frame no second motion brings
 One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest. A dream has power to poison sleep;
 We rise. One wandering thought pollutes the day;
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
 Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same. For, be it joy or sorrow,
 The path of its departure still is free:
 Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
 Nought may endure but mutability.

7†

I dreamed of him last night; I saw his face
 All radiant & unshadowed of distress,
 And as of old, in music measureless,
 I heard his golden voice and marked him trace
 Under the common thing the hidden grace,
 And conjure wonder out of emptiness,
 Till mean things put on beauty like a dress
 And all the world was an enchanted place.
 And then methought outside a fast locked gate
 I mourned the loss of unrecorded words,
 Forgotten tales & mysteries half said,
 Wonders that might have been articulate,
 And voiceless thoughts like murdered singing birds.
 And so I woke and knew that he was dead.

7† · “The third and fourth verses of this poem appear in Mrs Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, without attribution to her husband; it is unclear whether or not she was their genuine author.” · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

7† · “The Dead Poet” · Lord Alfred Douglas (1870 – 1945) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ The dead poet in question is almost certainly Oscar Wilde.

7* Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps.

7* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

8

8‡

What says my brother? 'Death is a fearful thing.'
 And shamèd life a hateful.
 'Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
 To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
 This sensible warm motion to become
 A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
 In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
 To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
 And blown with restless violence round about
 The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
 Of those that lawless & incertain thought
 Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!
 The weariest & most loathèd worldly life
 That age, ache, penury & imprisonment
 Can lay on nature is a paradise
 To what we fear of death.'

8†

By the sad waters of separation
 Where we have wandered by divers ways,
 I have but the shadow & imitation
 Of the old memorial days.

In music I have no consolation;
 No roses are pale enough for me;
 The sound of the waters of separation
 Surpasseth roses & melody.

No man knoweth our desolation;
 Memory pales of the old delight;
 While the sad waters of separation
 Bear us on to the ultimate night.

8* The great mistake is that of looking upon men as virtuous.

8‡ · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is a dialogue between Isabella and Claudio from *Measure for Measure* III.1.

8† · "Exile" · Ernest Dowson (1867 – 1900) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised the third and fourth verses. Dowson dedicated this poem to the Anglo-Irish dramatist and novelist known as Conal Holmes O'Connell O'Riordan, who outlived him by almost a half-century.

8* · Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1678 – 1751) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

9

9†

No more with overflowing light
 Shall fill the eyes that now are faded,
 Nor shall another's fringe with night
 Their woman-hidden world as they did.
 No more shall quiver down the days
 The flowing wonder of her ways,
 Whereof no language may requite
 The shifting & the many-shaded.

The grace, divine, definitive,
 Clings only as a faint forestalling;
 The laugh that love could not forgive
 Is hushed, and answers to no calling;
 The forehead & the little ears
 Have gone where *Saturn* keeps the years;
 The breast where roses could not live
 Has done with rising and with falling.

The beauty, shattered by the laws
 That have creation in their keeping,
 No longer trembles at applause,
 Or over children that are sleeping;
 And we who delve in beauty's lore
 Know all that we have known before
 Of what inexorable cause
 Makes time so vicious in his reaping.

9†

Sweet secrecy, what tongue can tell thy worth?
 What mortal pen sufficiently can praise thee?
 What curious pencil serves to limn thee forth?
 What muse hath power above thy height to raise thee?
 Strong lock of kindness, closet of love's store.
 Heart's mithridate, the soul's preservative,
 O virtue, which all virtues do adore.
 Chief good, from whom all good things we derive.
 O rare effect, true bond of friendship's measure.
 Conceit of angels, which all wisdom teachest,

9† · "For a Dead Lady" · Edwin Robinson (1869 – 1935) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*.

9† · Michael Drayton (1563 – 1631) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

O richest casket of all heavenly treasure.

In secret silence which such wonders preachest.

O purest mirror, wherein men may see

The lively image of divinity.

9* Truth lies within a little and certain compass, but error is immense.

IO

IO†

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 gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! An ecstasy of fumbling
 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.
 Dim through the misty panes & 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.

IO†

'Tis late & cold; stir up the fire;
 Sit close, and draw the table nigh;

IO† · "Dulce et Decorum Est" · Wilfred Owen (1893–1918) · *Poems that Make Grown Men Cry*. ¶ The Latin phrase is from Horace (*Carmina* III.2); it means, 'It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country.' Although credited to Owen, the poem was written in close collaboration with Siegfried Sassoon. It is sometimes said to be a response to the poetry of Jessie Pope.

IO† · John Fletcher (1579–1625) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This song is sung by the undead host in *The Lovers' Progress* III.1.

Be merry, and drink wine that's old,
A hearty medecine 'gainst a cold:
Your beds of wanton down the best,
Where you shall tumble to your rest;
I could wish you wenches too,
But I am dead and cannot do.
Call for the best the house may ring;
Sack, white, & claret, let them bring,
And drink apace, while breath you have;
You'll find but cold drink in the grave:
Plover, partridge, for you dinner,
And a capon for the sinner,
You shall find ready when you're up,
And your horse shall have his sup:
Welcome, welcome, shall fly round,
And I shall smile, though underground.

10* The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings.

II

II†

Three summers since I chose a maid,
 Too young maybe – but more's to do
 At harvest-time than bide & woo.

When us was wed she turned afraid
 Of love & me & all things human;
 Like the shut of a winter's day
 Her smile went out, and 'twasn't a woman –
 More like a little frightened fay.

One night, in the fall, she runned away.

Out 'mong the sheep, her be, they said;
 'Should properly have been abed;
 But sure enough she wasn't there
 Lying awake with her wide brown stare.
 So over seven-acre field & up-along across the down
 We chased her, flying like a hare
 Before out lanterns. To CHURCH-TOWN
 All in a shiver & a scare
 We caught her, fetched her home at last
 And turned the key upon her, fast.

She does the work about the house
 As well as most, but like a mouse:
 Happy enough to chat & play
 With birds & rabbits & such as they,
 So long as men-folk keep away.
 Not near, not near! her eyes beseech
 When one of us comes within reach.
 The women say that beasts in stall
 Look round like children at her call.
 I've hardly heard her speak at all.

Shy as a leveret, swift as he,
 Straight & slight as a young larch tree,
 Sweet as the first wild violets, she,
 To her wild self. But what to me?

II† · “The Farmer’s Bride” · Miss Charlotte Mew (1869 – 1928) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Miss Mew never married, and was fond of wearing male clothing.

The short days shorten & the oaks are brown;
 The blue smoke rises to the low grey sky;
 One leaf in the still air falls slowly down;
 A magpie's spotted feathers lie
 On the black earth spread white with rime;
 The berries redden up to Christmas-time.
 What's Christmas-time without there be
 Some other in the house than we!

She sleeps up in the attic there
 Alone, poor maid. 'Tis but a stair
 Betwixt us. Oh! my God! the down,
 The soft young down of her, the brown,
 The brown of her – her eyes, her hair, her hair!

II†

But for your terror
 Where would be valour?
 What is love for
 But to stand in your way?
 Taker & giver,
 For all your endeavour
 You leave us with more
 Than you touch with decay.

II* Sweet love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee.

II† · “To Death” · Mr Oliver Gogarty (1878 – 1957) · *Other Men's Flowers*.

II* · Miss Emily Brontë (1818 – 1848) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is a line from Miss Brontë's poem “Remembrance”.

12

12‡

It is the clay what makes the earth stick to his spade;
 He fills in holes like this year after year;
 The others have gone; they were tired, and half afraid
 But I would rather be standing here;

There is nowhere else to go. I have seen this place
 From the windows of the train that's going past
 Against the sky. This is rain on my face;
 It was raining here when I saw it last.

There is something horrible about a flower;
 This, broken in my hand, is one of those
 He threw it in just now; it will not live another hour;
 There are 1000s more; you do not miss a rose.

One of the children hanging about
 Pointed at the whole dreadful heap and smiled
 This morning after that was carried out;
 There is something terrible about a child.

We were like children last week, in the STRAND;
 That was the day you laughed at me
 Because I tried to make you understand
 The cheap, stale chap I used to be
 Before I saw the things you made me see.

This is not a real place; perhaps by & by
 I shall wake – I am getting drenched with all this rain:
 Tomorrow I will tell you about the eyes of the CRYSTAL PALACE train
 Looking down on us, and you will laugh & I shall see what you see again.

Not here, not now. We said, Not yet
 Across our low stone parapet
 Will the quick shadows of the sparrows fall.

But still it was a lovely thing
 Through the grey months to wait for spring
 With the birds that go a-gypsying
 In the parks till the blue seas call.

And next to these, you used to care
For the lions in TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
Who'll stand & speak for LONDON when her bell of judgement tolls –
And the gulls at WESTMINSTER that were
The old sea-captains' souls.
Today again the brown tide splashes step by step, the river-stair,
And the gulls are there!

By a month we have missed our day:
The children would have hung about
Round the carriage & over the way
As you & I came out.

We should have stood on the gulls' black cliffs & heard the sea
And seen the moon's white track;
I would have called; you would have come to me
And kissed me back.

You have never done that: I do not know
Why I stood staring at your bed
And heard you, though you spoke so low,
But could not reach your hands, your little head;
There was nothing we could not do, you said,
And you went, and I let you go!

Now I will burn you back; I will burn you through,
Though I am damned for it we two will lie
And burn, here where the starlings fly
To these white stones from the wet sky;
Dear, you will say this is not I –
It would not be you! It would not be you!

If for only a little while
You will think of it you will understand;
If you will touch my sleeve & smile
As you did that morning in the STRAND
I can wait quietly with you
Or go away if you want me to –
God! What is God? But your face has gone & your hand!
Let me stay here too.

When I was quite a little lad
At Christmas time we went half mad
For joy of all the toys we had,

And then we used to sing about the sheep
 The shepherds watched by night;
 We used to pray to *Christ* to keep
 Our small souls safe till morning light;
 I am scared; I am staying with you tonight –
 Put me to sleep.

I shall stay here: here you can see the sky;
 The houses in the street are much too high;
 There is no one left to speak to there;
 Here they are everywhere,
 And just above them fields & fields of roses lie –
 If he would dig it all up again they would not die.

12†

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And reddening *Phoebus* lifts his golden fire;
 The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
 Or cheerful fields resume their green attire;
 These ears – alas! – for other notes repine,
 A different object do these eyes require;
 My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
 And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain;
 I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
 And weep the more because I weep in vain.

12* Posterity is as likely to be wrong as anybody else.

12† · “On the Death of Mr Richard West” · Prof Thomas Gray (1716 – 1771) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.
 ¶ Richard West is an obscure figure, the son of another Richard West, who was briefly Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

12* · Heywood Broun (1888 – 1939) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

13

13†

Beautiful RAILWAY BRIDGE of the silvery TAY!
 Alas! I am very sorry to say
 That 90 lives have been taken away
 On the last sabbath day of eighteen seventy-nine,
 Which will be remembered for a very long time.

'Twas about seven o'clock at night,
 And the wind it blew with all its might,
 And the rain came pouring down,
 And the dark clouds seemed to frown,
 And the demon of the air seemed to say,
 I'll blow down the BRIDGE OF TAY.

When the train left EDINBURGH
 The passengers' hearts were light & felt no sorrow,
 But *Boreas* blew a terrific gale,
 Which made their hearts for to quail,
 And many of the passengers with fear did say,
 I hope God will send us safe across the BRIDGE OF TAY.

But when the train came near to WORMIT BAY,
Boreas he did loud & angry bray,
 And shook the central girders of the BRIDGE OF TAY
 On the last sabbath day of eighteen seventy-nine,
 Which will be remembered for a very long time.

So the train sped on with all its might,
 And bonny DUNDEE soon hove in sight,
 And the passengers' hearts felt light,
 Thinking they would enjoy themselves on the New Year,
 With their friends at home they loved most dear,
 And wish them all a happy New Year.

So the train moved slowly along the BRIDGE OF TAY,
 Until it was about midway,

13† · Sir William McGonagall (1825 – 1902) · *McGonagall: A Selection*. ¶ William McGonagall (his knighthood would seem to have been self-bestowed; but where's the harm in that?) is often said to be the worst poet in the English language, and this his worst poem. Yet the Almanacker cannot help but discern a particular kind of genius in his works, rarely seen outside of the writings of Joseph Smith and L Ron Hubbard. The disaster described was indeed a genuine tragedy, and remains the most lethal British railway disaster to this day.

Then the central girders with a crash gave way,
 And down went the train & passengers into the TAY!
 The storm fiend did loudly bray,
 Because 90 lives had been taken away,
 On the last sabbath day of eighteen seventy-nine,
 Which will be remembered for a very long time.

As soon as the catastrophe came to be known
 The alarm from mouth to mouth was blown,
 And the cry rang out all o'er the town:
 Good Heavens! The TAY BRIDGE is blown down,
 And a passenger train from Edinburgh,
 Which filled all the people's hearts with sorrow,
 And made them for to turn pale,
 Because none of the passengers were saved to tell the tale
 How the disaster happened on the last sabbath day of eighteen seventy-
 nine,
 Which will be remembered for a very long time.

It must have been an awful sight,
 To witness in the dusky moonlight,
 While the storm fiend did laugh, and angry did bray,
 Along the RAILWAY BRIDGE of the silvery TAY.
 O ill-fated BRIDGE of the silvery TAY,
 I must now conclude my lay
 By telling the world fearlessly without the least dismay,
 That your central girders would not have given way,
 At least many sensible men do say,
 Had they been supported on each side with buttresses,
 At least many sensible men confesses,
 For the stronger we our houses do build,
 The less chance we have of being killed.

13†

Others – I am not the first –
 Have willed more mischief than they durst:
 If in the breathless night I too
 Shiver now, 'tis nothing new.

More than I, if truth were told,
 Have stood and sweated hot & cold,

And through their reins in ice & fire
Fear contended with desire.

Agued once like me were they,
But I like them shall win my way
Lastly to the bed of mould
Where there's neither heat nor cold.

But from my grave across my brow
Plays no wind of healing now,
And fire & ice within me fight
Beneath the suffocating night.

13* The pen is worse than the sword.

14

14†

When I lie where shades of darkness
 Shall no more assail mine eyes,
 Nor the rain make lamentation
 When the wind sighs;
 How will fare the world whose wonder
 Was the very proof of me?
 Memory fades; must the remembered
 Perishing be?

O when this my dust surrenders
 Hand, foot, lip, to dust again,
 May these loved & loving faces
 Please other men.
 May the rusting harvest hedgerow
 Still the traveller's joy entwine,
 And as happy children gather
 Posies once mine.

Look thy last on all things lovely,
 Every hour. Let no night
 Seal thy sense in deathly slumber
 Till to delight
 Thou have paid thy utmost blessing;
 Since that all things thou wouldst praise
 Beauty took from those who loved them
 In other days.

14†

Farewell, thou child of my right hand, and joy;
 My sin was too much hope of thee, loved boy.
 Seven years tho' wert lent to me, and I thee pay,
 Exacted by thy fate, on the just day.
 O could I lose all father now. For why
 Will man lament the state he should envy?
 To have so soon 'scaped world's & flesh's rage,
 And if no other misery, yet age?
 Rest in soft peace, and, asked, say, Here doth lie

14† · Walter de la Mare (1873 – 1956) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The term 'traveller's joy' is one of several traditional English names for the climbing shrub *Clematis vitalba*.

14† · "On My First Son" · Ben Jonson (1572 – 1637) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The name Benjamin, the name of the departed child, means 'son of my right hand'.

Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry –
For whose sake henceforth all his vows be such,
As what he loves may never like too much.

14* I have not loved the world, nor the world me.

14* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

15

15†

St *Agnes'* Eve – ah bitter chill it was!
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
 The hare limped, trembling through the frozen grass,
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
 Numb were the beadsman's fingers, while he told
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
 Like pious incense from a censer old,
 Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
 And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
 Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
 The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
 Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:
 Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
 He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
 To think how they may ache in icy hoods & mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
 And scarce three steps, ere music's golden tongue
 Flattered to tears this agèd man & poor;
 But no – already had his deathbell rung;
 The joys of all his life were said & sung:
 His was harsh penance on St *Agnes'* Eve:
 Another way he went, and soon among
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient beadsman heard the prelude soft;
 And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
 From hurry to & fro. Soon, up aloft,
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a 1000 guests:
 The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,
 Star, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

15† · “The Eve of St Agnes” · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, & all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
The brain, new-stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St *Agnes*' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St *Agnes*' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful *Madeline*:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by – she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere:
She sighed for *Agnes*' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick & short:
The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, & scorn,
Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amorn,
Save to St *Agnes* & her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before tomorrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young *Porphyro*, with heart on fire

For *Madeline*. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of *Madeline*,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze & worship all unseen;
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss – in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:
 All eyes be muffled, or a 100 swords
 Will storm his heart, love's fev'rous citadel:
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
 Hyena foemen, & hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body & in soul.

Ah – happy chance! – the agèd creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad half-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment & chorus bland:
 He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, 'Mercy, *Porphyro*! hie thee from this place;
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

'Get hence! Get hence! There's dwarfish *Hildebrand*;
 He had a fever late, and in the fit
 He cursèd thee & thine, both house & land:
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 More tame for his gray hairs – Alas me! Flit!
 Flit like a ghost away.' 'Ah, gossip dear,
 We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
 And tell me how' – 'Good saints! Not here, not here;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.'

He followed through a lowly archèd way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
 And as she muttered, 'Well-a—well-a-day!
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, latticed, chill, & silent as a tomb.
 'Now tell me where is *Madeline*,' said he,

'O tell me, *Angela*, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they *St Agnes'* wool are weaving piously.'

'*St Agnes!* Ah! It is *St Agnes'* Eve –
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the elves & fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, *Porphyro!* *St Agnes'* Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve.'

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While *Porphyro* upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an agèd crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And *Madeline* asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
'A cruel man & impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, & dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go! Go! I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem.'

'I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,'
Quoth *Porphyro*: 'O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good *Angela*, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves & bears.'

'Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn & evening,
 Were never missed.' Thus plaining, doth she bring
 A gentler speech from burning *Porphyro*;
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
 That *Angela* gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
 Even to *Madeline's* chamber, and there hide
 Him in a closet, of such privacy
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
 While legioned faeries paced the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers met,
 Since *Merlin* paid his demon all the monstrous debt.

'It shall be as thou wishest,' said the dame:
 'All cates & dainties shall be storèd there
 Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
 Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
 For I am slow & feeble, and scarce dare
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
 The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
 Or may I never leave my grave among the dead.'

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;
 The dame returned, and whispered in his ear
 To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, & chaste;
 Where *Porphyro* took covert, pleased amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
 Old *Angela* was feeling for the stair,
 When *Madeline*, St *Agnes'* charmed maid,

Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, & pious care,
She turned, and down the agèd gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young *Porphyro*, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed & fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, & visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high & triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, & flowers, & bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains & splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong 1000 heraldries,
And twilight saints, & dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens & kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on *Madeline's* fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace & boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed,
Save wings, for heaven: *Porphyro* grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,

Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft & chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
 Until the popped warmth of sleep oppressed
 Her soothèd limbs, & soul fatigued away;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
 Blissfully havened both from joy & pain;
 Clasped like a missal where swart paynims pray;
 Blinded alike from sunshine & from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
 And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
 And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
 And over the hushed carpet, silent, stepped,
 And 'tween the curtains peeped, where – lo! – how fast she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, & jet:
 O for some drowsy morphean amulet!
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, & far-heard clarinet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanchèd linen, smooth, & lavendered,
 While he forth from the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, & plum, & gourd;
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
 Manna & dates, in argosy transferred
 From FEZ; & spicèd dainties, every one,
 From silken SAMARCAND to cedared Lebanon.

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes & in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retirèd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.
'And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St *Agnes*' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.'

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entailed in woofèd phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,
Tumultuous, and, in chords that tenderest be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence called, "La belle dame sans mercy":
Close to her ear touching the melody;
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan:
He ceased – she panted quick – and suddenly
Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
The blisses of her dream so pure & deep
At which fair *Madeline* began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on *Porphyro* would keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands & piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

'Ah, *Porphyro*!' said she, 'But even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;

And those sad eyes were spiritual & clear:
 How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, & drear!
 Give me that voice again, my *Porphyro*,
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
 O leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thy diest, my love, I know not where to go.'

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose
 Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
 Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose
 Blendeth its odour with the violet –
 Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
 Like love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes; St *Agnes'* moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
 'This is no dream, my bride, my *Madeline!*'
 'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave & beat:
 'No dream, Alas! Alas! And woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade & pine.
 Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;
 A dove forlorn & lost with sick unpruned wing.'

'My *Madeline!* sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped & vermeil-dyed?
 Ah silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 After so many hours of toil & quest,
 A famished pilgrim, saved by miracle.
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
 To trust, fair *Madeline*, to no rude infidel.

'Hark! 'Tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
 Arise! Arise! the morning is at hand;
 The bloated wassaillers will never heed:
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,

Drowned all in rhenish & the sleepy mead:
 Awake! Arise, my love, and fearless be,
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears,
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, & hound,
 Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
 Where lay the porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flaggon by his side:
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
 By one, & one, the bolts full easy slide:
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
 These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade & form
 Of witch, & demon, & large coffin-worm,
 Were long be-nightmared. *Angela* the old
 Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;
 The beadsman, after 1000 aves told,
 For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

15†

Here lies, to each her parents' ruth,
Mary, the daughter of their youth;
 Yet all heaven's gifts being heaven's due,
 It makes the father less to rue.
 At six months' end she parted hence
 With safety of her innocence;
 Whose soul heaven's queen, whose name she bears,

In comfort of her mother's tears,
Hath placed amongst her virgin-train:
Where, while that severed doth remain,
This grave partakes the fleshly birth;
Which cover lightly, gentle earth.

15* Of its beauty is the mind diseased.

15* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from the fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

16

16‡

I remember, I remember
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn;
 He never came a wink too soon,
 Nor brought too long a day,
 But now, I often wish the night
 Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember,
 The roses, red & white,
 The violets, & the lily-cups,
 Those flowers made of light!
 The lilacs where the robin built,
 And where my brother set
 The laburnum on his birthday –
 The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember,
 Where I was used to swing,
 And thought the air must rush as fresh
 To swallows on the wing;
 My spirit flew in feathers then,
 That is so heavy now,
 And summer pools could hardly cool
 The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember,
 The fir trees dark & high;
 I used to think their slender tops
 Were close against the sky:
 It was a childish ignorance,
 But now 'tis little joy
 To know I'm farther off from heav'n
 Than when I was a boy.

16‡ · Thomas Hood (1799 – 1845) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ Prof Philip Larkin's own "I Remember, I Remember" is a sour response Hood's poem.

16†

Ah what avails the sceptred race,
Ah what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
 May weep, but never see,
A night of memories & of sighs
 I consecrate to thee.

16* Ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge.

16† · “Rose Aylmer” · Walter Landor (1775 – 1864) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Landor was inspired to write these verses by The Hon Rose Aylmer, daughter of the 4th Baron Aylmer; she is an obscure character, who appears to have died in 1800.

16* · Dr Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

17

17‡

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 grey.

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
 Over tedious riddles of years ago;
 And some words played between us to & 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-cursed sun, & a tree,
 And a pond edged with greyish leaves.

17†

Here, ever since you went abroad,
 If there be change, no change I see;
 I only walk our wonted road;
 The road is only walked by me.

Yes; I forgot; a change there is;
 Was it of that you bade me tell?
 I catch at times, at times I miss
 The sight, the tone, I know so well.

Only two months since you stood here!
 Two shortest months! Then tell me why
 Voices are harsher than they were,
 And tears are longer ere they dry.

17* A conscience is a more expensive encumbrance than a wife or a carriage.

17‡ · "Neutral Tones" · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

17† · R "What News" · Walter Landor (1775 – 1864) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

17* · Thomas de Quincey (1785 – 1859) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

18

18†

There have been times when I well might have passed and the ending have come –
 Points in my path when the dark might have stolen on me, artless, unruing,
 Ere I had learnt that the world was a welter of futile doing:
 Such had been times when I well might have passed, and the ending have come.

Say, on the noon when the half sunny hours told that april was nigh,
 And I upgathered and cast forth the snow from the crocus border,
 Fashioned and furbished the soil into a summer-seeming order,
 Glowing in gladsome faith that I quickened the year thereby.

Or on that loneliest of eves when afar & benighted we stood,
 She who upheld me and I, in the midmost of EGDON together,
 Confident I in her watching & ward through the blackening heather,
 Deeming her matchless in might & with measureless scope endued.

Or on that winter-wild night when, reclined by the chimney-nook quoin,
 Slowly a drowse overgat me, the smallest & feeblest of folk there,
 Weak from my baptism of pain; when at times & anon I awoke there –
 Heard of a world wheeling on, with no listing or longing to join.

Even then, while unweeting that vision could vex or that knowledge could numb,
 That sweets to the mouth in the belly are bitter, & tart, & untoward,
 Then, on some dim-coloured scene should my briefly raised curtain have lowered,

Then might the voice that is law have said, 'Cease!' and the ending have come.

18†

Be with me, beauty, for the fire is dying;
 My dog & I are old, too old for roving.
 Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying,
 Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.
 I take the book and gather to the fire,

18† · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Psalms in English*. ¶ This is section III of "In Tenebris", which the poet wrote to express his despair over the failure of both *Jude the Obscure* and his first marriage. The poet's own note for this section references Psalm 119 – except that he was working from the Vulgate, so, according to the more commonly used Hebrew numbering, the verses that he had in mind were actually Psalm 120.5–6. i.e. 'Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar. Too long have I had my dwelling among those who hate peace.' £10: Egdon Heath is a fictional location that appears prominently in *The Return of the Native*, and crops up in several of the poet's other writings.

18† · "On Growing Old" · Dr John Masefield, Poet Laureate (1878 – 1967) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ There is a second verse, which the Almanacker has excised. £10: Where the Almanacker gives 'corn land', Aldington gives 'cornland'.

Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute
The clock ticks to my heart. A withered wire,
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.
I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
Your corn land, nor your hill land, nor your valleys
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies.
Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

18* Comfort's a cripple.

18* · Michael Drayton (1563 – 1631) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ These words can be found in canto 2 of *The Baron's Wars*.

19

19‡

Not a line of her writing have I,
 Not a thread of her hair,
 No mark of her late time as dame in her dwelling, whereby
 I may picture her there;
 And in vain do I urge my unsight
 To conceive my lost prize
 At her close, whom I knew when her dreams were upbrimming with light,

And with laughter her eyes.

What scenes spread around her last days,
 Sad, shining, or dim?
 Did her gifts & compassions enray & enarch her sweet ways
 With an aureat nimb?
 Or did life-light decline from her years,
 And mischances control
 Her full day-star; unease, or regret, or forebodings, or fears
 Disennoble her soul?

Thus I do but the phantom retain
 Of the maiden of yore
 As my relic; yet haply the best of her – fined in my brain
 It may be the more
 That no line of her writing have I,
 Nor a thread of her hair,
 No mark of her late time as dame in her dwelling, whereby
 I may picture her there.

19†

In Flanders fields the poppies grow
 Between the crosses, row on row,
 That mark our place; and in the sky

19‡ · “Thoughts of Phena” · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ Subtitle: ‘At News of Her Death’. The Phena in question was a Tryphena Sparks, Hardy’s probable lover and cousin (or possibly niece) and at one time his intended bride. Prof Larkin commented once that reading this poem brought about his conversion to the genuinely English tradition of poetry, and away from Yeats’s shoddy school.

19† · Dr John McCrae (1872 – 1918) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The argument of the poem – that the living should give their lives to avenge the dead – is clearly stupid. Where would the killing end before the whole world was sacrificed to this quasi-religion of military honour? And indeed the First World War provided a kind of answer to that question. But it remains a fine poem, and was popular with the ordinary soldiers of that most terrible of wars.

The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved & were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

19* Whores and silver in one age were born.

19* · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is from line 35 of Dryden's *Sixth Satyr of Juvenal*.

20

20†

In the vaulted way, where the passage turned
 To the shadowy corner that none could see,
 You paused for our parting – plaintively:
 Though overnight had come words that burned
 My fond frail happiness out of me.

And then I kissed you – despite my thought
 That our spell must end when reflection came
 On what you had deemed me, whose one long aim
 Had been to serve you; that what I sought
 Lay not in a heart that could breathe such blame.

But yet I kissed you: whereon you again
 As of old kissed me. Why, why was it so?
 Do you cleave to me after that light-tongued blow?
 If you scorned me at eventide, how love then?
 The thing is dark, dear. I do not know.

20†

I am the ghost of SHADWELL STAIR.
 Along the wharves by the waterhouse,
 And through the cavernous slaughterhouse,
 I am the shadow that walks there.

Yet I have flesh both firm & cool,
 And eyes tumultuous as the gems
 Of moons & lamps in the full THAMES
 When dusk sails wavering down the pool.

Shuddering the purple street arc burns
 Where I watch always; from the banks
 Dolorously the shipping clanks
 And after me a strange tide turns.

I walk till the stars of LONDON wane
 And dawn creeps up the SHADWELL STAIR.

20† · “In the Vaulted Way” · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

20† · “Shadwell Stair” · Wilfred Owen (1893 – 1918) · *The Faber Book of Twentieth Century Verse*. ¶ Shadwell Stair is an obscure alleyway leading down to the Thames, in Rotherhithe, a district on the outskirts of London proper. The place is said to have been, in Owen’s time, one of those spots where gay men pick each other up for sexual encounters; although it has to be countered that the same could be said of a great many locations.

But when the crowing sirens blare
I with another ghost am lain.

20* Good men starve for want of impudence.

20* · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from the epilogue to *Constantine the Great*.

21

21‡

Hereto I come to view a voiceless ghost;
 Whither, O whither will its whim now draw me?
 Up the cliff, down, till I'm lonely, lost,
 And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.
 Where you will next be there's no knowing,
 Facing round about me everywhere,
 With your nut-coloured hair,
 And grey eyes, and rose-flush coming & going.

Yes: I have re-entered your olden haunts at last;
 Through the years, through the dead scenes I have tracked you;
 What have you now found to say of our past –
 Scanned across the dark space wherein I have lacked you?
 Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought division?
 Things were not lastly as firstly well
 With us twain, you tell?
 But all's closed now, despite time's derision.

I see what you are doing: you are leading me on
 To the spots we knew when we haunted here together,
 The waterfall, above which the mist-bow shone
 At the then fair hour in the then fair weather,
 And the cave just under, with a voice still so hollow
 That it seems to call out to me from forty years ago,
 When you were all aglow,
 And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow.

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,
 The waked birds preen & the seals flop lazily,
 Soon you will have, dear, to vanish from me,
 For the stars close their shutters & the dawn whitens hazily.
 Trust me, I mind not, though life lours,
 The bringing me here; nay, bring me here again.
 I am just the same as when
 Our days were a joy, & our paths through flowers.

21‡ · R "After a Journey" · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ The ghost in question is that of Hardy's first wife, Emma.

21†

Here lies wise and valiant dust
 Huddled up 'twixt fit & just,
Strafford, who was hurried hence
 'Twixt treason & convenience.
 He spent his time here in a mist,
 A papist, yet a calvinist;
 His prince's nearest joy & grief,
 He had, yet wanted all relief;
 The prop & ruin of the state;
 The people's violent love & hate;
 One in extremes loved & abhorred.
 Riddles lie here, or in a word,
 Here lies blood; and let it lie
 Speechless still and never cry.

21* There is, however, a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue.

21† · “Epitaph on the Earl of Strafford” · The Rev Dr Clement Paman (1612 – 1664) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ Strafford, one of the Charles I's ministers, offered himself up to the king as a sacrifice to appease a certain faction in the House of Commons, and was duly beheaded. Sir Christopher notes that others have attributed this poem to John Cleveland.

21* · The Rt Hon Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

22

22†

He talked of DELHI brothels half the night,
 Quaking with fever; and then, dragging tight
 The frouzy blankets to his chattering chin,
 Cursed for an hour because they were so thin
 And nothing would keep out that gnawing cold –
 Scarce 40 years of age, and yet so old,
 Haggard and worn with burning eyes set deep –
 Until at last he cursed himself asleep.

Before I'd shut my eyes reveille came;
 And as I dressed by the one candle-flame
 The mellow golden light fell on his face
 Still sleeping, touching it to tender grace,
 Rounding the features life had scarred so deep,
 Till youth came back to him in quiet sleep:
 And then what women saw in him I knew
 And why they'd love him all his brief life through.

22†

What are the falling rills, the pendent shades,
 The morning bowers, the evening colonnades,
 But soft recesses for the uneasy mind
 To sigh unheard in, to the passing wind?
 So the struck deer, in some sequestered part,
 Lies down to die, the arrow in his heart;
 There hid in shades, and wasting day by day,
 Inly he bleeds, and pants his soul away.

22* It is a general popular error to imagine that the loudest complainers for the public to be the most anxious for its welfare.

22† · R "Long Tom" · Wilfrid Gibson (1878 – 1962) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

22† · Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*. ¶ This fragment is sometimes attributed to William Congreve, but the consensus as of the early twenty-first century is to credit Pope; and indeed the editor of *Additions to the Works of Alexander Pope* of 1776 claims to have sighted a manuscript including these lines written in Pope's handwriting.

22* · The Rt Hon Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

23

23‡

Out walking in the frozen swamp one grey day,
I paused and said, 'I will turn back from here.
No, I will go on farther – and we shall see.'
The hard snow held me, save where now & then
One foot went through. The view was all in lines
Straight up & down of tall slim trees
Too much alike to mark or name a place by
So as to say for certain I was here
Or somewhere else: I was just far from home.
A small bird flew before me. He was careful
To put a tree between us when he lighted,
And say no word to tell me who he was
Who was so foolish as to think what he thought.
He thought that I was after him for a feather –
The white one in his tail; like one who takes
Everything said as personal to himself.
One flight out sideways would have undeceived him.
And then there was a pile of wood for which
I forgot him and let his little fear
Carry him off the way I might have gone,
Without so much as wishing him good night.
He went behind it to make his last stand.
It was a cord of maple, cut & split
And piled – and measured, four by four by eight.
And not another like it could I see.
No runner tracks in this year's snow looped near it.
And it was older sure than this year's cutting,
Or even last year's or the year's before.
The wood was grey & the bark warping off it
And the pile somewhat sunken. Clematis
Had wound strings round & round it like a bundle.
What held it though on one side was a tree
Still growing, and on one a stake & prop,
These latter about to fall. I thought that only
Someone who lived in turning to fresh tasks
Could so forget his handiwork on which
He spent himself, the labor of his axe,

23‡ · "The Wood-Pile" · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

And leave it there far from a useful fireplace
 To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
 With the slow smokeless burning of decay.

23[†]

An age, in her embraces passed
 Would seem a winter's day;
 When life & light, with envious haste,
 Are torn and snatched away.

But O how slowly minutes roll,
 When absent from her eyes;
 That fed my love, which is my soul,
 It languishes and dies.

For then no more a soul but shade
 It mournfully does move;
 And haunts my breast, by absence made
 The living tomb of love.

23* A little learning is a dangerous thing.

23[†] · R John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647 – 1680) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These are the first three verses of 'The Mistress'.

23* · Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is line 215 of Pope's *Essay on Criticism*.

24

24[‡]

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
 With lights by clear reflection multiplied
 From many a mirror (in which he of GATH,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
 Whole without stooping, tow'ring crest & all),
 My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
 The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
 With faint illumination that uplifts
 The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits
 Dancing uncouthly to the quiv'ring flame.
 Not undelightful is an hour to me
 So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom
 Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
 The mind contemplative, with some new theme
 Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
 Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial pow'rs
 That never feel a stupor, know no pause
 Nor need one. I am conscious, and confess
 Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
 Me oft has fancy ludicrous & wild
 Soothed with a waking dream of houses, tow'rs,
 Trees, churches, & strange visages expressed
 In the red cinders, while with poring eye
 I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
 Nor less amused have I quiescent watched
 The sooty films that play upon the bars –
 Pendulous, & foreboding in the view
 Of superstition, prophesying still,
 Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.
 'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
 In indolent vacuity of thought,
 And sleeps & is refreshed. Meanwhile the face
 Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
 Of deep deliberation, as the man
 Were tasked to his full strength, absorbed & lost.
 Thus oft reclined at ease, I lose an hour
 At evening, till at length the freezing blast

24[‡] · William Cowper (1731 – 1800) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is an excerpt from a long poem, *The Task*, a series of urbane reflections.

That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
 The recollected powers and, snapping short
 The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves
 Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
 How calm is my recess, and how the frost
 Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
 The silence & the warmth enjoyed within.
 I saw the woods & fields at close of day,
 A variegated show; the meadows green
 Though faded, and the lands where lately waved
 The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
 Upturned so lately by the forceful share.
 I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
 With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
 By flocks fast-feeding & selecting each
 His fav'rite herb; while all the leafless groves
 That skirt th'horizon wore a sable hue
 Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
 Tomorrow brings a change, a total change
 Which even now – though silently performed
 And slowly, and by most unfelt – the face
 Of universal nature undergoes.
 Fast falls a fleecy show'r. The downy flakes
 Descending, and with never-ceasing lapse
 Softly alighting upon all below,
 Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
 Gladly the thick'ning mantle, & the green
 And tender blade that feared the chilling blast
 Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

24†

Two separate divided silences,
 Which, brought together, would find loving voice;
 Two glances which together would rejoice
 In love, now lost like stars beyond dark trees;
 Two hands apart whose touch alone gives ease;
 Two bosoms which, heart-shrined with mutual flame,
 Would, meeting in one clasp, be made the same;
 Two souls, the shore wave-mocked of sundering seas:
 Such are we now. Ah may our hope forecast
 Indeed one hour again, when on this stream

24† · Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ This sonnet is from Rossetti's sequence, *The House of Life*.

Of darkened love once more the light shall gleam?
An hour how slow to come – how quickly past –
Which blooms & fades, and only leaves at last,
Faint as shed flowers, the attenuated dream.

24* Good wombs have borne bad sons.

24* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ This is uttered by Miranda in *The Tempest* I.2.

25

25†

The cypress curtain of the night is spread,
 And over all a silent dew is cast.
 The weaker cares by sleep are conquerèd.
 But I alone with hideous grief aghast,
 In spite of *Morpheus'* charms a watch do keep
 Over mine eyes to banish careless sleep.

Yet oft my trembling eyes through faintness close;
 And then the map of hell before me stands,
 Which ghosts do see and I am one of those
 Ordained to pine in sorrow's endless bands,
 Since from my wretched soul all hopes are reft,
 And now no cause of life to me is left.

Grief, sieze my soul for that will still endure
 When my crazed body is consumed and gone;
 Bear it to thy black den; there keep it sure,
 Where thou 10,000 souls dost tire upon:
 Yet all do not afford such food to thee
 All this poor one, the worse part of me.

25†

Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame
 Is lust in action; and till action, lust
 Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
 Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight,
 Past reason hunted; and, no sooner had
 Past reason hated as a swallowed bait
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
 Mad in pursuit & in possession so,
 Had, having, & in quest to have, extreme;
 A bliss in proof & proved, a very woe;
 Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
 All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

25† · Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *The London Book of English Verse*.

25† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *Other Men's Flowers*.

25* · Archibald Wavell, 1st Earl Wavell (1883 – 1950) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ¶ This is from the introduction to the second section.

25* Love poems are usually written by those who have been in love; battle poems are seldom written by those who have been in battle.

26

26‡

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
 In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
 Stealthily & perpetually settling & loosely lying,
 Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;
 Lazily & incessantly floating down & down:
 Silently sifting & veiling road, roof & railing;
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
 Into angles & crevices softly drifting & sailing.
 All night it fell, and when full inches seven
 It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
 The clouds blew off from a high & frosty heaven;
 And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
 Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
 The eye marvelled – marvelled at the dazzling whiteness;
 The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
 No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
 And the busy morning cries came thin & spare.
 Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
 They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze
 Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;
 Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
 Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
 O look at the trees! they cried, O look at the trees!
 With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
 Following along the white deserted way,
 A country company long dispersed asunder:
 When now already the sun, in pale display
 Standing by PAUL's high dome, spread forth below
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.
 For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
 And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,
 Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:
 But even for them awhile no cares encumber
 Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,

The daily thoughts of labour & sorrow slumber
 At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm they have
 broken.

26†

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
 As, to behold desert a beggar born,
 And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
 And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
 And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,
 And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
 And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
 And strength by limping sway disabled,
 And art made tongue-tied by authority,
 And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
 And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
 And captive good attending captain ill.
 Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
 Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

26* Justice brings knowledge within the reach of those who have suffered.

26† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Poet's Tongue*. ¶ This is Sonnet 66.

26* · Prof William Goodwin (1831 – 1912) · *Agamemnon*. ¶ Professor Goodwin is here translating a line from Aeschylus's *Ἀγαμέμνων*.

27

27[†]

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow filled?

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no. Never can it be.
Never, never can it be.

And can he who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief & care,
Hear the woes that infants bear

And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast?
And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear?

And not sit both night & day,
Wiping all our tears away?
O no. Never can it be.
Never, never can it be.

He doth give his joy to all:
He becomes an infant small:
He becomes a man of woe:
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by:
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.

O he gives to us his joy
 That our grief he may destroy:
 Till our grief is fled & gone
 He doth sit by us and moan.

27†

When icicles hang by the wall,
 And *Dick* the shepherd blows his nail,
 And *Tom* bears logs into the hall,
 And milk comes frozen home in pail,
 When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,
 Tu-whit;
 Tu-who, a merry note,
 While greasy *Joan* doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
 And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
 And birds sit brooding in the snow,
 And *Marian's* nose looks red & raw,
 When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,
 Tu-whit;
 Tu-who, a merry note,
 While greasy *Joan* doth keel the pot.

27* Dislike of realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in the glass.

27† · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This song is sung in *Love's Labours Lost* V.2. £2: Blowing one's nail means breathing on one's hands to warm them up. £11: The parson's saw is more likely his sermon than an implement for cutting wood; likewise the crabs hissing in the bowl are more likely crab apples than sea creatures.

27* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ The original, in Wilde's preface to his *Portrait of Dorian Gray*, begins, 'The nineteenth century dislike of realism...'

28

28†

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
 England mourns for her dead across the sea.
 Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
 Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill; death august & royal
 Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,
 There is music in the midst of desolation
 And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle; they were young,
 Straight of limb, true of eye, steady & aglow.
 They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
 They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
 Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
 At the going down of the sun & in the morning
 We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
 They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
 They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
 They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are & our hopes profound,
 Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
 To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
 As the stars are known to the night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
 Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
 As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
 To the end, to the end, they remain.

28†

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,

28† · "For the Fallen" · Prof Laurence Binyon (1869 – 1943) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

28† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

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 & bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets & 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.

28* Men talk of killing time, while time quietly kills them.

29

29‡

Now is the time for the burning of the leaves.
 They go to the fire; the nostril pricks with smoke
 Wandering slowly into a weeping mist.
 Brittle & blotched, ragged & rotten sheaves.
 A flame seizes the smouldering ruin and bites
 On stubborn stalks that crackle as they resist.

The last hollyhock's fallen tower is dust;
 All the spices of june are a bitter reek,
 All the extravagant riches spent & mean.
 All burns. The reddest rose is a ghost;
 Sparks whirl up, to expire in the mist: the wild
 Fingers of fire are making corruption clean.

Now is the time for stripping the spirit bare,
 Time for the burning of days ended & done,
 Idle solace of things that have gone before:
 Rootless hope & fruitless desire are there;
 Let them go to the fire, with never a look behind.
 The world that was ours is a world that is ours no more.

They will come again, the leaf & the flower, to arise
 From squalor of rottenness into the old splendour,
 And magical scents to a wondering memory bring;
 The same glory, to shine upon different eyes.
 Earth cares for her own ruins, naught for ours.
 Nothing is certain, only the certain spring.

29†

Tell him this, when you shall part
 From a maiden pined:
 That I see him with my heart,
 Now my eyes are blind.

29* A nation is not to be governed, which is perpetually to be conquered.

29‡ · Prof Laurence Binyon (1869 – 1943) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ Prof Larkin calls these four verses “The Burning of the Leaves”, although in other books they are the first of five parts of a longer poem of the same name.

29† · Francis Thompson (1859 – 1907) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ¶ This is the last verse of “Messages”, which is a dialogue between the narrator and a dying woman. Perhaps the image of tender-hearted, unfortunate woman was inspired by the prostitute who saved the poet from a suicide attempt.

29* · The Rt Hon Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

30

30†

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills.
 In the two HINKSEYS nothing keeps the same;
 The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
 And from the sign is gone *Sibylla's* name,
 And from the roofs the twisted chimney stacks –
 Are ye too changed, ye hills?
 See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
 Tonight from OXFORD up your pathway strays.
 Here came I often, often, in old days –
Thyrsis ADD I; we still had *Thyrsis* then.

Runs it not here, the track by CHILDSWORTH FARM,
 Past the high wood, to where the elm tree crowns
 The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
 The signal elm, that looks on ILSLEY DOWNS,
 The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful THAMES?
 This winter eve is warm,
 Humid the air; leafless, yet soft as spring,
 The tender purple spray on copse & briers;
 And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
 She needs not june for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely tonight –
 Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
 Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
 Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;
 Now seldom come I, since I came with him.

30† · ℞ “Thyrsis” · Prof Matthew Arnold (1822 – 1888) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ¶ The poet's own note: ‘A Monody, to commemorate the author's friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, who died at Florence, 1861.’ Thyrsis is a character who makes two notable appearances in classical literature. (1) Theocritus' first Idyll is sometimes entitled *Θύρσις*, in which the eponymous shepherd sings the myth of Daphnis. (2) Virgil's seventh Eclogue relates a singing contest between the shepherd Thyrsis and the goatherd Corydon, which Corydon wins. ℓ2: There is a North Hinksey to the west of Oxford, and a South Hinksey to the south-west. ℓ3: The ‘haunted mansion’ refers to a building that used to stand in North Hinksey, whereas ‘Sibylla’ refers to one Sybella Curr, who was once landlady of the Cross Keys pub in South Hinksey. ℓ14: According to some notes compiled by the University of Oxford as “The Memories of George King, Botley”, the signal tree resembled an elm, but was, in fact, an oak. ℓ84: Bion of Smyrna was one of the three canonical bucolic poets, with Theocritus and Moschus. His only work which survives in completeness is a ninety-eight line lament for Adonis. ℓ89: According to Ovid (see *Metamorphoses* V), Pluto abducted Persephone (alias Proserpine) while she was gathering flowers near Lake Pergus in Sicily. ℓ95: Alternatively, in *Fasti* IV, Ovid gives Enna (alias Henna) as the location of the abduction – which is as close to Lake Pergus as makes no difference to a poet.

That single elm tree bright
Against the west – I miss it. Is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the scholar-gipsy, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd pipes we first assayed.
Ah me. This many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday.
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world & wave of men depart;
But *Thyrsis* of his own will went away.

It irked him to be here; he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields;
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lowered on the fields,
Here with the shepherds & the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and filled his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing; he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early june,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses & the longest day –
When garden walks & all the grassy floor
With blossoms red & white of fallen may
And chestnut flowers are strewn –
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vexed garden trees,
Come with the volleying rain & tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high midsummer pomps come on;
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell;
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,

Sweet-william with his homely cottage smell,
 And stocks in fragrant blow;
 Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
 And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
 And groups under the dreaming garden trees,
 And the full moon, & the white evening star.

He hearkens not. Light comer, he is flown.
 What matters it? Next year he will return,
 And we shall have him in the sweet spring days,
 With whitening hedges, & uncrumpling fern,
 And blue-bells trembling by the forest ways,
 And scent of hay new-mown.
 But *Thyrsis* never more we swains shall see;
 See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
 And blow a strain the world at last shall heed –
 For time, not *Corydon*, hath conquered thee.

Alack, for *Corydon* no rival now –
 But when sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
 Some good survivor with his flute would go,
 Piping a ditty sad for *Bion's* fate;
 And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
 And relax *Pluto's* brow,
 And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
 Of *Proserpine*, among whose crownèd hair
 Are flowers first opened on sicilian air,
 And flute his friend, like *Orpheus*, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
 When dorian shepherds sang to *Proserpine*.
 For she herself had trod sicilian fields;
 She knew the dorian water's gush divine,
 She knew each lily white which ENNA yields,
 Each rose with blushing face;
 She loved the dorian pipe, the dorian strain.
 But ah of our poor THAMES she never heard.
 Her foot the CUMNOR cowslips never stirred;
 And we should tease her with our plaint in vain.

Well, wind-dispersed & vain the words will be,
 Yet, *Thyrsis*, let me give my grief its hour
 In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill.

Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil;
I know the FYFIELD tree;
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river fields,
Above by ENSHAM, down by SANDFORD, yields,
And what sedged brooks are THAMES's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?
But many a tingle on the loved hillside,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossomed trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and, far descried,
High towered the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoored our skiff when through the WYTHAM flats,
Red loosestrife & blond meadowsweet among
And darting swallows & light water gnats,
We tracked the shy THAMES shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well.

Yes, thou art gone; and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day;
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with grey;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crushed, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seemwd so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;

And high the mountain tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain tops where is the throne of truth,
Tops in life's morning sun so bright & bare.
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;
And strange & vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near & real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush; the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet. Look, adown the dusk hill side,
A troop of OXFORD hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial & talking, ride.
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick, let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field. 'Tis done; and see,
Backed by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange & pale violet evening sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the tree, the tree.

I take the omen. Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scattered farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal tree tonight,
Yet, happy omen, hail.
Hear it from thy broad lucent ARNO vale
(For there thine earth forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless & unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale);

Hear it, O *Thyrsis*; still our tree is there.
Ah vain. These english fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old.
 Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
 In the hot cornfield of the phrygian king,
 For thee the *Lityerses* song again
 Young *Daphnis* with his silver voice doth sing;
 Sings his sicilian fold,
 His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes –
 And how a call celestial round him rang,
 And heavenward from the fountain brink he sprang,
 And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
 Sole in these fields; yet will I not despair.
 Despair I will not, while I yet descry
 'Neath the mild canopy of english air
 That lonely tree against the western sky.
 Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
 Our gipsy-scholar haunts, outliving thee.
 Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
 Woods with anemonies in flower till may,
 Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive & gracious light he seeks,
 Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
 This does not come with houses or with gold,
 With place, with honour, & a flattering crew;
 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold –
 But the smooth-slipping weeks
 Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone;
 He wends unfollowed; he must house alone;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O *Thyrsis*, on like quest wast bound;
 Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour:
 Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
 If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,
 If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
 And this rude CUMNOR ground,
 Its fir-topped HURST, its farms, its quiet fields,
 Here camest thou in thy jocund youthful time,
 Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime;
 And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
 Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
 Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
 Of men contention-tossed, of men who groan,
 Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat –
 It failed, and thou wage mute;
 Yet hadst thou always visions of our light,
 And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
 And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
 Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here;
 'Mid city noise, not, as with thee of yore,
 Thyrsis, in reach of sheep bells is my home.
 Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
 Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
 To chase fatigue & fear:
Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.
 Roam on. The light we sought is shining still.
 Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill;
Our scholar travels yet the loved hill side.

30†

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
 And sink from high to low, along a scale
 Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
 A musical but melancholy chime,
 Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
 Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
 Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
 The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
 That in the morning whitened hill & plain
 And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
 Of yesterday, which royally did wear
 His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
 Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
 Or the unimaginable touch of time.

30* There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure
 established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted.

30† · "Mutability" · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.
 30* · *The Book of Common Prayer*.

MONTH XI

Wolf

I

1‡

Since I no more do see your face
Up stairs or down below,
I'll sit me in the lonesome place
Where flat-boughed beech do grow;
Below the beeches' bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't look to meet ye now
As I do look at home.

Since you no more be at my side
In walks in summer het
I'll go alone where mist do ride,
Through trees a-drippin' wet;
Below the rain-wet bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now
As I do grieve at home.

Since now beside my dinner-board
Your voice do never sound,
I'll eat the bit I can afford,
A-yield upon the ground;
Below the darksome bough, my love,
Where you did never dine,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now
As I at home do pine.

1‡ · ℞ “The Wife A-Lost” · The Rev William Barnes (1801 – 1886) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

Since I do miss your voice an' face
 In prayer at eventide,
 I'll pray wi' one sad voice for grace
 To go where you do bide;
 Above the tree an' bough, my love,
 Where you be gone afore,
 An' be a waitin' for me now
 To come for evermore.

1†

Winter uncovers distances, I find;
 And so the cold and so the wintry mind
 Takes leaves away, till there is left behind
 A wide cold world. And so the heart grows blind
 To the earth's green motions lying warm below
 Field upon field, field upon field, of snow.

1* The axe is laid unto the root of the trees.

1† · Witter Bynner (1881 – 1968) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

1* · Matthew 3.10 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*. ¶ The KJV's rendering of Matthew 3.10 in full: 'And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.'

2

2‡

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note
 As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;
 Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
 O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
 The sods with our bayonets turning,
 By the struggling moonbeam's misty light
 And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
 Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;
 But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
 With his martial cloak around him.

Few & short were the prayers we said,
 And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
 But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
 And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed
 And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
 That the foe & the stranger would tread o'er his head,
 And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
 And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him –
 But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
 In the grave where a briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done
 When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
 And we heard the distant & random gun
 That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly & sadly we laid him down,
 From the field of his fame fresh & gory;
 We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
 But we left him alone with his glory.

‡ · The Rev Charles Wolfe (1791 – 1823) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ Lieutenant General Sir John Moore died of wounds, having led his men into battle, at the battle of Corunna in the Peninsular War.

2†

I am ashes where once I was fire,
 And the bard in my bosom is dead;
 What I loved I now merely admire,
 And my heart is as grey as my head.

My life is not dated by years –
 There are moments which act as a plough;
 And there is not a furrow appears
 But is deep in my soul as my brow.

Let the young & the brilliant aspire
 To sing what I gaze on in vain;
 For sorrow has torn from my lyre
 The string which was worthy the strain.

2* Each man kills the thing he loves.

2† · “To the Countess of Blessington” · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Poems and Dramas of Lord Byron*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised the first two verses.

2* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*.

3

3†

O captain, my captain, our fearful trip is done;
 The ship has weathered 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 & daring;
 But O heart, heart, heart,
 O the bleeding drops of red,
 Where on the deck my captain lies,
 Fallen cold & 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 & ribboned 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 & dead.

My captain does not answer; his lips are pale & still;
 My father does not feel my arm; he has no pulse nor will;
 The ship is anchored safe & sound, its voyage closed & 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 & dead.

3†

My dearest dust, could not thy hasty day
 Afford thy drowsy patience leave to stay
 One hour longer: so that we might either

3† · “O Captain! My Captain!” · Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892) · *The Golden Treasury [together with one hundred additional poems]*. ¶ This is probably the poet’s most famous effort, although he himself is said to have disliked it; it is certainly quite different from his other work. The poem features prominently in the climax of *Dead Poets’ Society* (1999).

3† · Catherine Dyer, Lady Dyer (1590 – 1654) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ Lady Dyer had this remarkable epitaph inscribed on the monument of her late husband, Sir William Dyer (1583 – 1621), which can be found in St Denys’ Church in the village of Colmworth, Bedfordshire. This sonnet is actually just the second half of the complete epitaph. £12: There is some ambiguity in this line: some books give ‘my blood grows cold’, while others give ‘my beloved grows’ cold. The Almanacker is no scholar of seventeenth century English orthography, but he has seen the original monument himself, and can report that it reads ‘MY BLOVD GROWES COLD’, and thus he concludes that either interpretation may be correct.

Sit up, or gone to bed together?
But since thy finished labour hath possessed
Thy weary limbs with early rest,
Enjoy it sweetly: and thy widow bride
Shall soon repose her by thy slumb'ring side.
Whose business, now, is only to prepare
My nightly dress, and call to prayer:
Mine eyes wax heavy and the day grows old.
The dew falls thick; my blood grows cold.
Draw, draw the closed curtains: and make room:
My dear, my dearest dust; I come, I come.

3* Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud.

3* · "This is a line from Sonnet 35." · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

4

4‡

Of all things human which are strange & wild
 This is perchance the wildest & most strange,
 And showeth man most utterly beguiled,
 To those who haunt that sunless city's range;
 That he bemoans himself for aye, repeating
 How time is deadly swift, how life is fleeting,
 How naught is constant on the earth but change.

The hours are heavy on him & the days;
 The burden of the months he scarce can bear;
 And often in his secret soul he prays
 To sleep through barren periods unaware,
 Arousing at some longed-for date of pleasure;
 Which having passed and yielded him small treasure,
 He would outsleep another term of care.

Yet in his marvellous fancy he must make
 Quick wings for time, and see it fly from us;
 This time which crawleth like a monstrous snake,
 Wounded & slow & very venomous;
 Which creeps blindworm-like round the earth & ocean,
 Distilling poison at each painful motion,
 And seems condemned to circle ever thus.

And since he cannot spend and use aright
 The little time here given him in trust,
 But wasteth it in weary undelight
 Of foolish toil & trouble, strife & lust,
 He naturally claimeth to inherit
 The everlasting future, that his merit
 May have full scope; as surely is most just.

O length of the intolerable hours,
 O nights that are as aeons of slow pain,
 O time, too ample for our vital powers,
 O Life, whose woeful vanities remain
 Immutable for all of all our legions

4‡ · R James Thomson (1700 – 1748) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is part XIII of *The City of Dreadful Night*.

Through all the centuries & in all the regions,
Not of your speed & variance we complain.

We do not ask a longer term of strife,
Weakness & weariness & nameless woes;
We do not claim renewed & endless life
When this which is our torment here shall close,
An everlasting conscious inanition,
We yearn for speedy death in full fruition,
Dateless oblivion & divine repose.

4†

The snow falls deep; the forest lies alone:
The boy goes hasty for his load of brakes,
Then thinks upon the fire and hurries back;
The gypsy knocks his hands and tucks them up,
And seeks his squalid camp, half hid in snow,
Beneath the oak, which breaks away the wind,
And bushes close, with snow like hovel warm:
There stinking mutton roasts upon the coals,
And the half-roasted dog squats close and rubs,
Then feels the heat too strong and goes aloof;
He watches well, but none a bit can spare,
And vainly waits the morsel thrown away:
’Tis thus they live – a picture to the place;
A quiet, pilfering, unprotected race.

4*

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burnèd is *Apollo’s* laurel bough.

4† · “Gypsies” · John Clare (1793 – 1864) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

4* · Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These lines are sung by the chorus as part of the epilogue to *Faustus*.

5

5‡

Lo, thus, as prostrate, 'In the dust I write
 My heart's deep languor & my soul's sad tears.'
 Yet why evoke the spectres of black night
 To blot the sunshine of exultant years?
 Why disinter dead faith from mouldering hidden?
 Why break the seals of mute despair unbidden,
 And wail life's discords into careless ears?

Because a cold rage seizes one at whiles
 To show the bitter old & wrinkled truth
 Stripped naked of all vesture that beguiles,
 False dreams, false hopes, false masks & modes of youth;
 Because it gives some sense of power & passion
 In helpless innocence to try to fashion
 Our woe in living words howe'er uncouth.

Surely I write not for the hopeful young,
 Or those who deem their happiness of worth,
 Or such as pasture and grow fat among
 The shows of life and feel nor doubt nor dearth,
 Or pious spirits with a god above them
 To sanctify and glorify and love them,
 Or sages who foresee a heaven on earth.

For none of these I write, and none of these
 Could read the writing if they deigned to try;
 So may they flourish in their due degrees,
 On our sweet earth & in their unplaced sky.
 If any cares for the weak words here written,
 It must be someone desolate, fate-smitten,
 Whose faith & hopes are dead, and who would die.

Yes, here & there some weary wanderer
 In that same city of tremendous night,
 Will understand the speech and feel a stir
 Of fellowship in all-disastrous fight;
 'I suffer mute & lonely, yet another

5‡ · R James Thomson (1700 – 1748) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is the proem to *The City of Dreadful Night*. L27: Where the Almanacker gives 'someone', Aldington gives 'some one', as do several other sources.

Uplifts his voice to let me know a brother
 Travels the same wild paths though out of sight.'

O sad fraternity, do I unfold
 Your dolorous mysteries shrouded from of yore?
 Nay, be assured; no secret can be told
 To any who divined it not before:
 None uninitiate by many a presage
 Will comprehend the language of the message,
 Although proclaimed aloud for evermore.

5†

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 & 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.

5* I find the laurel also bears a thorn.

5† · Miss Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

5* · Walter Landor (1775 – 1864) · *The Golden Treasury [with a fifth book selected by John Press]*. ¶ This is the last line of a short poem beginning 'Lately our poets loiter'd in green lanes'.

6

6‡

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean;
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
 In looking on the happy autumn fields,
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,
 Sad as the last which reddens over one
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah sad & strange as in dark summer dawns
 The earliest pipe of half awakened birds
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
 On lips that are for others; deep as love,
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
 O death in life, the days that are no more.

6‡

She had no saying dark enough
 For the dark pine that kept
 Forever trying the window latch
 Of the room where they slept.

The tireless but ineffectual hands
 That with every futile pass
 Made the great tree seem as a little bird
 Before the mystery of glass.

It never had been inside the room,
 And only one of the two

6‡ · Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, Poet Laureate (1809 – 1892) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

6‡ · “The Oft-Repeated Dream” · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ‡ This is part of a sequence of poems called “The Hill Wife”.

Was afraid in an oft-repeated dream
Of what the tree might do.

6*

In frolick dispose your pounds, shillings & pence,
For we shall be nothing a hundred years hence.

6* · \mathbb{R} Thomas Jordan (1612 – 1685) · *The Penguin Book of Light Verse*. ¶ This is a couplet from “The Epicure”.

7

7‡

Shall I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
 Brother, on this that was the veil of thee?
 Or quiet sea flower moulded by the sea,
 Or simplest growth of meadowsweet or sorrel,
 Such as the summer-sleepy dryads weave,
 Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve?
 Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
 Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
 And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
 To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
 Trod by no tropic feet?

For always thee the fervid languid glories
 Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies;
 Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
 Where the sea sobs round lesbian promontories,
 The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
 That knows not where is that leucadian grave
 Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
 Ah salt & sterile as her kisses were,
 The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
 Hither & thither, and vex and work her wrong,
 Blind gods that cannot spare.

7‡ · “Ave atque Vale” · Algernon Swinburne (1837 – 1909) · *Cassell’s Anthology of English Poetry*. ¶ Subtitled: ‘In memory of Charles Baudelaire’, and with, in some editions a lengthy quotation from the French poet’s elegy for his nursemaid in *Les Fleurs du mal*. The main title alludes to Catullus 101. £3: ‘sea flower’ = sea anemone. £17: Menander claimed that Sappho died by throwing herself off the Leucadian cliffs, because of her unrequited love for the ferryman, Phaon (see Strabo, *Γεωγραφικά* X.2.9). £59: The titaness is generally thought to be an allusion Baudelaire’s ‘La Géante’. £120: When Orestes’ father, Agamemnon, was murdered by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus, the son killed his mother and her bit on the side in revenge, and thus – within the logic of the morality of the ancient Greeks – honoured his father’s memory (see *Ὀδύσσεια* III.300–310). £123: The king in question must be Agamemnon. £132: ‘[O]ur God’ could be either God or – on the strength of the reference to the ‘God of all suns and songs’ two verses later – Apollo, but the Almanacker leans toward God. £159: There were temples to Venus Erycina on the Capitoline and Quirinal hills of ancient Rome. The name Erycina derives from Eryx, a mountain in Sicily, which is called Erice in both the modern Italian and modern Sicilian languages. £165: This appears to be a reference to Numbers 17. £191: According to the *Βιβλιοθήκη* of Pseudo-Apollodorus, Niobe, who had fourteen children, boasted that she was more fortunate than Leto, who had only two, the divine twins Apollo and Artemis. Leto ordered her children to punish the woman for her blasphemy, and they promptly killed Niobe’s children with arrows, sparing only two, a boy and a girl.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
Secrets & sorrows unbeheld of us:
Fierce loves, & lovely leaf buds poisonous,
Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other
Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime;
The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
Sin without shape, & pleasure without speech;
And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep;
And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
Seeing as men sow men reap.

O sleepless heart & sombre soul unsleeping,
That were athirst for sleep & no more life
And no more love, for peace & no more strife!
Now the dim gods of death have in their keeping
Spirit & body & all the springs of song,
Is it well now where love can do no wrong,
Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang
Behind the unopening closure of her lips?
Is it not well where soul from body slips
And flesh from bone divides without a pang
As dew from flower bell drips?

It is enough; the end & the beginning
Are one thing to thee, who art past the end.
O hand unclasped of unbeholden friend,
For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for winning,
No triumph & no labour & no lust,
Only dead yew leaves & a little dust.
O quiet eyes wherein the light saith nought,
Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night
With obscure finger silences your sight,
Nor in your speech the sudden soul speaks thought,
Sleep, and have sleep for light.

Now all strange hours & all strange loves are over,
Dreams & desires & sombre songs & sweet,
Hast thou found place at the great knees & feet
Of some pale titan woman like a lover,
Such as thy vision here solicited,
Under the shadow of her fair vast head,
The deep division of prodigious breasts,

The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep,
The weight of awful tresses that still keep
The savour & shade of old-world pine forests
Where the wet hill winds weep?

Hast thou found any likeness for thy vision?
O gardener of strange flowers, what bud, what bloom,
Hast thou found sown, what gathered in the gloom?
What of despair, of rapture, of derision,
What of life is there, what of ill or good?
Are the fruits grey like dust or bright like blood?
Does the dim ground grow any seed of ours,
The faint fields quicken any terrene root,
In low lands where the sun & moon are mute
And all the stars keep silence? Are there flowers
At all, or any fruit?

Alas, but though my flying song flies after,
O sweet strange elder singer, thy more fleet
Singing, & footprints of thy fleeter feet,
Some dim derision of mysterious laughter
From the blind tongueless warders of the dead,
Some gainless glimpse of *Proserpine's* veiled head,
Some little sound of unregarded tears
Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,
And from pale mouths some cadence of dead sighs –
These only, these the hearkening spirit hears,
Sees only such things rise.

Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow,
Far too far off for thought or any prayer.
What ails us with thee, who art wind & air?
What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow?
Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire,
Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire,
Our dreams pursue our dead and do not find.
Still, & more swift than they, the thin flame flies,
The low light fails us in elusive skies,
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind
Are still the eluded eyes.

Not thee, O never thee, in all time's changes,
Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad soul,

The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut scroll
I lay my hand on, and not death estranges
My spirit from communion of thy song –
These memories & these melodies that throng
Veiled porches of a muse funereal –
These I salute, these touch, these clasp and fold
As though a hand were in my hand to hold,
Or through mine ears a mourning musical
Of many mourners rolled.

I among these, I also, in such station
As when the pyre was charred, and piled the sods,
And offering to the dead made, & their gods,
The old mourners had, standing to make libation,
I stand, and to the gods & to the dead
Do reverence without prayer or praise, and shed
Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom,
And what of honey & spice my seedlands bear,
And what I may of fruits in this chilled air,
And lay, *Orestes*-like, across the tomb
A curl of severed hair.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,
Not like the low-lying head of him, the king,
The flame that made of Troy a ruinous thing,
Thou liest, and on this dust no tears could quicken
There fall no tears like theirs that all men hear
Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
Down the opening leaves of holy poets' pages.
Thee not *Orestes*, not *Electra* mourns;
But bending us-ward with memorial urns
The most high muses that fulfil all ages
Weep, and our God's heart yearns.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often
Among us darkling here the lord of light
Makes manifest his music & his might
In hearts that open and in lips that soften
With the soft flame & heat of songs that shine.
Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine,
And nourished them indeed with bitter bread;
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food came,
The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame

Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he fed
Who feeds our hearts with fame.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sunseting,
God of all suns & songs, he too bends down
To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown,
And save thy dust from blame & from forgetting.
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert and art,
Compassionate, with sad & sacred heart,
Mourns thee of many his children the last dead,
And hallows with strange tears & alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth & sunless eyes,
And over thine irrevocable head
Sheds light from the under skies.

And one weeps with him in the ways lethean,
And stains with tears her changing bosom chill:
That obscure *Venus* of the hollow hill,
That thing transformed which was the cytherean,
With lips that lost their grecian laugh divine
Long since, & face no more called *Erycine*;
A ghost, a bitter & luxurious god.
Thee also with fair flesh & singing spell
Did she, a sad & second prey, compel
Into the footless places once more trod,
And shadows hot from hell.

And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom,
No choral salutation lure to light
A spirit sick with perfume & sweet night
And love's tired eyes & hands & barren bosom.
There is no help for these things; none to mend
And none to mar; not all our songs, O friend,
Will make death clear or make life durable.
Howbeit with rose & ivy & wild vine
And with wild notes about this dust of thine
At least I fill the place where white dreams dwell
And wreathe an unseen shrine.

Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon;
If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no more to live;
And to give thanks is good, and to forgive.
Out of the mystic & the mournful garden

Where all day through thine hands in barren braid
 Wove the sick flowers of secrecy & shade,
 Green buds of sorrow & sin, & remnants grey,
 Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, sanguine-hearted,
 Passions that sprang from sleep & thoughts that started,
 Shall death not bring us all as thee one day
 Among the days departed?

For thee, O now a silent soul, my brother,
 Take at my hands this garland, and farewell.
 Thin is the leaf, & chill the wintry smell,
 And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,
 With sadder than the niobeian womb,
 And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.
 Content thee, howsoever, whose days are done;
 There lies not any troublous thing before,
 Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
 For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
 All waters as the shore.

7†

We who are left, how shall we look again
 Happily on the sun or feel the rain
 Without remembering how they who went
 Ungrudgingly and spent
 Their lives for us loved, too, the sun & rain?

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings –
 But we, how shall we turn to little things
 And listen to the birds & winds & streams
 Made holy by their dreams,
 Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things?

7* Comforter, where, where is your comforting?

7† · “Lament” · Wilfrid Gibson (1878 – 1962) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ Although Gibson joined the British Army during the First World War, he never served abroad. Due to some kind of medical defect, possibly poor eyesight, he ultimately served as a clerk, which – when one compares his lifespan to that of Edward Thomas, who was born in the same year – turned out to be a good career move.

7* · Fr Gerard Hopkins (1844 – 1889) · *The Golden Treasury [with a fifth book selected by John Press]*. ¶ This is a line from one of the poet’s so-called “terrible” sonnets, specifically the one beginning ‘No worst, there is none’. The ‘Comforter’ in this context is the Holy Spirit.

8

8‡

Nothing is better, I well think,
 Than love; the hidden well-water
 Is not so delicate to drink:
 This was well seen of me & her.

I served her in a royal house;
 I served her wine & curious meat.
 For will to kiss between her brows,
 I had no heart to sleep or eat.

Mere scorn God knows she had of me,
 A poor scribe, nowise great or fair,
 Who plucked his clerk's hood back to see
 Her curled-up lips & amorous hair.

I vex my head with thinking this.
 Yea, though God always hated me,
 And hates me now that I can kiss
 Her eyes, plait up her hair to see

How she then wore it on the brows,
 Yet am I glad to have her dead
 Here in this wretched wattled house
 Where I can kiss her eyes & head.

Nothing is better, I well know,
 Than love; no amber in cold sea
 Or gathered berries under snow:
 That is well seen of her & me.

Three thoughts I make my pleasure of:
 First I take heart & think of this:
 That knight's gold hair she chose to love,
 His mouth she had such will to kiss.

Then I remember that sundawn
 I brought him by a privy way
 Out at her lattice, and thereon
 What gracious words she found to say.

8‡ · "The Leper" · Algernon Swinburne (1837 – 1909) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ As Swinburne's own note indicates, this poem is a retelling of a digression in the *Grand Chroniques de France*, 1505.

(Cold rushes for such little feet —
Both feet could lie into my hand.
A marvel was it of my sweet
Her upright body could so stand.)

'Sweet friend, God give you thank & grace;
Now am I clean & whole of shame,
Nor shall men burn me in the face
For my sweet fault that scandals them.'

I tell you over word by word.
She, sitting edgewise on her bed,
Holding her feet, said thus. The third,
A sweeter thing than these, I said.

God, that makes time and ruins it
And alters not, abiding God,
Changed with disease her body sweet,
The body of love wherein she abode.

Love is more sweet & comelier
Than a dove's throat strained out to sing.
All they spat out and cursed at her
And cast her forth for a base thing.

They cursed her, seeing how God had wrought
This curse to plague her, a curse of his.
Fools were they surely, seeing not
How sweeter than all sweet she is.

He that had held her by the hair,
With kissing lips blinding her eyes,
Felt her bright bosom, strained & bare,
Sigh under him, with short mad cries

Out of her throat & sobbing mouth
And body broken up with love,
With sweet hot tears his lips were loth
Her own should taste the savour of,

Yea, he inside whose grasp all night
Her fervent body leapt or lay,
Stained with sharp kisses red & white,
Found her a plague to spurn away.

I hid her in this wattled house,
I served her water & poor bread.
For joy to kiss between her brows
Time upon time I was nigh dead.

Bread failed; we got but well-water
And gathered grass with dropping seed.
I had such joy of kissing her,
I had small care to sleep or feed.

Sometimes when service made me glad
The sharp tears leapt between my lids,
Falling on her, such joy I had
To do the service God forbids.

'I pray you let me be at peace;
Get hence, make room for me to die.'
She said that: her poor lip would cease,
Put up to mine, and turn to cry.

I said, 'Bethink yourself how love
Fared in us twain, what either did;
Shall I unclothe my soul thereof?
That I should do this, God forbid.'

Yea, though God hateth us, he knows
That hardly in a little thing
Love faileth of the work it does
Till it grow ripe for gathering.

Six months, and now my sweet is dead
A trouble takes me; I know not
If all were done well, all well said,
No word or tender deed forgot.

Too sweet, for the least part in her,
To have shed life out by fragments; yet,
Could the close mouth catch breath and stir,
I might see something I forget.

Six months, and I sit still and hold
In two cold palms her cold two feet.
Her hair, half grey half ruined gold,
Thrills me and burns me in kissing it.

Love bites and stings me through, to see
Her keen face made of sunken bones.
Her worn-off eyelids madden me,
That were shot through with purple once.

She said, 'Be good with me; I grow
So tired for shame's sake, I shall die
If you say nothing:' even so.
And she is dead now, and shame put by.

Yea, and the scorn she had of me
In the old time, doubtless vexed her then.
I never should have kissed her. See
What fools God's anger makes of men!

She might have loved me a little too,
Had I been humbler for her sake.
But that new shame could make love new
She saw not – yet her shame did make.

I took too much upon my love,
Having for such mean service done
Her beauty & all the ways thereof,
Her face & all the sweet thereon.

Yea, all this while I tended her,
I know the old love held fast his part:
I know the old scorn waxed heavier,
Mixed with sad wonder, in her heart.

It may be all my love went wrong –
A scribe's work writ awry and blurred,
Scrawled after the blind evensong –
Spoilt music with no perfect word.

But surely I would fain have done
All things the best I could. Perchance
Because I failed, came short of one,
She kept at heart that other man's.

I am grown blind with all these things:
It may be now she hath in sight
Some better knowledge; still there clings
The old question. Will not God do right?

8†

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, undistressed
 By hearts grown cold to me,
 Could lonely wait my endless rest
 With equanimity.

But time, to make me grieve,
 Part steals, lets part abide;
 And shakes this fragile frame at eve
 With throbbings of noontide.

8*

Violets plucked, the sweetest rain
 Makes not fresh nor grow again.

8† · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

8* · John Fletcher (1579 – 1625) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These lines are from a song sung by the chorus in *The Queen of Corinth* III.2.

9

9‡

Let us go hence, my songs; she will not hear.
 Let us go hence together without fear;
 Keep silence now, for singing-time is over,
 And over all old things & all things dear.
 She loves not you nor me as all we love her.
 Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
 She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part; she will not know.
 Let us go seaward as the great winds go,
 Full of blown sand & foam; what help is here?
 There is no help, for all these things are so,
 And all the world is bitter as a tear.
 And how these things are, though ye strove to show,
 She would not know.

Let us go home & hence; she will not weep.
 We gave love many dreams & days to keep,
 Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,
 Saying, If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle and reap.
 All is reaped now; no grass is left to mow;
 And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,
 She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest; she will not love.
 She shall not hear us if we sing hereof,
 Nor see love's ways, how sore they are & steep.
 Come hence, let be, lie still; it is enough.
 Love is a barren sea, bitter & deep;
 And though she saw all heaven in flower above,
 She would not love.

Let us give up, go down; she will not care.
 Though all the stars made gold of all the air,
 And the sea moving saw before it move
 One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair;
 Though all those waves went over us, and drove
 Deep down the stifling lips & drowning hair,
 She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence; she will not see.
 Sing all once more together; surely she,
 She too, remembering days & words that were,
 Will turn a little toward us, sighing; but we,
 We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.
 Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,
 She would not see.

9†

Sweet, be not proud of those two eyes,
 Which starlike sparkle in their skies;
 Nor be you proud that you can see
 All hearts your captives, yours yet free;
 Be you not proud of that rich hair
 Which wantons with the lovesick air;
 Whenas that ruby which you wear,
 Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,
 Will last to be a precious stone
 When all your world of beauty's gone.

9* Where is the life we have lost in living?

9† · "To Dianeme" · Robert Herrick (1591 – 1634) · *The Golden Treasury*.

9* · Prof Thomas Eliot (1888 – 1965) · *The Poet's Tongue*. ¶ This line appears in one of the choruses from *The Rock*, a work which the poet himself described as a 'pageant play'. This line is followed by two similar questions: 'Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?'

IO

IO‡

I have lived long enough, having seen one thing, that love hath an end;
 Goddess & maiden & queen, be near me now and befriend.
 Thou art more than the day or the morrow, the seasons that laugh or that weep;
 For these give joy & sorrow; but thou, *Proserpina*, sleep.
 Sweet is the treading of wine, and sweet the feet of the dove;
 But a goodlier gift is thine than foam of the grapes or love.
 Yea, is not even *Apollo*, with hair & harpstring of gold,
 A bitter god to follow, a beautiful god to behold?
 I am sick of singing; the bays burn deep and chafe: I am fain
 To rest a little from praise & grievous pleasure & pain.
 For the gods we know not of, who give us our daily breath,
 We know they are cruel as love or life, & lovely as death.
 O gods dethroned & deceased, cast forth, wiped out in a day.
 From your wrath is the world released, redeemed from your chains, men say.
 New gods are crowned in the city; their flowers have broken your rods;
 They are merciful, clothed with pity, the young compassionate gods.
 But for me their new device is barren; the days are bare;
 Things long passed-over suffice, and men forgotten that were.
 Time & the gods are at strife; ye dwell in the midst thereof,
 Draining a little life from the barren breasts of love.
 I say to you, Cease, take rest; yea, I say to you all, Be at peace,
 Till the bitter milk of her breast & the barren bosom shall cease.
 Wilt thou yet take all, *Galilean*? But these thou shalt not take,
 The laurel, the palms & the paeon, the breasts of the nymphs in the brake;
 Breasts more soft than a dove's, that tremble with tenderer breath;
 And all the wings of the loves, and all the joy before death;
 All the feet of the hours that sound as a single lyre,
 Dropped & deep in the flowers, with strings that flicker like fire.
 More than these wilt thou give, things fairer than all these things?
 Nay, for a little we live, and life hath mutable wings.
 A little while and we die; shall life not thrive as it may?
 For no man under the sky lives twice, outliving his day.
 And grief is a grievous thing, and a man hath enough of his tears:
 Why should he labour, and bring fresh grief to blacken his years?
 Thou hast conquered, O pale *Galilean*; the world has grown grey from thy breath;
 We have drunken of things lethean, and fed on the fullness of death.

IO‡ · "Hymn to Proserpine" · Algernon Swinburne (1837 – 1909) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*.

¶ Subtitle: 'After the Proclamation in Rome of the Christian Faith'. The poet's own inscription: 'Vicisti, Galilaeae' which means, 'You have won, Galilean', reputedly the dying words of Emperor Julian, Rome's last pagan ruler.

Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a day;
 But love grows bitter with treason, and laurel outlives not may.
 Sleep, shall we sleep after all? For the world is not sweet in the end;
 For the old faiths loosen and fall; the new years ruin and rend.
 Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul is a rock that abides;
 But her ears are vexed with the roar, and her face with the foam of the tides.
 O lips that the live blood faints in, the leavings of racks & rods.
 O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods.
 Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all knees bend,
 I kneel not neither adore you, but standing, look to the end.
 All delicate days & pleasant, all spirits & sorrows are cast
 Far out with the foam of the present that sweeps to the surf of the past:
 Where beyond the extreme sea wall, and between the remote sea gates,
 Waste water washes, and tall ships founder, and deep death waits:
 Where, mighty with deepening sides, clad about with the seas as with wings,
 And impelled of invisible tides, and fulfilled of unspeakable things,
 White-eyed and poisonous-finned, shark-toothed and serpentine-curved,
 Rolls, under the whitening wind of the future, the wave of the world.
 The depths stand naked in sunder behind it, the storms flee away;
 In the hollow before it the thunder is taken and snared as a prey;
 In its sides is the north-wind bound; and its salt is of all men's tears;
 With light of ruin, & sound of changes, & pulse of years:
 With travail of day after day, & with trouble of hour upon hour;
 And bitter as blood is the spray; and the crests are as fangs that devour:
 And its vapour & storm of its steam as the sighing of spirits to be;
 And its noise as the noise in a dream; & its depth as the roots of the sea:
 And the height of its heads as the height of the utmost stars of the air:
 And the ends of the earth at the might thereof tremble, and time is made bare.
 Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins? Will ye chasten the high sea with rods?
 Will ye take her to chain her with chains, who is older than all ye gods?
 All ye as a wind shall go by; as a fire shall ye pass and be passed;
 Ye are gods, and, behold, ye shall die, and the waves be upon you at last.
 In the darkness of time, in the deeps of the years, in the changes of things,
 Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and the world shall forget you for kings.
 Though the feet of thine high priests tread where thy lords & our forefathers trod,
 Though these that were gods are dead, and thou being dead art a god,
 Though before thee the throned cytherean be fallen, and hidden her head,
 Yet thy kingdom shall pass, *Galilean*; thy dead shall go down to thee dead.
 Of the maiden thy mother men sing as a goddess with grace clad around;
 Thou art throned where another was king; where another was queen she is crowned.

Yea, once we had sight of another: but now she is queen, say these.

Not as thine, not as thine was our mother, a blossom of flowering seas,
 Clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment, & fair as the foam,
 And fleeter than kindled fire, & a goddess, & mother of ROME.
 For thine came pale & a maiden, & sister to sorrow; but ours,
 Her deep hair heavily laden with odour & colour of flowers,
 White rose of the rose-white water, a silver splendour, a flame,
 Bent down unto us that besought her, and earth grew sweet with her name.
 For thine came weeping, a slave among slaves, & rejected; but she
 Came flushed from the full-flushed wave, & imperial, her foot on the sea.
 And the wonderful waters knew her, the winds & the viewless ways,
 And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-blue stream of the bays.
 Ye are fallen, our lords, by what token? We wise that ye should not fall.
 Ye were all so fair that are broken; and one more fair than ye all.
 But I turn to her still, having seen she shall surely abide in the end;
 Goddess & maiden & queen, be near me now and befriend.
 O daughter of earth, of my mother, her crown & blossom of birth,
 I am also, I also, thy brother; I go as I came unto earth.
 In the night where thine eyes are as moons are in heaven, the night where thou art,
 Where the silence is more than all tunes, where sleep overflows from the heart,
 Where the poppies are sweet as the rose in our world, and the red rose is white,
 And the wind falls faint as it blows with the fume of the flowers of the night,
 And the murmur of spirits that sleep in the shadow of gods from afar
 Grows dim in thine ears & deep as the deep dim soul of a star,
 In the sweet low light of thy face, under heavens untrod by the sun,
 Let my soul with their souls find place, and forget what is done & undone.
 Thou art more than the gods who number the days of our temporal breath;
 Let these give labour and slumber; but thou, *Proserpina*, death.
 Therefore now at thy feet I abide for a season in silence. I know
 I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as they sleep; even so.
 For the glass of the years is brittle wherein we gaze for a span;
 A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is man.
 So long I endure, no longer; and laugh not again, neither weep.
 For there is no god found stronger than death; and death is a sleep.

10†

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh
 This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;
 That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
 In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;
 That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
 And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;

10† · "Sonnet" · Thomas Hood (1799 – 1845) · *The London Book of English Verse*.

That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal spright
Be lapped in alien clay and laid below;
It is not death to know this – but to know
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft – and when grass waves
Over the passed-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

10* Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle.

II

II†

In a solitude of the sea
 Deep from human vanity,
 And the pride of life that planned her, stilly couches she.

Steel chambers, late the pyres
 Of her salamandrine fires,
 Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

Over the mirrors meant
 To glass the opulent
 The sea-worm crawls – grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

Jewels in joy designed
 To ravish the sensuous mind
 Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared & black & blind.

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
 Gaze at the gilded gear
 And query, What does this vaingloriousness down here?

Well: while was fashioning
 This creature of cleaving wing,
 The immanent will that stirs & urges everything

Prepared a sinister mate
 For her – so gaily great –
 A shape of ice, for the time far & dissociate.

And as the smart ship grew
 In stature, grace, & hue,
 In shadowy silent distance grew the iceberg too.

Alien they seemed to be;
 No mortal eye could see
 The intimate welding of their later history,

Or sign that they were bent
 By paths coincident
 On being anon twin halves of one august event,

II† · “The Convergence of the Twain” · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

¶ Hardy wrote this poem in response to the sinking of the RMS *Titanic*. His ideas about the ‘immanent will’ seem to owe a debt to the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer.

Till the spinner of the years
 Said, Now! And each one hears,
 And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

II†

Ensanguining the skies
 How heavily it dies
 Into the west away;
 Past touch & sight & sound,
 Not further to be found,
 How hopeless under ground
 Falls the remorseful day.

II* You will be damned if you do, and you will be damned if you don't.

II† · Prof Alfred Housman (1859 – 1936) · *Poems that Make Grown Men Cry*.

II* · Lorenzo Dow (1777 – 1834) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Dow was speaking specifically about the Calvinist doctrine of

12

12‡

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead –
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music & splendor
Survive not the lamp & the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall & cold winds come.

12†

Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows:
What are those blue remembered hills?
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content
– I see it shining plain –
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.

12* Satan hates me, yet is loath to lose me.

12† · Prof Alfred Housman (1859 – 1936) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

12* · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *Metaphysical Poetry*. ¶ These words concluded the poet's sonnet beginning 'As due by many titles I resign'.

13

13‡

No matter where. Of comfort no man speak.
 Let's talk of graves, of worms, & epitaphs,
 Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
 Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
 Let's choose executors and talk of wills.
 And yet not so, for what can we bequeath
 Save our deposèd bodies to the ground?
 Our lands, our lives, & all are *Bolingbroke's*,
 And nothing can we call our own but death
 And that small model of the barren earth
 Which serves as paste & cover to our bones.
 For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings –
 How some have been deposed, some slain in war,
 Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,
 Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed,
 All murdered. For within the hollow crown
 That rounds the mortal temples of a king
 Keeps death his court, and there the antic sits,
 Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,
 Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
 To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks,
 Infusing him with self & vain conceit,
 As if this flesh which walls about our life
 Were brass impregnable; and humored thus,
 Comes at the last and with a little pin
 Bores through his castle wall, and farewell, king!
 Cover your heads, and mock not flesh & blood
 With solemn reverence. Throw away respect,
 Tradition, form, & ceremonious duty,
 For you have but mistook me all this while.
 I live with bread like you, feel want,
 Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus,
 How can you say to me I am a king?

13‡ · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Dragon Book of Verse*. ¶ These lines are spoken by the title character in *Richard II* III.2.

13†

And if tonight my soul may find her peace
 In sleep, and sink in good oblivion,
 And in the morning wake like a new-opened flower
 Then I have been dipped again in God, and new-created.

And if, as weeks go round, in the dark of the moon
 My spirit darkens and goes out, and soft strange gloom
 Pervades my movements & my thoughts & words
 Then I shall know that I am walking still
 With God, we are close together now the moon's in shadow.

And if, as autumn deepens & darkens
 I feel the pain of falling leaves, and stems that break in storms
 And trouble & dissolution & distress
 And then the softness of deep shadows folding,
 Folding around my soul & spirit, around my lips
 So sweet, like a swoon, or more like the drowse of a low, sad song
 Singing darker than the nightingale, on, on to the solstice
 And the silence of short days, the silence of the year, the shadow,
 Then I shall know that my life is moving still
 With the dark earth, and drenched
 With the deep oblivion of earth's lapse & renewal.

And if, in the changing phases of man's life,
 I fall in sickness & in misery;
 My wrists seem broken and my heart seems dead
 And strength is gone, and my life
 Is only the leavings of a life:

And still, among it all, snatches of lovely oblivion, and snatches
 Of renewal
 Odd, wintry flowers upon the withered stem, yet new, strange flowers
 Such as my life has not brought forth before, new blossoms of me

Then I must know that still
 I am in the hands of the unknown God;
 He is breaking me down to his own oblivion
 To send me forth on a new morning, a new man.

13† · "Shadows" · David Lawrence (1885 – 1930) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.
 ℓ31: Prof Larkin places the 'of' in this line in square brackets, presumably because of its absence in some
 manuscript from which the text is ultimately drawn.

13* · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

13* It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place; if you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that.

14

14[†]

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
 And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
 Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
 Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
 Voices of play & pleasure after day,
 Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.

About this time town used to swing so gay
 When glow-lamps budded in the light blue trees,
 And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim –
 In the old times, before he threw away his knees.
 Now he will never feel again how slim
 Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands.
 All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,
 For it was younger than his youth, last year.
 Now, he is old; his back will never brace;
 He's lost his colour very far from here,
 Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
 And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race
 And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.

One time he liked a blood-smear down his leg,
 After the matches, carried shoulder-high.
 It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,
 He thought he'd better join. He wonders why.
 Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts,
 That's why; and maybe, too, to please his *Meg*,
 Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts
 He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;
 Smiling they wrote his lie: aged 19 years.
 Germans he scarcely thought of; all their guilt,
 And Austria's, did not move him. And no fears
 Of fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
 For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
 And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;

14[†] · "Disabled" · Wilfred Owen (1893 – 1918) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. £12:
 Owen is generally considered to have been a homosexual, but this line forces the Almanacker to doubt – to
 reconsider at least – this hypothesis. £19: Nineteen was a significant age, since this was the youngest age at
 which a soldier could be sent to the front line.

Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.
And soon, he was drafted out with drums & cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer, Goal!
Only a solemn man who brought him fruits
Thanked him; and then enquired about his soul.

Now, he will spend a few sick years in institutes,
And do what things the rules consider wise,
And take whatever pity they may dole.
Tonight he noticed how the women's eyes
Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
How cold & late it is. Why don't they come
And put him into bed? Why don't they come?

14†

My love looks like a girl tonight,
But she is old.
The plaits that lie along her pillow
Are not gold,
But threaded with filigree silver
And uncanny cold.

She looks like a young maiden, since her brow
Is smooth & fair;
Her cheeks are very smooth; her eyes are closed.
She sleeps a rare
Still winsome sleep, so still, and so composed.

Nay, but she sleeps like a bride, and dreams her dreams
Of perfect things.
She lies at last, the darling, in the shape of her dream.
And her dead mouth sings
By its shape, like the thrushes in clear evenings.

14* There are strings... in the human heart that had better not be vibrated.

14† · "The Bride" · David Lawrence (1885 – 1930) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

14* · Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ These words are uttered by Mr Tappertit in *Barnaby Rudge*, chapter 22.

15

15†

He found her by the ocean's moaning verge,
 Nor any wicked change in her discerned;
 And she believed his old love had returned,
 Which was her exultation, & her scourge.
 She took his hand, and walked with him, and seemed
 The wife he sought, though shadow-like & dry.
 She had one terror, lest her heart should sigh,
 And tell her loudly that she no longer dreamed.
 She dared not say, 'This is my breast: look in.'
 But there's a strength to help the desperate weak.
 That night he learned how silence best can speak
 The awful things when pity pleads for sin.
 About the middle of the night her call
 Was heard, and he came wondering to the bed.
 Now kiss me, dear! It may be, now! she said.
 LETHE had passed those lips, and he knew all.

15†

On a starred night Prince *Lucifer* uprose.
 Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
 Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened,
 Where sinners hugged their spectre of repose.
 Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
 And now upon his western wing he leaned;
 Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened;
 Now the black planet shadowed arctic snows.
 Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
 With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
 He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
 Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
 Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
 The army of unalterable law.

15* The good die early, and the bad die late.

15‡ · George Meredith (1828 – 1909) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is taken from *Modern Love*, Meredith's sequence of poems describing the breakdown of his first marriage.

15† · "Lucifer in Starlight" · George Meredith (1828 – 1909) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

15* · Daniel Defoe (1660 – 1731) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

16

16‡

By this he knew she wept with waking eyes:
 That, at his hand's light quiver by her head,
 The strange low sobs that shook their common bed
 Were called into her with a sharp surprise,
 And strangled mute, like little gaping snakes,
 Dreadfully venomous to him. She lay
 Stone-still, and the long darkness flowed away
 With muffled pulses. Then, as midnight makes
 Her giant heart of memory & tears
 Drink the pale drug of silence, and so beat
 Sleep's heavy measure, they from head to feet
 Were moveless, looking through their dead black years,
 By vain regret scrawled over the blank wall.
 Like sculptured effigies they might be seen
 Upon their marriage-tomb, the sword between;
 Each wishing for the sword that severs all.

16†

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
 Brought to me, like *Alcestis*, from the grave,
 Whom *Jove's* great son to her glad husband gave,
 Rescued from death by force, though pale & faint.
 Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
 Purification in the old law did save,
 And such as yet once more I trust to have
 Full sight of her in heaven without restraint,
 Came vested all in white, pure as her mind;
 Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight
 Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
 So clear as in no face with more delight.
 But O as to embrace me she inclined,
 I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

16* My life will be sour grapes and ashes without you.

16‡ · George Meredith (1828 – 1909) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is taken from *Modern Love*, Meredith's sequence of poems describing the breakdown of his first marriage.

16† · Sonnet 23 · John Milton (1608 – 1674) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ℓ2: *Alcestis* was the wife of *Admetus*. Having given her life to ensure her husband's survival, *Heracles* broke into the underworld and returned her to her home.

16* · Mrs Daisy Devlin (1881 – 1972) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

17

17‡

In our old shipwrecked days there was an hour,
 When, in the firelight steadily aglow,
 Joined slackly, we beheld the red chasm grow
 Among the clicking coals. Our library-bower
 That eve was left to us: and hushed we sat
 As lovers to whom time is whispering.
 From sudden-opened doors we heard them sing:
 The nodding elders mixed good wine with chat.
 Well knew we that life's greatest treasure lay
 With us, and of it was our talk. 'Ah, yes!
 Love dies!' I said: I never thought it less.
 She yearned to me that sentence to unsay.
 Then when the fire domed blackening, I found
 Her cheek was salt against my kiss, and swift
 Up the sharp scale of sobs her breast did lift:
 Now am I haunted by that taste, that sound.

17†

At VALENCIENNES I saw you turn
 Swiftly into an open church. I followed,
 Stood in the shadow of the aisle
 And watched you pray. My impulse then
 Was to meet you in the porch and test
 My smile against your smile, my peace against yours
 And from your abashment pluck a wilder hope.
 But the impulse died in the act: your face was blank
 Drained of sorrow as of joy, and I was dumb
 Before renunciation's subtler calm.
 I let you pass, and into the world
 Went to deny my sight, to seal my lips
 Against the witness of your humble faith.
 For my faith was action: is action now.
 In death I triumph with a deed
 And prove my faith against your passive ghost.

17*

17‡ · George Meredith (1828 – 1909) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ¶ This is taken from *Modern Love*, Meredith's sequence of poems describing the breakdown of his first marriage.

17† · Prof Sir Herbert Read (1893 – 1968) · *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. ¶ This is one verse from "Meditation of a Dying German Officer".

17* · Miss Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This is a couplet from *Monna Innominata* XIV.

I will not bind fresh roses in my hair,
To shame a cheek at best but little fair.

18

18‡

At dinner, she is hostess; I am host.
 Went the feast ever cheerfuller? She keeps
 The topic over intellectual deeps
 In buoyancy afloat. They see no ghost.
 With sparkling surface-eyes we ply the ball:
 It is in truth a most contagious game:
 “Hiding the Skeleton” shall be its name.
 Such play as this the devils might appal!
 But here’s the greater wonder; in that we,
 Enamoured of an acting nought can tire,
 Each other, like true hypocrites, admire;
 Warm-lighted looks, love’s ephemerae,
 Shoot gaily o’er the dishes & the wine.
 We waken envy of our happy lot.
 Fast, sweet, & golden, shows the marriage-knot.
 Dear guests, you now have seen love’s corpse-light shine.

18†

Good morning! Good morning! the general said
 When we met him last week on our way to the line.
 Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of ’em dead,
 And we’re cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
 He’s a cheery old card, grunted *Harry to Jack*
 As they slogged up to ARRAS with rifle & pack.

 But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

18*

Heaven has no rage, like love to hatred turned;
 Nor hell a fury, like a woman scorned.

18‡ · R George Meredith (1828 – 1909) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is taken from *Modern Love*, Meredith’s sequence of poems describing the breakdown of his first marriage.

18† · “The General” · Siegfried Sassoon (1886 – 1967) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*. ¶ Arras was the site of a battle between the British and German Empires in 1917, which resulted in some three hundred thousand casualties.

18* · William Congreve (1670 – 1729) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

19

19‡

Where are *Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom & Charley*,
 The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozier, the fighter?
 All, all are sleeping on the hill.

One passed in a fever,
 One was burned in a mine,
 One was killed in a brawl,
 One died in a jail,
 One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife –
 All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are *Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie & Edith*,
 The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?
 All, all are sleeping on the hill.

One died in shameful childbirth,
 One of a thwarted love,
 One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
 One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,
 One after life in far-away LONDON & *Paris*
 Was brought to her little space by *Ella & Kate & Mag* –
 All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are *Uncle Isaac & Aunt Emily*,
 And old *Towny Kincaid & Seigne Houghton*,
 And *Major Walker* who had talked
 With venerable men of the revolution?
 All, all are sleeping on the hill.

They brought them dead sons from the war,
 And daughters whom life had crushed,
 And their children fatherless, crying –
 All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

19‡ · “The Hill” · Edgar Masters (1869 – 1950) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. £35: Clary’s Grove is an abandoned settlement Illinois, not far from New Salem, the village in which Abraham Lincoln spent the lion’s share of his twenties. Stephen Douglas, Lincoln’s Democratic opponent in the presidential election of 1860, stated in a debate that Lincoln could ‘beat any of the boys [i.e. the Clary’s Grove Boys gang] wrestling, or running a foot-race, in pitching quoits or tossing a copper; could ruin more liquor than all the boys of the town together; and the dignity and impartiality with which he presided at a horse-race or fist-fight... won the praise of everybody that was present and participated.’

Where is *Old Fiddler Jones*
 Who played with life all his 90 years,
 Braving the sleet with bared breast,
 Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
 Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
 Lo, he babbles of the fish fries of long ago,
 Of the horse races of long ago at CLARY'S GROVE,
 Of what *Abe Lincoln* said
 One time at SPRINGFIELD.

19†

Come away, come away, death,
 And in sad cypress let me be laid;
 Fly away, fly away, breath;
 I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
 My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
 O prepare it.
 My part of death, no one so true
 Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
 On my black coffin let there be strown;
 Not a friend, not a friend greet
 My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
 A thousand sighs to save,
 Lay me O where
 Sad true lover never find my grave,
 To weep there.

19* We first crush people to the earth, and then claim the right of trampling on them forever, because they are prostrate.

19† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ This song is sung by Feste in *Twelfth Night* II.4.

19* · Mrs Lydia Child (1802 – 1880) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

20

20†

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines & the hemlocks,
 Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
 Stand like druids of old, with voices sad & prophetic,
 Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms
 Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean
 Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it
 Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?
 Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of acadian farmers,
 Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,
 Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?
 Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed.
 Scattered like dust & leaves, when the mighty blasts of october
 Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.
 Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of GRAND-PRZZ.

20†

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

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
 Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
 Care no more to clothe & 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 the all-dreaded thunder stone;
 Fear not slander, censure rash;
 Thou hast finished joy & moan:
 All lovers young, all lovers must
 Consign to thee, and come to dust.

20† · R Prof Henry Longfellow (1807 – 1882) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

20† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ These lines are sung by the king's two sons in *Cymbeline* IV.2.

20* Nothing to be done without a bribe I find, in love as well as law.

21

21†

We kissed at the barrier; and passing through
 She left me, and moment by moment got
 Smaller & smaller, until to my view
 She was but a spot;

A wee white spot of muslin fluff
 That down the diminishing platform bore
 Through hustling crowds of gentle & rough
 To the carriage door.

Under the lamplight's fitful glowers,
 Behind dark groups from far & near,
 Whose interests were apart from ours,
 She would disappear,

Then show again, till I ceased to see
 That flexible form, that nebulous white;
 And she who was more than my life to me
 Had vanished quite.

We have penned new plans since that fair fond day,
 And in season she will appear again
 – Perhaps in the same soft white array –
 But never as then.

And why, young man, must eternally fly
 A joy you'll repeat, if you love her well?
 O friend, nought happens twice thus; why,
 I cannot tell.

21†

How like a winter hath my absence been
 From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year.
 What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen,
 What old december's bareness everywhere.
 And yet this time removed was summer's time:
 The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
 Bearing the wanton burden of the prime

21† · "On the Departure Platform" · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

21† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*.

Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
But hope of orphans, & unfathered fruit;
For summer & his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

21* Experience is the best of schoolmasters, only the school fees are heavy.

22

22[‡]

When I see birches bend to left & right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-coloured
As the stir cracks & crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering & avalanching on the snow-crust –
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands & knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out & in to fetch the cows –
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over & over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.

22[‡] · “Birches” · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
 Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
 So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
 And so I dream of going back to be.
 It's when I'm weary of considerations,
 And life is too much like a pathless wood
 Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
 Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
 From a twig's having lashed across it open.
 I'd like to get away from earth awhile
 And then come back to it and begin over.
 May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
 And half grant what I wish & snatch me away
 Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
 I don't know where it's likely to go better.
 I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
 And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
 Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
 But dipped its top and set me down again.
 That would be good both going & coming back.
 One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

22†

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
 Foiled by those rebel powers that thee array,
 Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?

Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
 Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
 Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
 Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?

Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
 And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
 Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
 Within be fed, without be rich no more:—

So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men;
 And death once dead, there's no more dying then.

22† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*.

22* · The Rev Robert Burton (1577 – 1640) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

22* Were it not that they are loath to lay out money for a rope, they would be hanged forthwith.

23

23[‡]

At every stroke his brazen fins do take,
 More circles in the broken sea they make
 Than cannons' voices, when the air they tear:
 His ribs are pillars, and his high-arched roof
 Of bark that blunts best steel is thunder-proof:
 Swim in him swallowed dolphins, without fear,
 And feel no sides, as if his vast womb were
 Some inland sea, and ever as he went
 He spouted rivers up, as if he meant
 To join our seas with seas above the firmament.

He hunts not fish, but as an officer,
 Stays in his court, at his own net, and there
 All suitors of all sorts themselves enthrall;
 So on his back lies this whale wantoning,
 And in his gulf-like throat sucks every thing
 That passeth near; fish chaseth fish, and all,
 Flyer & follower, in this whirlpool fall;
 O might not states of more equality
 Consist? And is it of necessity
 That thousand guiltless smalls, to make one great, must die?

Now drinks he up seas, and he eats up flocks;
 He jostles Islands, and he shakes firm rocks.
 Now in a roomful house this soul doth float,
 And like a prince she sends her faculties
 To all her limbs, distant as provinces.
 The sun hath 20 times both crab & goat
 Parchèd, since first launched forth this living boat,
 'Tis greatest now, and to destruction
 Nearest; there's no pause at perfection;
 Greatness a period hath, but hath no station.

23[†]

23[‡] · R "The Whale" · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Poet's Tongue*. ¶ These are verses 32–34 of the poet's *Metempsychosis*.

23[†] · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Penguin Book of Unrespectable Verse*. ¶ These are the second and third verses of "The Masque of Anarchy", a longer poem which, as the poet's own subtitle indicates, was written in response to the Peterloo massacre. ℓ2: 'Castlereagh' = Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, a British government minister whom the Romantic poets held to be an arch-reactionary. He succeeded to his father's peerages as the 2nd Marquess of Londonderry in 1821, but took his own life the following year; hence he is generally known to history under the title accorded him as his father's heir apparent.

I met *Murder* on the way –
He had a mask like *Castlereagh* –
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;
Seven bloodhounds followed him.

All were fat; and well they might
Be in admirable plight,
For one by one, & two by two,
He tossed the human hearts to chew
Which from his wide cloak he drew.

23* One was never married, and that's his hell; another is, and that's his...

24

24[‡]

What bright soft thing is this?
 Sweet *Mary*, the fair eyes' expense?
 A moist spark it is,
 A wat'ry diamond; from whence
 The very term, I think, was found
 The water of a diamond.

O 'tis not a tear,
 'Tis a star about to drop
 From thine eye its sphere;
 The sun will stoop & take it up.
 Proud will his sister be to wear
 This thine eyes' jewel in her ear.

O 'tis a tear,
 Too true a tear; for no sad eyne,
 How sad so e'er,
 Rain so true a teare as thine;
 Each drop leaving a place so dear,
 Weeps for itself, is its own tear.

Such a pearl as this is,
 (Slipped from *Aurora's* dewy breast)
 The rosebud's sweet lip kisses;
 And such the rose itself, when vexed
 With ungentle flames, does shed,
 Sweating in too warm a bed.

Such the maiden gem,
 By the wanton spring put on,
 Peeps from her parent stem,
 And blushes on the manly sun:
 This wat'ry blossom of thy eyne,
 Ripe, will make the richer wine.

Fair drop, why quak'st thou so?
 'Cause thou straight must lay thy head
 In the dust? O no;
 The dust shall never be thy bed:

A pillow for thee will I bring,
Stuffed with down of angels' wing.

Thus carried up on high,
(For to heaven thou must go)
Sweetly shalt thou lie
And in soft slumbers bathe thy woe;
Till the singing orbs awake thee,
And one of their bright chorus make thee.

There thy self shalt be
An eye, but not a weeping one,
Yet I doubt of thee,
Whether th'hadst rather there have shone
An eye of heaven; or still shine here,
In th'heaven of *Mary's* eye, a tear.

24†

Lift not the painted veil which those who live
Call life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread – behind, lurk fear
And hope, twin destinies; who ever weave
Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless & drear.
I knew one who had lifted it – he sought,
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
But found them not, alas, nor was there aught
The world contains, the which he could approve.
Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene, a spirit that strove
For truth, and like the preacher found it not.

24* In you come with your cold music till I creep through every nerve.

24† · “A Complaint by Night of the Lover not Beloved” · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Penguin Book of English Verse*. ¶ The title Somerset Maugham's novel *The Painted Veil* is drawn from this sonnet.

24* · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This is a line from “A Toccata of Galuppi's”.

25

25†

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
 Long since, with many an arrow deep infixed
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
 There was I found by one who had himself
 Been hurt by th'archers. In his side he bore,
 And in his hands & feet, the cruel scars.
 With gentle force soliciting the darts,
 He drew them forth, and healed and bade me live.
 Since then, with few associates, in remote
 And silent woods I wander, far from those,
 My former partners of the peopled scene;
 With few associates, and not wishing more.
 Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
 With other views of men and manners now
 Than once, and others of a life to come.
 I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
 Each in his own delusions; they are lost
 In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed
 And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
 And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
 And still are disappointed. Rings the world
 With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind
 And add two thirds of the remaining half,
 And find the total of their hopes & fears
 Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay,
 As if created only like the fly,
 That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon
 To sport their season and be seen no more.
 The rest aro sober dreamers, grave & wise
 And pregnant with discoveries new & rare.
 Some write a narrative of wars & feats,
 Of heroes little known, and call the rant
 A history; describe the man, of whom
 His own coevals took but little note,
 And paint his person, character, & views,

25† · ℞ "The Stricken Deer" · William Cowper (1731 – 1800) · *The London Book of English Verse*. ℓ144: Pilgrims to the oracle at Delphi would first wash themselves in the Castalian spring. Drinking therefrom was said to induce poetical inspiration. ℓ150: Themis was a Greek goddess of prophecy, named in some sources as the mother of Prometheus. ℓ151: 'Immortal Hale' = Sir Matthew Hale.

As they had know him from his mother womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein
In which obscurity has wrapped them up,
The threads of politic & shrewd design
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had
Or having, kept concealed. Some drill & bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That he, who made it and revealed its date
To *Moses*, was mistaken in its age.
Some, more acute & more industrious still,
Contrive creation, travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
Tell us whence the stars, why some are fixed,
And planetary some, what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flowed their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants, each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs, and blear the sight
Of oracles like these. Great pity too
That having wielded the elements, and built
A 1000 systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fame and be forgot!
Ah what is life thus spent? And what are they
But frantic who thus spend it? All for smoke –
Eternity for bubbles proves at last
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Played by the creatures of a power who swears
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a sharp reckoning that has lived in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it the infallible result
So hollow and so false – I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learned,
If this be learning, most of all deceived.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps

While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.
Defend me therefore, common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!

'Twere well says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arched & aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,
'Twere well could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases. What's the world to you?
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk,
As sweet as charity, from human breasts.
I think, articulate; I laugh and weep
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein;
Take of the crimson stream meandering there,
And catechise it well. Apply your glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own: and if it be,
With edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise & skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common maker bound me to the kind.
True; I am no proficient, I confess,
In arts like yours I cannot call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in th'earth beneath;
I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point
That seems half quenched in the immense abyss;
Such powers I boast not – neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage,
Or heedless folly by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, & kindred souls to mine.

God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By strides of human wisdom. In his works,
Though wondrous, he commands us in his word
To seek him rather where his mercy shines.
The mind indeed, enlightened from above,
Views him in all; ascribes to the grand cause

The grand effect, acknowledges with joy
 His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.
 But never yet did philosophic tube
 That brings the planets home into the eye
 Of observation, and discovers, else
 Not visible, his family of worlds,
 Discover him that rules them: such a veil
 Hangs o'er mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
 And dark in things divine. Full often too
 Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
 Of nature, overlooks her author more;
 From instrumental causes proud to draw
 Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.
 But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray
 Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
 Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,
 Then all is plain. Philosophy baptised
 In the pure fountain of eternal love
 Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees,
 As meant to indicate a God to man,
 Gives him his praise, and forfeits not her own.
 Learning has borne such fruit in other days
 On all her branches: piety has found
 Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
 Has flowed from lips wet with castalian dews.
 Such was thy wisdom, *Newton*, childlike sage,
 Sagacious reader of the works of God,
 And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
 And fed on manna. And such thine, in whom
 Our british *Themis* gloried with just cause,
 Immortal *Hale*, for deep discernment praised,
 And sound integrity not more, than famed
 For sanctity of manners undefiled.

25†

It was evening all afternoon.
 It was snowing
 And it was going to snow.
 The blackbird sat
 In the cedar limbs.

25† · Wallace Stevens (1879 – 1955) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This is the thirteenth of Stevens's famous "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird".

25* Everybody favours free speech in the slack moments when no axes are being ground.

26

26‡

I am sitting here
 Since the moon rose in the night,
 Kindling a fire,
 And striving to keep it alight;
 The folk of the house are lying
 In slumber deep;
 The geese will be gabbling soon:
 The whole of the land is asleep.

May I never leave this world
 Until my ill luck is gone;
 Till I have cows & sheep,
 And the lad that I love for my own;
 I would not think it long,
 The night I would lie at his breast,
 And the daughters of spite, after that,
 Might say the thing they liked best.

Love takes the place of hate,
 If a girl have beauty at all:
 On a bed that was narrow & high,
 A three-month I lay by the wall:
 When I bethought on the lad
 That I left on the brow of the hill,
 I wept from dark until dark,
 And my cheeks have the tear tracks still.

And, O young lad that I love,
 I am no mark for your scorn;
 All you can say of me is
 Undowered I was born:
 And if I've no fortune in hand,
 Nor cattle & sheep of my own,
 This I can say, O lad,
 I am fitted to lie my lone.

26†

Tread lightly, she is near
 Under the snow;
 Speak gently; she can hear
 The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
 Tarnished with rust,
 She that was young & fair
 Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
 She hardly knew
 She was a woman, so
 Sweetly she grew.

Peace, peace, she cannot hear
 Lyre or sonnet;
 All my life's buried here;
 Heap earth upon it.

26* The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him; they crush those beneath them.

26† · “Requiescat” · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *Cassell's Anthology of English Poetry*. ¶ The Almack has excised the fourth verse from the original.

26* · Miss Emily Brontë (1818 – 1848) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

27

27‡

Part I

It is an ancient mariner
 And he stoppeth one of three.
 'By thy long grey beard & 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 dropped he.

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 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 & higher every day,
 Till over the mast at noon –'

27‡ · "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" · Samuel Coleridge (1772 – 1834) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

¶ Coleridge kicks off his "Rime" with a lengthy quotation from a seventeenth century theologian, Thomas Burnet, and the original text is peppered with margin notes throughout.

The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

‘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.

‘And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous & strong:
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

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

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

‘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 & growled, and roared & howled,
Like noises in a swound!

‘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 & round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through.

'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.'

'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 II

'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 mariner's hollo.

'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!"

'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 & mist."

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

'Down dropped 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 & 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.

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

'And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist & snow.

'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.

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

Part III

'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.

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

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

'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!"

'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.

"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 aflame.
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.

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

"Alas!" thought I, and my heart beat loud,
"How fast she nears & 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?"

'Her lips were red; her looks were free;
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy;
The nightmare life-in-death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

'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.

'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.

'We listened & 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 steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip –
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

'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.

'Four times 50 living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

'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 IV

'I fear thee, ancient mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, & lank, & 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 dropped not down.

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

'The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a 1000 1000 slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

'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 gushed,
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 & the sea, and the sea & the sky
Lay dead like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

'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 O 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.

'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 & awful red.

'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 & swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

'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.

'The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

Part V

'O 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.

'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.

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

'The upper air burst into life!
And a 100 fire-flags sheen,
To & fro they were hurried about!
And to & fro, and in & 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 & wide.

'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 & I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.'

'I fear thee, ancient mariner!
'Be calm, thou wedding-guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses 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 & smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

'Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist & 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 & 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.

'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 & 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 VI
 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.

"Fly, brother, fly! More high, more high!
 Or we shall be belated:

For slow & slow that ship will go,
When the mariner's trance is abated."

'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.

'And now this spell was snapped: 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 & 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.

'O dream of joy, is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? Is this the kirk?
Is this mine own country?

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

'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.

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

'A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck –
O *Christ*! What saw I there!

'Each corse lay flat, lifeless & 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 O 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 & the pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Hhaven! 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 VII

'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 marineres
That come from a far country.

'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 & fair,
That signal made but now?"

"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 & 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 afeared." "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.

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

'Stunned by that loud & dreadful sound,
Which sky & 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 & 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 & long, and all the while
His eyes went to & fro.
"Ha ha!" quoth he, "Full plain I see,
The devil knows how to row."

'And now, all in my own country,
I stood on the firm land.

The hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

“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 woeful agony,

Which forced me to begin my tale;

And then it left me free.

‘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 seemèd 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 & maidens gay!

'Farewell, farewell! But this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man & bird & beast.

'He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great & small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made & 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 & a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

27†

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks, & stones, & trees.

27* Every harlot was a virgin once.

27† · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Golden Treasury*.

27* · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton*. ¶ This is one of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

28

28‡

When midnight comes a host of dogs & men
 Go out and track the badger to his den,
 And put a sack within the hole, and lie
 Till the old grunting badger passes by.
 He comes and hears. They let the strongest loose.
 The old fox hears the noise and drops the goose.
 The poacher shoots and hurries from the cry,
 And the old hare half wounded buzzes by.
 They get a forked stick to bear him down
 And clap the dogs and take him to the town,
 And bait him all the day with many dogs,
 And laugh & shout & fright the scampering hogs.
 He runs along and bites at all he meets:
 They shout & hollo down the noisy streets.

He turns about to face the loud uproar
 And drives the rebels to their very door.
 The frequent stone is hurled where'er they go;
 When badgers fight, then everyone's a foe.
 The dogs are clapped and urged to join the fray;
 The badger turns and drives them all away.
 Though scarcely half as big, demure & small,
 He fights with dogs for bones and beats them all.
 The heavy mastiff, savage in the fray,
 Lies down and licks his feet and turns away.
 The bulldog knows his match and waxes cold,
 The badger grins and never leaves his hold.
 He drives the crowd and follows at their heels
 And bites them through; the drunkard swears & reels.

The frightened women take the boys away,
 The blackguard laughs and hurries on the fray.
 He tries to reach the woods, an awkward race,
 But sticks & cudgels quickly stop the chase.
 He turns againn and drives the noisy crowd
 And beats the many dogs in noises loud.
 He drives away and beats them every one,
 And then they loose them all and set them on.
 He falls as dead and kicked by boys & men,

Then starts and grins and drives the crowd again;
 Till kicked & torn & beaten out he lies
 And leaves his hold and cackles, groans, & dies.

28†

Surprised by joy – impatient as the wind
 I turned to share the transport – O with whom
 But thee, long buried in the silent tomb,
 That spot which no vicissitude can find?
 Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind –
 But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
 Even for the least division of an hour,
 Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
 To my most grievous loss! That thought's return
 Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
 Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
 Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
 That neither present time, nor years unborn
 Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

28* There is no living with thee, nor without thee.

28† · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

28* · The Rt Hon Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

29

29‡

Now winter nights enlarge
 The number of their hours;
 And clouds their storms discharge
 Upon the airy towers.
 Let now the chimneys blaze
 And cups o'erflow with wine;
 Let well-turned words amaze
 With harmony divine.
 Now yellow waxen lights
 Shall wait on honey love
 While youthful revels, masques & courtly sights
 Sleep's leaden spells remove.

This time doth well dispense
 With lovers' long discourse;
 Much speech hath some defense,
 Though beauty no remorse.
 All do not all things well;
 Some measures comely tread,
 Some knotted riddles tell,
 Some poems smoothly read.
 The summer hath his joys,
 And winter his delights;
 Though love & all his pleasures are but toys,
 They shorten tedious nights.

29†

The world is too much with us; late & soon,
 Getting & spending, we lay waste our powers;
 Little we see in nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
 This 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;

29‡ · Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

29† · Dr William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate (1770 – 1850) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ℓ13: Proteus and Triton are minor aquatic deities from Greek mythology who appear in Homer's *Πρωτεύς* and Hesiod's *Τριτωνία* respectively.

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.

29* The post of honour is a private station.

30

30‡

The sea is calm tonight.
 The tide is full; the moon lies fair
 Upon the straits; on the french coast the light
 Gleams & is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
 Glimmering & vast, out in the tranquil bay.
 Come to the window; sweet is the night-air.
 Only, from the long line of spray
 Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
 Listen. You hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
 At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
 Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb & flow
 Of human misery; we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
 To one another, for the world, which seems
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle & flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

30†

The silver swan, who, living, had no note,
When death approached, unlocked her silent throat.
Leaning her breast upon the reedy shore,
Thus sang her first & last, and sang no more:
Farewell, all joys. O death, come close mine eyes.
More geese than swans now live, more fools than wise.

30* It is well for his peace that the saint goes to his martyrdom; he is spared the sight of the horror of his harvest.

30† · “The Silver Swan” · This brief poem was made into a famous madrigal by Orlando Gibbons. The identity of the author of the words is unclear, although it may have been Gibbons himself or his patron Sir Christopher Hatton. · Anonymous · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

30* · Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) · *The Critic as Artist*.

MONTH XII

Snow

I

1‡

The cleanly rush of the mountain air,
And the mumbling, grumbling humblebees,
Are the only things that wander there;
The pitiful bones are laid at ease,
The grass has grown in his tangled hair,
And a rambling bramble binds his knees.

To shrieve his soul from the pangs of hell,
The only requiem bells that rang
Were the harebell and the heather bell.
Hushed he is with the holy spell
In the gentle hymn the wind sang,
And he lies quiet, and sleeps well.

He is bleached & blanched with the summer sun;
The misty rain & cold dew
Have altered him from the kingly one
(That his lady loved, and his men knew)
And dwindled him to a skeleton.

The vetches have twined about his bones,
The straggling ivy twists and creeps
In his eye-sockets; the nettle keeps
Vigil about him while he sleeps.
Over his body the wind moans
With a dreary tune throughout the day,
In a chorus wistful, eerie, thin

1‡ · “The Dead Knight” · Dr John Masefield, Poet Laureate (1878 – 1967) · *The Golden Treasury* [with a fifth book selected by John Press].

As the gull's cry – as the cry in the bay,
 The mournful word the seas say
 When tides are wandering out or in.

1†

What lips my lips have kissed, & where, & why,
 I have forgotten, & what arms have lain
 Under my head till morning; but the rain
 Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh
 Upon the glass and listen for reply,
 And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain
 For unremembered lads that not again
 Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.
 Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,
 Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,
 Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:
 I cannot say what loves have come and gone,
 I only know that summer sang in me
 A little while, that in me sings no more.

1* All places are distant from heaven alike.

1† · Mrs Edna Boissevain (1892 – 1950) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

1* · The Rev Robert Burton (1577 – 1640) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

2

2‡

All the world's a stage,
 And all the men & women merely players;
 They have their exits & their entrances,
 And one man in his time plays many parts,
 His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
 Mewling & puking in the nurse's arms.
 Then the whining schoolboy, 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 honor, sudden & quick in quarrel,
 Seeking the bubble reputation
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
 In fair round belly with good capon lined,
 With eyes severe & beard of formal cut,
 Full of wise saws & modern instances;
 And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
 Into the lean & slippered pantaloon,
 With spectacles on nose & pouch on side;
 His youthful hose, well saved, 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 & mere oblivion,
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

2‡

Art thou pale for weariness
 Of climbing heaven, and gazing on the earth,
 Wandering companionless
 Among the stars that have a different birth –
 And ever-changing, like a joyless eye
 That finds no object worth its constancy?

2‡ · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are spoken by Jaques in *As You Like It*, II.7.

2‡ · “To the Moon” · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Golden Treasury*.

2* Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.

2* · Daniel 5.27 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*. ¶ This is a portion of Daniel's interpretation of the famous writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast.

3

3†

As I beheld a winter's evening air,
 Curled in her court false locks of living hair,
 Buttered with jessamine the sun left there.

Galliard & clinquant she appeared to give,
 A serenade or ball to us that grieve,
 And teach us *à la mode* more gently live.

But as a moor, who to her cheeks prefers
 White spots, t'allure her black idolaters,
 Me thought she looked all o'er bepatched with stars.

Like the dark front of some ethiopian queen,
 Veiled all o'er with gems of red, blue, green,
 Whose ugly night seemed masked with days' skreen.

Whilst the fond people offered sacrifice
 To sapphires, 'stead of veins & arteries,
 And bowed unto the diamonds, not her eyes.

Behold *Lucasta's* face, how't glows like noon!
 A sun entire is her complexion,
 And formed of one whole constellation.

So gently shining, so serene, so clear,
 Her look doth universal nature cheer;
 Only a cloud or two hangs here & there.

3†

Full fathom five thy father lies:
 Of his bones are coral made;
 Those are pearls that were his eyes:
 Nothing of him that doth fade
 But doth suffer a sea-change
 Into something rich & strange.
 Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
 Hark! now I hear them –
 Ding-dong, bell.

3† · "Another: A Black patch on Lucasta's Face" · Col Richard Lovelace (1617 – 1657) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

3† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ This song is sung by Ariel in *The Tempest* I.2.

3* They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.

4

4†

No, no, go not to LETHE, neither twist
 Wolfsbane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
 By nightshade, ruby grape of *Proserpine*;
 Make not your rosary of yew berries,
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death moth be
 Your mournful *Psyche*, nor the downy owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an april shroud;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
 Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with beauty – beauty that must die;
 And joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu; and aching pleasure nigh,
 Turning to poison while the bee mouth sips:
 Ay, in the very temple of delight
 Veiled melancholy has her sov'reign shrine,
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
 Can burst joy's grape against his palate fine;
 His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

4†

Razors pain you;
 Rivers are damp;
 Acids stain you;
 And drugs cause cramp.

4† · “Ode on Melancholy” · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The Golden Treasury*.

4† · “Résumé” · Mrs Dorothy Parker (1893 – 1967) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

Guns aren't lawful;
Nooses give;
Gas smells awful;
You might as well live.

4* Summer is ended, and we are not saved.

5

5‡

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-wingèd dryad of the trees
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, & shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
 Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
 Tasting of *Flora* & the country green,
 Dance, & provencal song, & 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-stainèd 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, & the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, & 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 tomorrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by *Bacchus* & his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes & retards:

5‡ · ℞ “Ode to a Nightingale” · John Keats (1795 – 1821) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ Where the Almanacker gives ‘foreign’, Palgrave gives ‘alien’; ‘foreign’ is the Almanacker’s invention, but ‘alien’ is an intolerable metrical sin.

Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the queen-moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms & winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, & the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, & the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered 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,
Called him soft names in many a musèd 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 & clown:
Perhaps the selfsame song that found a path
Through the sad heart of *Ruth*, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the foreign corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in fairy 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 famed to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! Adieu! Thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hillside; 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?

5†

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-bys.
 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.

5* My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

5† · R “Anthem for Doomed Youth” · Wilfred Owen (1893 – 1918) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

5* · Matthew 27.46 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*. ¶ Christ is quoting here the first line of Psalm 22. The Aramaic, following the KJV's transliteration, is ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’.

6

6‡

Sombre & rich, the skies;
Great glooms, & starry plains.
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me: and around
The saddest of all kings
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely & calm, he rides
Hard by his own WHITEHALL:
Only the night wind glides:
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his court; and yet,
The stars his courtiers are:
Stars in their stations set;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair & fatal king:
Dark night is all his own,
That strange & solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:
The stars, or those sad eyes?
Which are more still & great:
Those brows, or the dark skies?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy:
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends:
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

6‡ · "By the Statue of King Charles at Charing Cross" · Lionel Johnson (1867 – 1902) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*.

Brief life & hapless? Nay:
 Through death, life grew sublime.
 Speak after sentence? Yea:
 And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
 Bare to the stars of doom:
 He triumphs now, the dead,
 Beholding LONDON's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
 Vexed in the world's employ:
 His soul was of the saints;
 And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe,
 Men hunger for thy grace:
 And through the night I go,
 Loving thy mournful face.

Yet when the city sleeps;
 When all the cries are still:
 The stars & heavenly deeps
 Work out a perfect will.

6†

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,
 A gentle face – the face of one long dead –
 Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
 The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.
 Here in this room she died; and soul more white
 Never through martyrdom of fire was led
 To its repose; nor can in books be read
 The legend of a life more benedight.
 There is a mountain in the distant west
 That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines
 Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
 Such is the cross I wear upon my breast

6† · “The Cross of Snow” · Prof Henry Longfellow (1807 – 1882) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Prof Longfellow survived both of his wives. The first, Elizabeth, died at twenty-two following a miscarriage. The second, Frances, having given him six children, died in an horrific accident; her dress caught fire while she was sealing envelopes with melted wax, and, although Prof Longfellow heroically tried to smother the flames with his own body, she was burned to death. Naturally, the professor was badly burned himself, which perhaps explains the ‘cross of snow... I wear upon my breast’.

These 18 years, through all the changing scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

6* I shall go to him but he shall not return to me.

6* · 2 Samuel 22.22 · *The Holy Bible, King James Version*. ¶ King David says this of his dead son, the first child Bathsheba bore him.

7

7†

When the present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,
 And the may month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,
 Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,
 ‘He was a man who used to notice such things’?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid’s soundless blink,
 The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight
 Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,
 ‘To him this must have been a familiar sight.’

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy & warm,
 When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
 One may say, ‘He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,
 But he could do little for them; and now he is gone.’

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
 Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
 Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
 ‘He was one who had an eye for such mysteries’?

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,
 And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
 Till they rise again, as they were a new bell’s boom,
 ‘He hears it not now, but used to notice such things’?

7†

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:
 Nature I loved, and, next to nature, art:
 I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
 It sinks; and I am ready to depart.

7* Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.

7‡ · “Afterwards” · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

7† · “Dying Speech of an Old Philosopher” · Walter Landor (1775 – 1864) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

7* · William Yeats (1865 – 1939) · *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*. ¶ This is a line from “The Second Coming”. Chinua Achebe’s famous novel *Things Fall Apart* takes its title from this line.

8

8‡

As I drive to the junction of lane & highway,
 And the drizzle bedrenches the waggonette,
 I look behind at the fading byway,
 And see on its slope, now glistening wet,
 Distinctly yet

Myself and a girlish form benighted
 In dry march weather. We climb the road
 Beside a chaise. We had just alighted
 To ease the sturdy pony's load
 When he sighed & slowed.

What we did as we climbed, and what we talked of
 Matters not much, nor to what it led –
 Something that life will not be balked of
 Without rude reason till hope is dead,
 And feeling fled.

It filled but a minute. But was there ever
 A time of such quality, since or before,
 In that hill's story ? To one mind never,
 Though it has been climbed, foot-swift, foot-sore,
 By 1000s more.

Primeval rocks form the road's steep border,
 And much have they faced there, first & last,
 Of the transitory in earth's long order;
 But what they record in colour & cast
 Is – that we two passed.

And to me, though time's unflinching rigour,
 In mindless rote, has ruled from sight
 The substance now, one phantom figure
 Remains on the slope, as when that night
 Saw us alight.

8‡ · ℞ “At Castle Boterel” · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *Poems that Make Grown Men Cry*. ¶ Kastel Boterel is the Cornish-language name for the English village of Boscastle. The village is named after a nearby castle (of which very little survives) which itself was named after the Barons Botreaux (pronounced like the English word *buttery*), a title in the Peerage of England in abeyance at the time of writing.

I look & see it there, shrinking, shrinking;
 I look back at it amid the rain
 For the very last time; for my sand is sinking,
 And I shall traverse old love's domain
 Never again.

8†

When you shall see me in the toils of time,
 My lauded beauties carried off from me,
 My eyes no longer stars as in their prime,
 My name forgot of maiden fair & free;
 When, in your being, heart concedes to mind,
 And judgment, though you scarce its process know,
 Recalls the excellencies I once enshrined,
 And you are irked that they have withered so;
 Remembering mine the loss is, not the blame,
 That sportsman time but rears his brood to kill,
 Knowing me in my soul the very same
 One who would die to spare you touch of ill,
 Will you not grant to old affection's claim
 The hand of friendship down life's sunless hill?

8* Be less beautiful, or be less brief.

8† · She to Him 1 · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

8* · Sir William Watson (1858 – 1935) · *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. ¶ This is a line (minus the vocative O) from “Autumn”.

9

9†

It was too lonely for her there,
 And too wild,
 And since there were but two of them,
 And no child,

And work was little in the house,
 She was free,
 And followed where he furrowed field,
 Or felled tree.

She rested on a log and tossed
 The fresh chips,
 With a song only to herself
 On her lips.

And once she went to break a bough
 Of black alder.
 She strayed so far she scarcely heard
 When he called her –

And didn't answer – didn't speak –
 Or return.
 She stood, and then she ran & hid
 In the fern.

He never found her, though he looked
 Everywhere,
 And he asked at her mother's house
 Was she there.

Sudden & swift & light as that
 The ties gave,
 And he learned of finalities
 Besides the grave.

9†

Since there's no help, come let us kiss & part –
 Nay I have done, you get no more of me;
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,

9† · “The Impulse” · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

¶ This is part of a sequence of poems called “The Hill Wife”.

9† · “Love's Farewell” · Michael Drayton (1563 – 1631) · *The Golden Treasury*.

That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows;
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes –
Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

9* Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows.

9* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ This is uttered by Trinculo in *The Tempest* II.2.

IO

IO†

'Tis the year's midnight, and it is the day's,
Lucy's, who scarce seven hours herself unmask;
 The sun is spent, and now his flasks
 Send forth light squibs, no constant rays;
 The world's whole sap is sunk;
 The general balm th'hydropic earth hath drunk,
 Whither, as to the bed's feet, life is shrunk,
 Dead & interred; yet all these seem to laugh,
 Compared with me, who am their epitaph.

Study me then, you who shall lovers be
 At the next world, that is, at the next spring;
 For I am every dead thing,
 In whom love wrought new alchemy.
 For his art did express
 A quintessence even from nothingness,
 From dull privations, and lean emptiness;
 He ruined me, and I am re-begot
 Of absence, darkness, death: things which are not.

All others, from all things, draw all that's good,
 Life, soul, form, spirit, whence they being have;
 I, by love's limbeck, am the grave
 Of all that's nothing. Oft a flood
 Have we two wept, and so
 Drowned the whole world, us two; oft did we grow
 To be two chaoses, when we did show
 Care to aught else; and often absences
 Withdrew our souls, and made us carcasses.

But I am by her death (which word wrongs her)
 Of the first nothing the elixir grown;
 Were I a man, that I were one

IO† · "A Nocturnal upon St Lucy's Day, Being the Shortest Day" · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ St Lucy's day falls on the thirteenth day of December in both the Julian and Gregorian calendars. Christmas, the twenty-fifth of December, being a kind of successor to a Roman festival in honour of the sun, was intended to fall on (or very close to) the winter solstice; however, due to the slight failings of the Julian calendar, by the seventeenth century the solstice actually occurred on the thirteenth. The Gregorian reforms essentially rectified the situation, although they've also anachronised a rather beautiful poem. £39: The 'goat' refers primarily to Aries, the sign of the zodiac corresponding to spring.

I needs must know; I should prefer,
 If I were any beast,
 Some ends, some means; yea plants, yea stones detest,
 And love; all, all some properties invest;
 If I an ordinary nothing were,
 As shadow, a light and body must be here.

But I am none; nor will my sun renew.
 You lovers, for whose sake the lesser sun
 At this time to the goat is run
 To fetch new lust, and give it you,
 Enjoy your summer all;
 Since she enjoys her long night's festival,
 Let me prepare towards her, and let me call
 This hour her vigil, and her eve, since this
 Both the year's, and the day's deep midnight is.

10†

When thou must home to shades of underground,
 And there arrived, a new admirèd guest,
 The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,
 White *Iope*, blithe *Helen*, & the rest,
 To hear the stories of thy finished love
 From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move;

Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,
 Of masques & revels which sweet youth did make,
 Of tourneys & great challenges of knights,
 And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake:
 When thou hast told these honours done to thee,
 Then tell, O tell, how thou didst murder me.

10* Hell is empty, and all the devils are here.

10† · Dr Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

10* · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. ¶ This is uttered by Ariel in *The Tempest* I.2.

II

II†

They flee from me that sometime did me seek
 With naked foot stalking in my chamber.
 I have seen them gentle, tame and meek
 That now are wild and do not remember.
 That sometime they put themselves 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 me she caught in her arms long & small;
 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.
 But since that I so kindly am served,
 I would fain know what she hath deserved.

II†

Western wind, when wilt thou blow,
 The small rain down can rain?
Christ, if my love were in my arms
 And I in my bed again.

II* I have a rendezvous with death.

II† · Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 – 1542) · *The Golden Treasury*.

II† · Anonymous · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*.

II* · Alan Seeger (1888 – 1916) · *Other Men's Flowers*. ¶ This is the title and opening line of the poet's most famous poem. He was sadly correct; he died in the Battle of the Somme at the age of 28.

12

12†

Rain, midnight rain, nothing but the wild rain
 On this bleak hut, & 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 solitude.
 Blessèd 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 & 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.

12†

Cruel were my parents to tear my love from me.
 Cruel were the press-gang that took him off to sea.
 Cruel was the little ship that rowed him off the strand,
 And cruel was the great big ship that sailed from the land.

12* Babylon in all its desolation is a sight not so awful as that of the human mind in ruins.

12† · “Rain” · Edward Thomas (1878 – 1917) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

12† · ℞ “Oh! Cruel” · Anonymous · *Bodleian* 8227. ¶ This is the first verse in a ballad; sadly the others are much inferior. The ‘Oh!’ has been excised from the front of the first line, and the ‘And’ has been excised from the front of the middle two lines.

12* · Scrope Davies (1782 – 1852) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

13

13‡

Row after row with strict impunity
 The headstones yield their names to the element,
 The wind whirrs without recollection;
 In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
 Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
 To the seasonal eternity of death;
 Then driven by the fierce scrutiny
 Of heaven to their election in the vast breath,
 They sough the rumour of mortality.

Autumn is desolation in the plot
 Of a thousand acres where these memories grow
 From the inexhaustible bodies that are not
 Dead, but feed the grass row after rich row.
 Think of the autumns that have come & gone –
 Ambitious november with the humours of the year,
 With a particular zeal for every slab,
 Staining the uncomfortable angels that rot
 On the slabs, a wing chipped here, an arm there:
 The brute curiosity of an angel's stare
 Turns you, like them, to stone,
 Transforms the heaving air
 Till plunged to a heavier world below
 You shift your sea space blindly
 Heaving, turning like the blind crab.

Dazed by the wind, only the wind;
 The leaves flying, plunge...

13‡ · ℝ “Ode to the Confederate Dead” · Dr Allen Tate (1899 – 1979) · *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*. ¶ This poem is controversial in the twenty-first century because it declines to condemn the Confederacy's inhumanity towards black people. The poet argued in favour of white hegemony during the 1920s and 30s – the poem was first published in 1928 – although he also criticised lynching and fascism, and expressed admiration for Langston Hughes, during the same period. Following his conversion and baptism in 1950, he came to regret his earlier views, and in the 1960s he expressed support for that decade's famous civil rights movement. Robert Lowell (who knew Dr Tate personally) wrote his famous lament for Col Robert Shaw, “For the Union Dead”, as a kind of reply. £33: There have been several famous men called Zeno, but the one referenced here is probably Zeno of Elea, who devised a set of paradoxes in order to develop and support the teachings of Parmenides (also of Elea), a pre-Socratic philosopher who argued for the impossibility of change. £47: ‘Stonewall’ is of course Lt Gen Thomas Jackson. £48: ‘Shiloh, Antietam, Malvern Hill’ were the sites of significant Confederate defeats in 1862, while ‘Bull Run’ was the site two important Confederate victories, the first – during which Stonewall Jackson earned his name – in the summer of 1861 and the second the following year.

You know who have waited by the wall
The twilight certainty of an animal,
Those midnight restitutions of the blood
You know – the immitigable pines, the smoky frieze
Of the sky, the sudden call: you know the rage,
The cold pool left by the mounting flood,
Of muted *Zeno & Parmenides*.
You who have waited for the angry resolution
Of those desires that should be yours tomorrow,
You know the unimportant shrift of death
And praise the vision
And praise the arrogant circumstance
Of those who fall
Rank upon rank, hurried beyond decision –
Here by the sagging gate, stopped by the wall.

Seeing, seeing only the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire...

Turn your eyes to the immoderate past,
Turn to the inscrutable infantry rising
Demons out of the earth they will not last.
Stonewall, Stonewall, & the sunken fields of hemp,
SHILOH, ANTETAM, MALVERN HILL, BULL RUN.
Lost in that orient of the thick & fast,
You will curse the setting sun.

Cursing only the leaves crying
Like an old man in a storm...

You hear the shout; the crazy hemlocks point
With troubled fingers to the silence which
Smothers you, a mummy, in time. The hound bitch
Toothless & dying, in a musty cellar
Hears the wind only.

Now that the salt of their blood
Stiffens the saltier oblivion of the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of the flood,
What shall we who count our days and bow
Our heads with a commemorial woe
In the ribboned coats of grim felicity,
What shall we say of the bones, unclean,
Whose verdurous anonymity will grow?

The ragged arms, the ragged heads & eyes
 Lost in these acres of the insane green?
 The gray lean spiders come, they come and go;
 In a tangle of willows without light
 The singular screech owl's tight
 Invisible lyric seeds the mind
 With the furious murmur of their chivalry.

We shall say only the leaves
 Flying, plunge and expire...

We shall say only the leaves whispering
 In the improbable mist of nightfall
 That flies on multiple wing:
 Night is the beginning & the end
 And in between the ends of distraction
 Waits mute speculation, the patient curse
 That stones the eyes, or like the jaguar leaps
 For his own image in a jungle pool, his victim.

What shall we say who have knowledge
 Carried to the heart? Shall we take the act
 To the grave? Shall we, more hopeful, set up the grave
 In the house? The ravenous grave?

Leave now
 The shut gate & the decomposing wall:
 The gentle serpent, green in the mulberry bush,
 Riots with his tongue through the hush –
 Sentinel of the grave who counts us all.

13†

I saw the ramparts of my native land,
 One time so strong, now dropping in decay,
 Their strength destroyed by this new age's way
 That has worn out and rotted what was grand.
 I went into the fields: there I could see
 The sun drink up the waters newly thawed,
 And on the hills the moaning cattle pawed;
 Their miseries robbed the day of light for me.

13† · "Sonnet" · Dr John Masefield, Poet Laureate (1878 – 1967) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This is based on a sonnet by Don Francisco de Quevedo.

I went into my house: I saw how spotted,
Decaying things made that old home their prize.
My withered walking-staff had come to bend;
I felt the age had won; my sword was rotted,
And there was nothing on which I set my eyes
That was not a reminder of the end.

13* Where are the snows of yesteryear?

13* · Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ This quotation forms the refrain of a ballad, which was translated from a French poem, “Ballad des dames du temps jadis”, by François Villon. The French is, ‘Mais où sont les neiges d’antan?’

14

14[†]

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.
 Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars;
 It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
 And smooth as monumental alabaster.
 Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
 Put out the light, and then put out the light.
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore
 Should I repent me. But once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that promethean heat
 That can thy light relume. When I have plucked thy rose
 I cannot give it vital growth again,
 It must needs wither. I'll smell thee on the tree.
 O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
 Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.
 Be thus when thou art dead and I will kill thee
 And love thee after. One more, and that's the last.
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
 But they are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly,
 It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

14[†]

What is the world, O soldiers?
 It is I:
 I, this incessant snow,
 This northern sky;
 Soldiers, this solitude
 Through which we go
 Is I.

14* You do well to weep as a woman over what you could not defend as a man.

14[†] · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines are spoken by Othello over the sleeping Desdemona in *Othello* V.2.

14[†] · “Napoleon” · Walter de la Mare (1873 – 1956) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ This poem presumably concerns Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia.

14* · Washington Irving (1783 – 1859) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Irving attributed this quotation to Ayesha, the mother of Sultan Muhammad XII of Granada (called Boabdil by the Spanish), the last Muslim ruler on the Iberian peninsular.

15

15†

He paused on the sill of a door ajar
 That screened a lively liquor bar,
 For the name had reached him through the door
 Of her he had married the week before.

'We called her the hack of the parade;
 But she was discreet in the games she played;
 If slightly worn, she's pretty yet,
 And gossips, after all, forget.

'And he knows nothing of her past;
 I am glad the girl's in luck at last;
 Such ones, though stale to native eyes,
 Newcomers snatch at as a prize.'

'Yes, being a stranger he sees her blent
 Of all that's fresh & innocent,
 Nor dreams how many a love campaign
 She had enjoyed before his reign!'

That night there was the splash of a fall
 Over the slimy harbour-wall:
 They searched, and at the deepest place
 Found him with crabs upon his face.

15†

Violets from PLUG STREET WOOD,
 Sweet, I send you from oversea.
 (It is strange they should be blue,
 Blue, when his soaked blood was red,
 For they grew around his head:
 It is strange they should be blue.)

Violets from PLUG STREET WOOD,
 Think what they have meant to me –
 Life & hope & love & you.
 (And you did not see them grow,

15† · "The Newcomer's Wife" · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*.

15† · "Villanelle" · Roland Leighton (1895 – 1915) · *Testament of Youth*. ¶ The Almanacker heard this poem recited over Leighton's grave when he was sixteen. £1: Plug Street was the name adopted by the British soldiers for Ploegsteert, a Belgian village.

Where his mangled body lay,
Hiding horror from the day;
Sweetest it was better so.)

Violets from oversea,
To your dear, far, forgetting land,
These I send in memory,
Knowing you will understand.

15* Where there is no imagination there is no horror.

16

16‡

In the black winter morning
 No light will be struck near my eyes
 While the clock in the stairway is warning
 For five, when he used to rise.

*Leave the door unbarred,
 The clock unwound;
 Make my lone bed hard;
 Would 'twere underground!*

When the summer dawns clearly,
 And the apple tree tops seem alight,
 Who will undraw the curtain and cheerly
 Call out that the morning is bright?

When I tarry at market
 No form will cross Durnover Lea
 In the gathering darkness, to hark at
 Grey's Bridge for the pit-pat o' me.

When the supper crock's steaming,
 And the time is the time of his tread,
 I shall sit by the fire and wait dreaming
 In a silence as of the dead.

*Leave the door unbarred,
 The clock unwound;
 Make my lone bed hard;
 Would 'twere underground!*

16†

Here dead lie we because we did not choose
 To live and shame the land from which we sprung.
 Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose,
 But young men think it is, and we were young.

16* Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday – but never jam today.

16‡ · “Bereft” · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*. ℓ16: Grey's Bridge is a bridge over the River Frome just outside of Dorchester, and Durnover Lea is a nearby meadow.

16† · Prof Alfred Housman (1859 – 1936) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

16* · The Rev Charles Dodgson (1832 – 1898) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

17

17‡

When my grave is broke up again,
 Some second guest to entertain
 (For graves have learned that womanhead,
 To be to more than one a bed)
 And he that digs it spies
 A bracelet of bright hair about the bone,
 Will he not let us alone,
 And think that there a loving couple lies,
 Who thought that this device might be some way
 To make their souls, at the last busy day,
 Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?

If this fall in a time, or land,
 Where misdevotion doth command,
 Then he, that digs us up, will bring
 Us to the bishop & the king,
 To make us relics; then
 Thou shalt be a *Mary Magdalen*, and I
 A something else thereby;
 All women shall adore us, and some men;
 And since at such time miracles are sought,
 I would have that age by this paper taught
 What miracles we harmless lovers wrought.

First, we loved well and faithfully,
 Yet knew not what we loved, nor why;
 Difference of sex no more we knew
 Than our guardian angels do;
 Coming & going, we
 Perchance might kiss, but not between those meals;
 Our hands ne'er touched the seals
 Which nature, injured by late law, sets free;
 These miracles we did, but now alas,
 All measure, and all language, I should pass,
 Should I tell what a miracle she was.

17‡ · "The Relic" · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ̘80: The Almanacker cannot help noticing that "Jesus Christ" would scan just as well as 'something else', though this is pure speculation.

17†

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
 With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
 Why do sinners' ways prosper? And why must
 Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
 How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
 Defeat, thwart me? O the sots & thralls of lust
 Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
 Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks & brakes
 Now, leaved how thick, laced they are again
 With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
 Them; birds build – but not I build; no, but strain,
 Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
 Mine, O thou Lord of life, send my roots rain.

17*

Parting is all we know of heaven,
 And all we need of hell.

17† · Fr Gerard Hopkins (1844 – 1889) · *The Psalms in English*. ¶ These lines are a paraphrase of Psalm 119.137-160. ℓ11: '[F]retty chervil' = wild parsley with fretted leaves.

17* · Miss Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ These are the closing lines of an untitled poem beginning 'My life closed twice'.

18

18‡

The frost performs its secret ministry,
 Unhelped by any wind. The owl'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, & wood,
 This populous village! Sea, & hill, & 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 & freaks the idling spirit
 By its own moods interprets, everywhere
 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 birth-place, 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 & 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.

18‡ · "Frost at Midnight" · Samuel Coleridge (1772 – 1834) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ In folklore, the flakes of ash floating up the flue were said to predict the arrival of strangers, and thus Coleridge refers to them as such.

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 play-mate 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 intersperséd 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 & stars.
But thóu, my babe, shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes & sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes & shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see & hear
The lovely shapes & 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 & sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the night-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.

18†

I well remember how some threescore years
And ten ago, a helpless babe, I toddled
From chair to chair about my mother's chamber,
Feeling, as 'twere, my way in the new world
And foolishly afraid of, or, as 't might be,
Foolishly pleased with, th' unknown objects round me.
And now with stiffened joints I sit all day
In one of those same chairs, as foolishly
Hoping or fearing something from me hid
Behind the thick, dark veil which I see hourly
And minutely on every side round closing
And from my view all objects shutting out.

18* The poor have sometimes objected to being governed badly; the rich have always objected to being governed at all.

18† · "Very Old Man" · Dr James Henry (1798 – 1876) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.

18* · Gilbert Chesterton, Knight (1874 – 1936) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

19

19‡

The rain set early in tonight;
 The sullen wind was soon awake;
 It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
 And did its worst to vex the lake:
 I listened with heart fit to break.
 When glided in *Porphyria*; straight
 She shut the cold out & the storm,
 And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
 Blaze up, & all the cottage warm;
 Which done, she rose, and from her form
 Withdrew the dripping cloak & shawl,
 And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
 Her hat & let the damp hair fall,
 And, last, she sat down by my side
 And called me. When no voice replied,
 She put my arm about her waist,
 And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
 And all her yellow hair displaced,
 And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
 And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
 Murmuring how she loved me – she
 Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
 To set its struggling passion free
 From pride, & vainer ties dissever,
 And give herself to me for ever.
 But passion sometimes would prevail,
 Nor could tonight's gay feast restrain
 A sudden thought of one so pale
 For love of her, and all in vain:
 So, she was come through wind & rain.
 Be sure I looked up at her eyes
 Happy & proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
 Made my heart swell, and still it grew
 While I debated what to do.
 That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
 Perfectly pure & good: I found

19‡ · “Porphyria’s Lover” · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Porphyria is a blood disorder commonly thought to induce madness, although this complication is actually very rare, even when one takes into account the rarity of the disease itself.

A thing to do, and all her hair
 In one long yellow string I wound
 Three times her little throat around,
 And strangled her. No pain felt she;
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.
 As a shut bud that holds a bee,
 I warily oped her lids: again
 Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
 And I untightened next the tress
 About her neck; her cheek once more
 Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
 I propped her head up as before,
 Only, this time my shoulder bore
 Her head, which droops upon it still:
 The smiling rosy little head,
 So glad it has its utmost will,
 That all it scorned at once is fled,
 And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
 Her darling one wish would be heard.
 And thus we sit together now,
 And all night long we have not stirred,
 And yet God has not said a word!

19†

He's gone, and all our plans
 Are useless indeed.
 We'll walk no more on Cotswold
 Where the sheep feed
 Quietly and take no heed.

His body that was so quick
 Is not as you
 Knew it, on SEVERN RIVER
 Under the blue
 Driving our small boat through.

You would not know him now...
 But still he died
 Nobly, so cover him over
 With violets of pride
 Purple from SEVERN side.

19† · "To His Love" · Ivor Gurney (1890 – 1937) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

Cover him! Cover him soon!
And with thick-set
Masses of memoried flowers
Hide that red wet
Thing I must somehow forget.

19* It isn't that they can't see the solution; it is that they can't see the problem.

20

20‡

My first thought was he lied in every word,
 That hoary cripple, with malicious eye
 Askance to watch the working of his lie
 On mine, & mouth scarce able to afford
 Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored
 Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?
 What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare
 All travellers who might find him posted there,
 And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh
 Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph
 For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

If at his counsel I should turn aside
 Into that ominous tract which, all agree,
 Hides the DARK TOWER. Yet acquiescingly
 I did turn as he pointed: neither pride
 Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
 So much as gladness that some end might be.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,
 What with my search drawn out thro' years, my hope
 Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope
 With that obstreperous joy success would bring,
 I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring
 My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

20‡ · “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came” · Robert Browning (1828 – 1889) · *Other Men's Flowers*.

¶ The title is taken from a line spoken by Edgar (in his disguise as Tom o' Bedlam) in *King Lear* III.4, but the substance of the poem has only a tangential relation to Shakespeare's play; 'childe' is an archaic term for a young man of noble birth; the word is absent from Dr Johnson's dictionary, perhaps because it was archaic even in Shakespeare's day. The poem has spawned numerous theories as to its inspirations and meanings. Lord Wavell asserts that it is a retelling of 'an old English fairy tale' but this is not quite true; Joseph Jacobs published a story about Childe Rowland, Burd Ellen and a Dark Tower in his *English Fairy Tales*, but that was in 1890 – Browning's poem was published in 1855 – and Jacobs's source, *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (1814) does not mention any dark towers. The poem has also inspired numerous subsequent works of art, including a painting by Thomas Moran and Stephen King's Dark Tower series. ℓ203: Lord Wavell notes: 'Browning slipped up on "slug-horn"; it sounds like the sort of thing that a medieval ogre might well hang on his castle gate, actually it is the corruption of a Gaelic word for the rallying cry of a clan; and its modern form is "slogan".'

As when a sick man very near to death
Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end
The tears and takes the farewell of each friend,
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath
Freelier outside ('Since all is o'er,' he saith,
'And the blow fallen no grieving can amend')

While some discuss if near the other graves
Be room enough for this, and when a day
Suits best for carrying the corpse away,
With care about the banners, scarves & staves:
And still the man hears all, and only craves
He may not shame such tender love and stay.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,
Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ
So many times among 'The Band' – to wit,
The knights who to the DARK TOWER's search addressed
Their steps – that just to fail as they, seemed best,
And all the doubt was now – should I be fit?

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,
That hateful cripple, out of his highway
Into the path he pointed. All the day
Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
Red leer to see the plain catch its stray.

For mark: no sooner was I fairly found
Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,
Than, pausing to throw backward a last view
O'er the safe road, 'twas gone; grey plain all round:
Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
I might go on; nought else remained to do.

So, on I went. I think I never saw
Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve:
For flowers – as well expect a cedar grove.
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,
You'd think; a burr had been a treasure trove.

No: penury, inertness & grimace,
In some strange sort, were the land's portion. 'See

Or shut your eyes,' said nature peevishly;
'Tis nothing skills: I cannot help my case:
'Tis the last judgment's fire must cure this place,
Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free.'

If there pushed any ragged thistle stalk
Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents
Were jealous else. What made those holes & rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to baulk
All hope of greenness? 'Tis a brute must walk
Pushing their life out, with a brute's intents.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair
In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud
Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came there:
Thrust out past service from the devil's stud.

Alive? He might be dead for aught I know,
With that red gaunt & coloped neck a-strain,
And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane;
Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe;
I never saw a brute I hated so;
He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.
As a man calls for wine before he fights,
I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights,
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards – the soldier's art:
One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

Not it. I fancied *Cuthbert's* reddening face
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace.
Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

Giles then, the soul of honour – there he stands
Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.
What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.
Good – but the scene shifts – faugh! What hangman hands

Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon & curst.

Better this present than a past like that;
Back therefore to my darkening path again.
No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.
Will the night send a howlet or a bat?
I asked: when something on the dismal flat
Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

A sudden little river crossed my path
As unexpected as a serpent comes.
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath
For the fiend's glowing hoof – to see the wrath
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes & spumes.

So petty yet so spiteful. All along,
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit
Of route despair, a suicidal throng:
The river which had done them all the wrong,
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

Which, while I forded, good saints, how I feared
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,
Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard.
It may have been a water rat I speared,
But, ugh! It sounded like a baby's shriek.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.
Now for a better country. Vain presage.
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage,
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank
Soil to a splash? Toads in a poisoned tank,
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage –

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.
What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?
No foot print leading to that horrid mews,
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work
Their brains, no doubt, like galley slaves the turk
Pits for his pastime, christians against jews.

And more than that – a furlong on – why, there,
What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,
Or brake, not wheel – that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk, with all the air
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,
Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel?

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,
Next a marsh, it would seem, & now mere earth
Desperate & done with; (so a fool finds mirth,
Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood
Changes and off he goes) within a rood –
Bog, clay & rubble, sand & stark black dearth.

Now blotches rankling, coloured gay & grim,
Now patches where some leanness of the soil's
Broke into moss or substances like boils;
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him
Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim
Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

And just as far as ever from the end.
Nought in the distance but the evening, nought
To point my footstep further. At the thought,
A great black bird, *Apollyon's* bosom friend,
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned
That brushed my cap – perchance the guide I sought.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place
All round to mountains – with such name to grace
Mere ugly heights & heaps now stolen in view.
How thus they had surprised me. Solve it, you.
How to get from them was no clearer case.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when –
In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,
Progress this way. When, in the very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a click
As when a trap shuts – you're inside the den.

Burningly it came on me all at once,
This was the place, those two hills on the right,

Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight;
 While to the left, a tall scalped mountain... Dunce,
 Dotard, a-doing at the very nonce,
 After a life spent training for the sight.

What in the midst lay but the tower itself?
 The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,
 Built of brown stone, without a counterpart
 In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf
 Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf
 He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

Not see? Because of night perhaps? Why, day
 Came back again for that. Before it left,
 The dying sunset kindled through a cleft:
 The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
 Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay:
 'Now stab and end the creature – to the heft!'

Not hear? When noise was everywhere. It tolled
 Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears
 Of all the lost adventurers my peers –
 How such a one was strong, and such was bold,
 And such was fortunate, yet, each of old
 Lost, lost. One moment knelled the woe of years.

There they stood, ranged along the hill sides, met
 To view the last of me, a living frame
 For one more picture. In a sheet of flame
 I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
 Dauntless the slughorn to my lips I set,
 And blew: 'Childe *Roland* to the DARK TOWER came.'

20†

Why were you born when the snow was falling?
 You should have come to the cuckoo's calling,
 Or when grapes are green in the cluster,
 Or, at least, when lithe swallows muster
 For their far off flying
 From summer dying.

Why did you die when the lambs were cropping?
 You should have died at the apples' dropping,

When the grasshopper comes to trouble,
And the wheat-fields are sodden stubble,
And all winds go sighing
For sweet things dying.

20* There is no hope but we will try to have no fear.

20* · Mrs Mary Chesnut (1823 – 1886) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

21

21†

The miller's wife had waited long;
 The tea was cold; the fire was dead;
 And there might yet be nothing wrong
 In how he went & what he said:
 'There are no millers any more,'
 Was all that she had heard him say;
 And he had lingered at the door
 So long that it seemed yesterday.

Sick with a fear that had no form
 She knew that she was there at last;
 And in the mill there was a warm
 And mealy fragrance of the past.
 What else there was would only seem
 To say again what he had meant;
 And what was hanging from a beam
 Would not have heeded where she went.

And if she thought it followed her,
 She may have reasoned in the dark
 That one way of the few there were
 Would hide her & would leave no mark:
 Black water, smooth above the weir
 Like starry velvet in the night,
 Though ruffled once, would soon appear
 The same as ever to the sight.

21†

They told me, *Heraclitus*, they told me you were dead;
 They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed;
 I wept as I remembered how often you & I
 Had tired the sun with talking, and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old carian guest,
 A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,

21† · "The Mill" · Edwin Robinson (1869 – 1935) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

21† · "Heraclitus" · William Cory (1823 – 1892) · *Poetry of the English-Speaking World*. ¶ This poem is in fact a fairly close translation of Callimachus' second epigram. The Heraclitus referred to here is not the famous philosopher – who died a couple of centuries before Callimachus was born – but the less famous poet Heraclitus of Halicarnassus, who contributed an epitaph for a mother of twins to the *Greek Anthology*. The nightingales serve primarily as a metaphor for Heraclitus' poems; some have even suggested that his magnum opus was a collection entitled Ἀνθόνες, i.e. nightingales.

Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

21* The heart of another is a dark forest.

22

22†

Is there anybody there? said the traveller,
 Knocking on the moonlit door;
 And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
 Of the forest's ferny floor:
 And a bird flew up out of the turret,
 Above the traveller's head:
 And he smote upon the door again a second time;
 Is there anybody there? he said.
 But no one descended to the traveller;
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill
 Leaned over & looked into his grey eyes,
 Where he stood perplexed & still.
 But only a host of phantom listeners
 That dwelt in the lone house then
 Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
 To that voice from the world of men:
 Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
 That goes down to the empty hall,
 Harkening in an air stirred & shaken
 By the lonely traveller's call.
 And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
 Their stillness answering his cry,
 While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
 'Neath the starred & leafy sky;
 For he suddenly smote on the door, even
 Louder, and lifted his head:
 Tell them I came, and no one answered,
 That I kept my word, he said.
 Never the least stir made the listeners,
 Though every word he spake
 Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
 From the one man left awake:
 Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
 And the sound of iron on stone,
 And how the silence surged softly backward,
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

22† · "The Listeners" · Walter de la Mare (1873 – 1956) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ This poem was said to be a favourite of St Teresa of Calcutta.

22†

A widow bird sate mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough;
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare.
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound.

22* The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true.

22† · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Golden Treasury*.

22* · James Cabell (1879 – 1958) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

23

23[‡]

Farewell, ungrateful traitor;
 Farewell, my perjured swain.
 Let never injured creature
 Believe a man again.
 The pleasure of possessing
 Surpasses all expressing,
 But 'tis too short a blessing,
 And love too long a pain.

'Tis easy to deceive us
 In pity of your pain,
 But when we love you leave us
 To rail at you in vain.
 Before we have descried it,
 There is no bliss beside it,
 But she that once has tried it
 Will never love again.

The passion you pretended
 Was only to obtain,
 But when the charm is ended
 The charmer you disdain.
 Your love by ours we measure
 Till we have lost our treasure,
 But dying is a pleasure,
 When living is a pain.

23[†]

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 & frozen lake
 The darkest evening of the year.

23[‡] · John Dryden, Poet Laureate (1631 – 1700) · *The New Penguin Book of Love Poetry*.

23[†] · “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” · Robert Frost, Poet Laureate of Vermont (1874 – 1963) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

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

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

23* You should have a softer pillow than my heart.

23* · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. ¶ Lord Byron is said to have uttered these words to his wife.

24

24†

Go & catch a falling star;
 Get with child a mandrake root;
 Tell me where all past years are,
 Or who cleft the devil's foot;
 Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
 Or to keep off envy's stinging,
 And find
 What wind
 Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
 Things invisible to see,
 Ride 10,000 days & nights,
 Till age snow white hairs on thee;
 Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me,
 All strange wonders that befell thee,
 And swear:
 Nowhere
 Lives a woman true, and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know;
 Such a pilgrimage were sweet;
 Yet do not; I would not go,
 Though at next door we might meet;
 Though she were true when you met her,
 And last till you write your letter,
 Yet she
 Will be
 False, ere I come, to two, or three.

24†

Move him into the sun –
 Gently its touch awoke him once,
 At home, whispering of fields half-sown.
 Always it woke him, even in France,

24† · The Very Rev Dr John Donne (1572 – 1631) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The line about the 'mandrake root' is puzzling. Surely it should be, 'Get with child *by* mandrake root' since mandrakes were once believed to have aphrodisiac and fertilising qualities (as per Genesis 30), an old wives' tale similar to the legends about Ulysses and the sirens or, indeed, a faithful beautiful woman? Or is the Very Rev Dr Donne genuinely inviting the reader to ejaculate into a plant?

24† · "Futility" · Wilfred Owen (1893 – 1918) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

Until this morning & this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds –
 Woke once the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides
 Full-nerved, still warm, too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

24* Naught so sweet as melancholy.

25

25†

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour:
A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all heaven in a rage.
A dove-house filled with doves & pigeons
Shudders hell through all its regions.
A dog starved at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the state.
A horse misused upon the road
Calls to heaven for human blood.
A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing.
The game cock clipped & armed for fight
Does the rising sun affright.
Every wolf's & lion's howl
Raises from hell a human soul.
The wild deer, wandering here & there
Keeps the human soul from care.
The lamb misused breeds public strife
And yet forgives the butcher's knife.
The bat that flits at close of eve
Has left the brain that won't believe.
The owl that calls upon the night
Speaks the unbeliever's fright.
He who shall hurt the little wren
Shall never be beloved by men.
He who the ox to wrath has moved
Shall never be by woman loved.
The wanton boy that kills the fly
Shall feel the spider's enmity.
He who torments the chafer's sprite
Weaves a bower in endless night.
The beggar's dog & widow's cat,
Feed them & thou wilt grow fat.
The gnat that sings his summer's song

25† · ℝ "Auguries of Innocence" · William Blake (1757 – 1827) · *William Blake: Poems selected by James Fenton.*

Poison gets from slander's tongue.
The poison of the snake & newt
Is the sweat of envy's foot.
The poison of the honey bee
Is the artist's jealousy.
The prince's robes & beggar's rags
Are toadstools on the miser's bags.
A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.
The soldier armed with sword & gun
Palsied strikes the summer's sun.
The poor man's farthing is worth more
Than all the gold on Afric's shore.
One mite wrung from the lab'rer's hands
Shall buy & sell the miser's lands,
Or if protected from on high
Does that whole nation sell & buy.
He who mocks the infant's faith
Shall be mocked in age & death.
He who shall teach the child to doubt
The rotting grave shall ne'er get out.
He who respects the infant's faith
Triumphs over hell & death.
The child's toys & the old man's reasons
Are the fruits of the two seasons.
The questioner who sits so sly
Shall never know how to reply.
He who replies to words of doubt
Doth put the light of knowledge out.
The strongest poison ever known
Came from caesar's laurel crown.
Nought can deform the human race
Like to the armour's iron brace.
When gold & gems adorn the plough
To peaceful arts shall envy bow.
A riddle or the cricket's cry
Is to doubt a fit reply.
The emmet's inch & eagle's mile
Make lame philosophy to smile.
He who doubts from what he sees
Will ne'er believe do what you please.
God appears & God is light

To those poor souls who dwell in night,
 But does a human form display
 To those who dwell in realms of day.

25†

Farewell to the bushy clump close to the river
 And the flags where the butter-bump hides in for ever;
 Farewell to the weedy nook, hemmed in by waters;
 Farewell to the miller's brook & his three bonny daughters;
 Farewell to them all while in prison I lie –
 In the prison a thrall sees nought but the sky.

Shut out are the green fields and birds in the bushes;
 In the prison yard nothing builds, blackbirds or thrushes.
 Farewell to the old mill & dash of the waters,
 To the miller &, dearer still, to his three bonny daughters.

In the nook, the large burdock grows near the green willow;
 In the flood, round the moorcock dashes under the billow;
 To the old mill farewell, to the lock, pens, & waters,
 To the miller himsel', & his three bonny daughters.

25* All poets are mad.

25† · "Farewell" · John Clare (1793 – 1864) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

25* · The Rev Robert Burton (1577 – 1640) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

26

26†

She should have died hereafter;
 There would have been a time for such a word.
 Tomorrow, & tomorrow, & tomorrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time,
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle.
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
 And then is heard no more: it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound & fury,
 Signifying nothing.

26†

So we'll go no more a roving
 So late into the night,
 Though the heart be still as loving,
 And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
 And the soul wears out the breast,
 And the heart must pause to breathe,
 And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
 And the day returns too soon,
 Yet we'll go no more a roving
 By the light of the moon.

26* Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven.

26† · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Dragon Book of Verse*. ¶ These lines are spoken by the title character in *Macbeth* V.5.

26† · George Noel, 6th Baron Byron (1788 – 1824) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Here Lord Byron is codifying, in a manner not dissimilar to Burns, an ancient English folk song, known in one of its variations as “The Maid of Amsterdam”.

26* · “This is the penultimate line of *Pilgrim's Progress* (or, more precisely, the first part thereof – the second part being a kind of sequel). The remaining prose reads: ‘as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke, and behold it was a dream.’” · John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

27

27† By the waters of BABYLON we sat down and wept ☿ when we remembered thee,
O ZION.

As for our harps, we hanged them up ☿ upon the trees that are therein.

For they that led us away captive required of us then a song, and melody in our
heaviness: ☿ sing us one of the songs of ZION.

How shall we sing the Lord's song ☿ in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O JERUSALEM, ☿ let my right hand forget her cunning.

Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember thee; ☿ yea,
if I prefer not JERUSALEM in my mirth.

Remember the children of Edom, O Lord, ☿ in the day of JERUSALEM,

How they said, Down with it, down with it, ☿ even to the ground.

O daughter of BABYLON, wasted with misery, ☿ yea, happy shall he be that re-
wardeth thee, as thou hast served us.

Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children ☿ and dasheth them against the stones.

27†

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow & tomorrow & tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts & frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound & fury,
Signifying nothing.

27* One leak will sink a ship.

27† · R William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. ¶ These lines form the eponymous villain's lament for his wife from *Macbeth* V.5.

27* · John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) · *Pilgrim's Progress*. ¶ The quotation continues: 'and one sin will destroy a sinner.' Bunyan was no sailor, or else he would have written: one *flood* will cause a ship to *founder*.

28

28†

My prime of youth is but a frost of cares;
 My feast of joy is but a dish of pain;
 My crop of corn is but a field of tares;
 And all my good is but vain hope of gain;
 The day is past, and yet I saw no sun,
 And now I live, and now my life is done.

My tale was heard and yet it was not told;
 My fruit is fallen, and yet my leaves are green;
 My youth is spent and yet I am not old;
 I saw the world and yet I was not seen;
 My thread is cut and yet it is not spun,
 And now I live, and now my life is done.

I sought my death and found it in my womb;
 I looked for life and saw it was a shade;
 I trod the earth and knew it was my tomb,
 And now I die, and now I was but made;
 My glass is full, and now my glass is run,
 And now I live, and now my life is done.

28†

Alone at the shut of day was I,
 With a star or two in a frost-clear sky,
 And the byre smell in the air.
 I'd tramped the length & breadth of the fen;
 But never a farmer wanted men;
 Naught doing anywhere.

A great calm moon rose back of the mill,
 And I told myself it was God's will
 Who went hungry and who went fed.
 I tried to whistle; I tried to be brave;

28† · "Tichborne's Lament" · Chidioc Tichborne (1562 – 1586) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ The ultimate written source for this poem is a letter which Tichborne wrote to his wife on the night before he was hanged, drawn and quartered for his part in a conspiracy against Elizabeth I. Tichborne was part of the same family which provided the fourteen Tichborne baronets (of Tichborne in the County of Hampshire) who held the title from its creation in 1621 until its extinction in 1968. He was also a distant cousin of Henry Tichborne, 1st Baron Ferrard and 1st Baronet (of Beaulieu in the County of Meath), who sadly left no heirs to his titles. £17: The word 'glass' refers here to an hourglass, rather than a drinking vessel.

28† · "Out of Work" · Kenneth Ashley (1885 – 1969) · *Poems that Make Grown Men Cry*.

But the new-ploughed fields smelt dank as the grave;
And I wished I were dead.

28* For the world, I count it not an inn, but an hospital, and a place, not to live,
but to die in.

29

29‡

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings & 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 & 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 & scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office & the spurns
 That patient merit of the 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 undiscovered 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 does 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 & moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action. Soft you now.
 The fair *Ophelia*. Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remembered.

29‡ · William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) · *The Dragon Book of Verse*. ¶ These lines were, of course, spoken by the title character in *Hamlet* III.1.

29†

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,
Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.
And he replied:
Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.
So I went forth, and finding the hand of God, trod gladly into the night.
And he led me towards the hills & the breaking of day in the lone east.

29* Proud people breed sad sorrows for themselves.

29† · “God Knows” · Miss Minnie Haskins (1875 – 1957) · *The Desert*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised all but the first verse. George VI recited the first five lines of this poem in the Royal Christmas Message of 1939.

29* · Miss Emily Brontë (1818 – 1848) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

30

30†

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When frost was spectre-grey,
 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 & birth
 Was shrunken hard & 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, & 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.

30† · "The Darkling Thrush" · Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) · *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. ¶ Hardy began writing this poem on the thirty-first day of December (of the New Style) of 1900.

30†

Music, when soft voices die,
 Vibrates in the memory –
 Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
 Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
 Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
 And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
 Love itself shall slumber on.

30* The fate of love is that it always seems too little or too much.

30† · “To –” · Percy Shelley (1792 – 1822) · *The Golden Treasury*. ¶ This poem closes the original *Golden Treasury*.

30* · Mrs Amelia Barr (1831 – 1919) · *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

MONTH XIII

Blue

I

1‡

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place;
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;

How, when the agèd are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there must always be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In *Bruegel's Jcarus*, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

1‡ · “Musée des Beaux Arts” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*. ¶ The Musée des Beaux Arts in questions is to be found in Brussels.

I†

A poet's hope: to be,
Like some valley cheese,
Local, but prized elsewhere.

I*

History to the defeated
May say alas but cannot help nor pardon.

I† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

I* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These are the last words of Prof Auden's "Spain 1937". He quoted them disapprovingly in the introduction to his *Collected Poems*.

2

2‡

As I listened from a beach-chair in the shade
 To all the noises that my garden made,
 It seemed to me only proper that words
 Should be withheld from vegetables & birds.

A robin with no christian name ran through
 The robin-anthem which was all it knew,
 While rustling flowers for some third party waited
 To say which pairs, if any, should get mated.

Not one of them was capable of lying;
 There was not one of them which knew that it was dying,
 Or could have with a rhythm or a rhyme
 Assumed responsibility for time.

Let them leave language to their lonely betters
 Who count some days and long for certain letters;
 We, too, make noises when we laugh or weep:
 Words are for those with promises to keep.

2†

A shilling life will give you all the facts:
 How father beat him, how he ran away,
 What were the struggles of his youth, what acts
 Made him the greatest figure of his day;
 Of how he fought, fished, hunted, worked all night,
 Though giddy, climbed new mountains; named a sea;
 Some of the last researchers even write
 Love made him weep his pints like you & me.
 With all his honours on, he sighed for one
 Who, say astonished critics, lived at home;
 Did little jobs about the house with skill
 And nothing else; could whistle; would sit still
 Or potter round the garden; answered some
 Of his long marvellous letters but kept none.

2* An adventure it would not have occurred to women to think worth while.

2‡ · “Their Lonely Betters” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907–1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

2† · “Who’s Who” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907–1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

2* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907–1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These words are taken from Prof Auden’s “Moon Landing”. The correctness of ‘worth while’ as two separate words in this context is not universally acknowledged.

3

3‡

As I walked out one evening,
 Walking down BRISTOL STREET,
 The crowds upon the pavement
 Were fields of harvest wheat.

And down by the brimming river
 I heard a lover sing
 Under an arch of the railway:
 'Love has no ending.

'I'll love you, dear, I'll love you
 Till China & Africa meet,
 And the river jumps over the mountain
 And the salmon sing in the street;

'I'll love you till the ocean
 Is folded & hung up to dry
 And the seven stars go squawking
 Like geese about the sky.

'The years shall run like rabbits,
 For in my arms I hold
 The flower of the ages,
 And the first love of the world.'

But all the clocks in the city
 Began to whirr & chime:
 'O let not time deceive you;
 You cannot conquer time.

'In the burrows of the nightmare
 Where justice naked is,
 Time watches from the shadow
 And coughs when you would kiss.

'In headaches & in worry
 Vaguely life leaks away,

3‡ · "As I Walked Out One Evening" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ℓ2: The Bristol Street which Prof Auden had in mind is probably the one in Birmingham – and the Birmingham in England, not the one in Alabama. ℓ12: This is likely an allusion to Burns's famous love lyric: 'Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,/ And the rocks melt wi' the sun'.

And time will have his fancy
To-morrow or to-day.

'Into many a green valley
Drifts the appalling snow;
Time breaks the threaded dances
And the diver's brilliant bow.

'O plunge your hands in water,
Plunge them in up to the wrist;
Stare, stare in the basin
And wonder what you've missed.

'The glacier knocks in the cupboard,
The desert sighs in the bed,
And the crack in the tea-cup opens
A lane to the land of the dead.

'Where the beggars raffle the banknotes
And the giant is enchanting to *Jack*,
And the lily-white boy is a roarer,
And *Jill* goes down on her back.

'O look, look in the mirror,
O look in your distress:
Life remains a blessing
Although you cannot bless.

'O stand, stand at the window
As the tears scald & start;
You shall love your crooked neighbour
With your crooked heart.'

It was late, late in the evening;
The lovers they were gone;
The clocks had ceased their chiming,
And the deep river ran on.

3†

Although you be, as I am, one of those
Who feel a christian ought to write in prose,

3† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W.H. Auden]*. ¶ This dedication to Christopher Isherwood and Chester Kallman appears at the beginning of at least two collections of Prof Auden's poetry.

For poetry is magic: born in sin, you
May read them to exorcise the gentile in you.

3* And nothing serious can happen here.

3* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is the last line of Prof Auden's sonnet "Macao".

4

4†

At last the secret is out,
 As it always must come in the end;
 The delicious story is ripe
 To tell to the intimate friend;
 Over the teacups & in the square
 The tongue has its desire;
 Still waters run deep, my dear;
 There's never smoke without fire.

Behind the corpse in the reservoir,
 Behind the ghost on the links,
 Behind the lady who dances and
 The man who madly drinks,
 Under the look of fatigue,
 The attack of migraine & the sigh
 There is always another story;
 There is more than meets the eye.

For the clear voice suddenly singing,
 High up in the convent wall,
 The scent of the elder bushes,
 The sporting prints in the hall,
 The croquet matches in summer,
 The handshake, the cough, the kiss,
 There is always a wicked secret,
 A private reason for this.

4†

As the poets have mournfully sung,
 Death takes the innocent young,
 The rolling in money,
 The screamingly funny,
 And those who are very well hung.

4* Another time has other lives to live.

4† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

4† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

4* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is the last line of Prof Auden's "Another Time".

5

5‡

Chaucer, Langland, Douglas, Dunbar, with all your
 Brother anons, how on earth did you ever manage,
 Without anaesthetics or plumbing,
 In daily peril from witches, warlocks,

Lepers, the Holy Office, foreign mercenaries
 Burning as they came, to write so cheerfully,
 With no grimaces of self-pathos?
 Long-winded you could be but not vulgar,

Bawdy but not grubby, your raucous flytings
 Sheer high-spirited fun, whereas our makers,
 Beset by every creature comfort,
 Immune, they believe, to all superstitions,

Even at their best are so often morose or
 Kinky, petrified by their gorgon egos.
 We all ask, but I doubt if anyone
 Can really say why all age groups should find our

Age quite so repulsive. Without its heartless
 Engines, though, you could not tenant my bookshelves,
 On hand to deflect my ear and chuckle
 My sad flesh: I would gladly just now be

Turning out verses to applaud a thundery
 Jovial june when the judas tree is in blossom,
 But am forbidden by the knowledge
 That you would have wrought them so much better.

5†

Carry her over the water,
 And set her down under a tree,
 Where the culvers white all day & all night
 And the winds from every quarter
 Sing agreeably, agreeably, agreeably of love.

Put a gold ring on her finger
 And press her close to your heart,

5‡ · "Ode to the Medieval Poets" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

5† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

While the fish in the lake their snapshots take,
And the frog, that sanguine singer,
Sings agreeably, agreeably, agreeably of love.

The streets shall flock to your marriage,
The houses turn round to look,
The tables & chairs say suitable prayers,
And the horses drawing your carriage
Sing agreeably, agreeably, agreeably of love.

§*

Any heaven we think it decent to enter
Must be ptolemaic with ourselves at the centre.

§* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This couplet was taken from one of the “Shorts” Prof Auden composed around 1940.

6

6‡

Consider this and in our time
 As the hawk sees it or the helmeted airman:
 The clouds rift suddenly – look there
 At cigarette-end smouldering on a border
 At the first garden party of the year.
 Pass on, admire the view of the massif
 Through plate-glass windows of the SPORT HOTEL;
 Join there the insufficient units
 Dangerous, easy, in furs, in uniform
 And constellated at reserved tables
 Supplied with feelings by an efficient band
 Relayed elsewhere to farmers and their dogs
 Sitting in kitchens in the stormy fens.

Long ago, supreme antagonist,
 More powerful than the great northern whale
 Ancient and sorry at life's limiting defect,
 In Cornwall, Mendip, or the Pennine moor
 Your comments on the highborn mining-captains,
 Found they no answer, made them wish to die
 - Lie since in barrows out of harm.
 You talk to your admirers every day
 By silted harbours, derelict works,
 In strangled orchard, and the silent comb
 Where dogs have worried or a bird was shot.
 Order the ill that they attack at once:
 Visit the ports and, interrupting
 The leisurely conversation in the bar
 Within a stone's throw of the sunlit water,
 Beckon your chosen out. Summon
 Those handsome and diseased youngsters, those women
 Your solitary agents in the country parishes;
 And mobilise the powerful forces latent
 In soils that make the farmer brutal
 In the infected sinus, and the eyes of stoats.
 Then, ready, start your rumour, soft
 But horrifying in its capacity to disgust
 Which, spreading magnified, shall come to be
 A polar peril, a prodigious alarm,

Scattering the people, as torn up paper
Rags and utensils in a sudden gust,
Seized with immeasurable neurotic dread.

Seekers after happiness, all who follow
The convolutions of your simple wish,
It is later than you think; nearer that day
Far other than that distant afternoon
Amid rustle of frocks and stamping feet
They gave the prizes to the ruined boys.
You cannot be away, then, no
Not though you pack to leave within an hour,
Escaping humming down arterial roads:
The date was yours; the prey to fugues,
Irregular breathing and alternate ascendancies
After some haunted migratory years
To disintegrate on an instant in the explosion of mania
Or lapse forever into a classic fatigue.

6†

Control of the passes was, he saw, the key
To this new district, but who would get it?
He, the trained spy, had walked into the trap
For a bogus guide, seduced with the old tricks.

At GREENHEARTH was a fine site for a dam
And easy power, had they pushed the rail
Some stations nearer. They ignored his wires.
The bridges were unbuilt and trouble coming.

The street music seemed gracious now to one
For weeks up in the desert. Woken by water
Running away in the dark, he often had
Reproached the night for a companion
Dreamed of already. They would shoot, of course,
Parting easily who were never joined.

6* Both God and the Accuser speak very softly.

6† · “The Secret Agent” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

¶ The text here follows that of the earliest published version. In later editions, Auden amended the final line to read: ‘Parting easily two that were never joined.’

6* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These words are taken from one of Prof Auden’s ‘Shorts’.

7

7‡

Dear, though the night is gone,
 Its dream still haunts today,
 That brought us to a room
 Cavernous, lofty as
 A railway terminus,
 And crowded in that gloom
 Were beds, and we in one
 In a far corner lay.

Our whisper woke no clocks,
 We kissed and I was glad
 At everything you did,
 Indifferent to those
 Who sat with hostile eyes
 In pairs on every bed,
 Arms round each other's neck,
 Inert & vaguely sad.

What hidden worm of guilt
 Or what malignant doubt
 Am I the victim of,
 That you then, unabashed,
 Did what I never wished,
 Confessed another love;
 And I, submissive, felt
 Unwanted and went out?

7†

Give me a doctor, partridge-plump,
 Short in the leg & broad in the rump,
 An endomorph with gentle hands
 Who'll never make absurd demands
 That I abandon all my vices,
 Nor pull a long face in a crisis,
 But with a twinkle in his eye
 Will tell me that I have to die.

7‡ · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is probably the strongest of Prof Auden's love lyrics. ℓ17: Earlier versions give: 'O but what worm of guilt'.

7† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

7* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These are two lines from Prof Auden's sonnet "Macao".

7* Churches alongside brothels testify that faith can pardon natural behaviour.

8

8‡

Ever since observation taught me temptation
 Is a matter of timing, I've tried
 To clothe my fiction in up-to-date diction,
 The contemporary jargon of pride.
 I can recall when, to win the more
 Obstinate round,
 The best bet was to say to them: Sin the more
 That grace may abound.

Free will is a mystical myth as statistical
 Methods have objectively shown,
 A fad of the churches: since the latest researches
 Into motivation it's known
 That honour is hypocrisy,
 Honesty a joke.
 You live in a democracy:
 Lie like other folk.

If in the scrimmage of business your image
 Should ever tarnish or stale,
 Public relations can take it and make it
 Shine like a knight of the grail.
 You can mark up the price that you sell at, if
 Your package has glamour & show:
 Values are relative.
 Dough is dough.

So let each while you may think you're more okay,
 More yourself than anyone else,
 Till you find that you're hooked, your goose is cooked,
 And you're only a cipher of hell's.
 Believe while you can that I'm proud of you;
 Enjoy your dream:
 I'm so bored with the whole fucking crowd of you
 I could scream!

8‡ · "Song of the Devil" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ The Almanacker has excised some of the weaker verses.

8†

God never makes knots,
But is expert, if asked to,
At untying them.

8* Friendship never ages.

8† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

8* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is a line from one of Prof Auden's 'Shorts'.

9

9‡

For us who, from the moment
We are first worlded,
Lapse into disarray,

Who seldom know exactly
What we are up to,
And, as a rule, don't want to,

What a joy to know,
Even when we can't see or hear you,
That you are around,

Though very few of you
Find us worth looking at,
Unless we come too close.

To you all scents are sacred
Except our smell & those
We manufacture.

How promptly & ably
You execute nature's policies,
And are never

Lured into misconduct
Except by some unlucky
Chance imprinting.

Endowed from birth with good manners,
You wag no snobbish elbows,
Don't leer,

Don't look down your nostrils,
Nor poke them into another
Creature's business.

Your own habitations
Are cosy & private, not
Pretentious temples.

9‡ · "Address to the Beasts" · Prof WYSTAN AUDEN (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller.*

Of course, you have to take lives
To keep your own, but never
Kill for applause.

Compared with even your greediest,
How non-U
Our hunting gentry seem.

Exempt from taxation,
You have never felt the need
To become literate,

But your oral cultures
Have inspired our poets to pen
Dulcet verses,

And, though unconscious of God,
Your sung eucharists
Are more hallowed than ours.

Instinct is commonly said
To rule you: I would call it
Common sense.

If you cannot engender
A genius like *Mozart*,
Neither can you

Plague the earth
With brilliant sillies like *Hegel*
Or clever nasties like *Hobbes*.

Shall we ever become adulated,
As you all soon do?
It seems unlikely.

Indeed, one balmy day,
We might all become
Not fossils, but vapour.

Distinct now,
In the end we shall join you
(How soon all corpses look alike),

But you exhibit no signs
Of knowing that you are sentenced.
Now, could that be why

We upstarts are often
Jealous of your innocence,
But never envious.

9†

Having abdicated with comparative ease
And dismissed the greater part of your friends,
Escaping by submarine
In a false beard, half hoping the ports were watched,
You have got here, and it isn't snowing:
How shall we celebrate your arrival?

9* Good poets have a weakness for bad puns.

9† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These lines constitute the first verse of “Half Way”.

9* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is a line from Prof Auden’s “The Truest Poetry is the Most Feigning”.

IO

IO†

Generally, reading palms or handwriting or faces
 Is a job of translation, since the kind
 Gentleman often is
 A seducer, the frowning schoolgirl may
 Be dying to be asked to stay;
 But the body of this old lady exactly indicates her mind;

Rorschach or *Binet* could not add to what a fool can see
 From the plain fact that she is alive & well;
 For when one is 80
 Even a teeny-weeny bit of greed
 Makes one very ill indeed,
 And a touch of despair is instantaneously fatal:

Whether the town once drank bubbly out of her shoes or whether
 She was a governess with a good name
 In church circles, if her
 Husband spoiled her or if she lost her son,
 Is by this time all one.
 She survived whatever happened; she forgave; she became.

So the painter may please himself; give her an english park,
 Rice-fields in China, or a slum tenement;
 Make the sky light or dark;
 Put green plush behind her or a red brick wall.
 She will compose them all,
 Centering the eye on their essential human element.

IO†

I woke. You were not there. But as I dressed
 Anxiety turned to shame, feeling all three
 Intended one rebuke. For had not each
 In its own way tried to teach
 My will to love you that it cannot be,
 As I think, of such consequence to want
 What anyone is given, if they want?

IO† · “The Model” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ Whether Prof Auden had a specific model and/or painting in mind is unclear.

IO† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*. ¶ This is the last verse of “The Lesson”.

10* Goodness is timeless.

10* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is the last line in Prof Auden's "Archaeology", and thus the last line in his *Collected Poems*.

II

II†

He was found by the Bureau of Statistic to be
 One against whom there was no official complaint,
 And all the reports on his conduct agree
 That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,
 For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
 Except for the war till the day he retired
 He worked in a factory and never got fired,
 But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
 Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
 For his union reports that he paid his dues,
 (Our report on his union shows it was sound)
 And our Social Psychology workers found
 That he was popular with his mates & liked a drink.
 The press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
 And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.
 Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
 And his health card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.
 Both Producers Research and High Grade Living declare
 He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Installment Plan
 And had every thing necessary to the Modern Man,
 A phonograph, a radio, a car & a frigidaire.
 Our research ers into Public Opinion are content
 That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
 When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war, he went.
 He was married and added five children to the population,
 Which our eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation,
 And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.
 Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
 Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

II†

I'm beginning to lose patience
 With my personal relations:
 They are not deep,
 And they are not cheap.

II† · "The Unknown Citizen" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ Prof Auden's subtitle: "To JS/07/M/378 This Marble Monument Is Erected by the State"

II† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

II* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These are two lines taken from Auden's early poem "Missing".

¶* Heroes are buried who did not believe in death.

I2

I2‡

Hearing of harvests rotting in the valleys,
 Seeing at end of street the barren mountains,
 Round corners coming suddenly on water,
 Knowing them shipwrecked who were launched for islands,
 We honour founders of these starving cities
 Whose honour is the image of our sorrow,

Which cannot see its likeness in their sorrow
 That brought them desperate to the brink of valleys;
 Dreaming of evening walks through learned cities
 They reined their violent horses on the mountains,
 Those fields like ships to castaways on islands,
 Visions of green to them who craved for water.

They built by rivers and at night the water
 Running past windows comforted their sorrow;
 Each in his little bed conceived of islands
 Where every day was dancing in the valleys
 And all the green trees blossomed on the mountains
 Where love was innocent, being far from cities.

But dawn came back and they were still in cities;
 No marvellous creature rose up from the water;
 There was still gold & silver in the mountains
 But hunger was a more immediate sorrow,
 Although to moping villagers in valleys
 Some waving pilgrims were describing islands...

‘The gods,’ they promised, ‘visit us from islands,
 Are stalking, head-up, lovely, through our cities;
 Now is the time to leave your wretched valleys
 And sail with them across the lime-green water,
 Sitting at their white sides, forget your sorrow,
 The shadow cast across your lives by mountains.’

I2‡ · “Paysage Moralisé” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ According to an article by one Harry Eyres, published in the *Financial Times* in 2012: “The art historian Erwin Panofsky coined the phrase *paysage moralisé* to describe the kind of renaissance painting in which aspects of landscape have moral significance. The example he took was Piero di Cosimo’s *The Discovery of Honey by Bacchus*, “where the antithesis between Virtue and Pleasure is symbolised by the contrast between an easy road winding through beautiful country and a steep stony path leading up to a forbidding rock”. Panofsky was apparently rather chuffed that his coinage provided W. H. Auden with the title for one of his most anthologised poems’.

So many, doubtful, perished in the mountains,
 Climbing up crags to get a view of islands;
 So many, fearful, took with them their sorrow
 Which stayed them when they reached unhappy cities;
 So many, careless, dived & drowned in water;
 So many, wretched, would not leave their valleys.

It is our sorrow. Shall it melt? Ah water
 Would gush, flush, green these mountains & these valleys,
 And we rebuild our cities, not dream of islands.

12†

It's farewell to the drawing room's mannerly cry,
 The professor's logical whereto & why,
 The frock-coated diplomat's polished aplomb,
 Now matters are settled with gas & with bomb.

12* Hindsight as foresight makes no sense.

12† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is the first verse of Prof Auden's "Danse Macabre".

12* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is a line from Prof Auden's "Secondary Epic".

13

13‡

I can't imagine anything
 That I would less like to be
 Than a disincarnate spirit,
 Unable to chew or sip
 Or make contact with surfaces
 Or breathe the scents of summer
 Or comprehend speech or music
 Or gaze at what lies beyond.
 No, God has placed me exactly
 Where I'd have chosen to be:
 The sub-lunar world is such fun,
 Where man is male or female
 And gives proper names to all things.

I can, however, conceive
 That the organs nature gave me,
 My ductless glands for instance,
 Slaving 24 hours a day
 With no show of resentment
 To gratify me, their master,
 And keep me in proper shape,
 (Not that I give them their orders;
 I wouldn't know what to yell)
 Dream of another existence
 Than that they have known so far.
 Yes, it could well be that my flesh,
 Is praying for 'him' to die,
 So setting her free to become
 Irresponsible matter.

13†

Let us honour if we can
 The vertical man,
 Though we value none
 But the horizontal one.

13* History marched to the drums of a clear idea.

13‡ · "No, Plato, No" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

13† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ The terms 'vertical' and 'horizontal' in this short poem refer to the living and the dead respectively.

13* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is a line from Prof Auden's "Memorial for the City".

14

14[‡]

If it form the landscape that we, the inconstant ones,
 Are constantly homesick for, this is chiefly
 Because it dissolves in water. Mark these rounded slopes
 With their surface fragrance of thyme and, beneath,
 A secret system of caves & conduits; hear the springs
 That spurt out everywhere with a chuckle,
 Each filling a private pool for its fish and carving
 Its own little ravine whose cliffs entertain
 The butterfly & the lizard; examine this region
 Of short distances & definite places:
 What could be more like mother or a fitter background
 For her son, the flirtatious male who lounges
 Against a rock in the sunlight, never doubting
 That for all his faults he is loved; whose works are but
 Extensions of his power to charm? From weathered outcrop
 To hill-top temple, from appearing waters to
 Conspicuous fountains, from a wild to a formal vineyard,
 Are ingenious but short steps that a child's wish
 To receive more attention than his brothers, whether
 By pleasing or teasing, can easily take.

Watch, then, the band of rivals as they climb up & down
 The steep stone gennels in twos & threes, at times
 Arm in arm, but never, thank God, in step; or engaged
 On a shady side of a square at midday in
 Voluble discourse, knowing each other too well to think
 There are any important secrets, unable
 To conceive a god whose temper-tantrums are moral
 And not to be pacified by a clever line
 Or a good lay: for, accustomed to a stone that responds,
 They have never had to veil their faces in awe
 Of a crater whose blazing fury could not be fixed;
 Adjusted to the local needs of valleys
 Where everything can be touched or reached by walking,
 Their eyes have never looked into infinite space
 Through the lattice-work of a nomad's comb; born lucky,
 Their legs have never encountered the fungi
 And insects of the jungle, the monstrous forms & lives

14[‡] · "In Praise of Limestone" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller.*

With which we have nothing, we like to think, in common.
 So, when one of them goes to the bad, the way his mind works
 Remains comprehensible: to become a pimp
 Or deal in fake jewellery or ruin a fine tenor voice
 For effects that bring down the house, could happen to all
 But the best & the worst of us... That is why, I suppose,
 The best & worst never stayed here long but sought
 Immoderate soils where the beauty was not so external,
 The light less public and the meaning of life
 Something more than a mad camp. 'Come!' cried the granite wastes,
 'How evasive is your humour, how accidental
 Your kindest kiss, how permanent is death.' (Saints-to-be
 Slipped away sighing.) 'Come!' purred the clays & gravels,
 'On our plains there is room for armies to drill; rivers
 Wait to be tamed and slaves to construct you a tomb
 In the grand manner: soft as the earth is mankind and both
 Need to be altered.' (Intendant Caesars rose and
 Left, slamming the door.) But the really reckless were fetched
 By an older colder voice, the oceanic whisper:
 'I am the solitude that asks & promises nothing;
 That is how I shall set you free. There is no love;
 There are only the various envies, all of them sad.

They were right, my dear; all those voices were right
 And still are; this land is not the sweet home that it looks,
 Nor its peace the historical calm of a site
 Where something was settled once & for all: a backward
 And dilapidated province, connected
 To the big busy world by a tunnel, with a certain
 Seedy appeal, is that all it is now? Not quite:
 It has a worldly duty which in spite of itself
 It does not neglect, but calls into question
 All the great powers assume; it disturbs our rights. The poet,
 Admired for his earnest habit of calling
 The sun the sun, his mind puzzle, is made uneasy
 By these marble statues which so obviously doubt
 His anti-mythological myth; and these gamins,
 Pursuing the scientist down the tiled colonnade
 With such lively offers, rebuke his concern for nature's
 Remotest aspects: I, too, am reproached, for what
 And how much you know. Not to lose time, not to get caught,
 Not to be left behind, not – please! – to resemble
 The beasts who repeat themselves or a thing like water

Or stone whose conduct can be predicted, these
 Are our **Common Prayer**, whose greatest comfort is music
 Which can be made anywhere, is invisible,
 And does not smell. In so far as we have to look forward
 To death as a fact, no doubt we are right: but if
 Sins can be forgiven, if bodies rise from the dead,
 These modifications of matter into
 Innocent athletes & gesticulating fountains,
 Made solely for pleasure, make a further point:
 The blessèd will not care what angle they are regarded from,
 Having nothing to hide. Dear, I know nothing of
 Either, but when I try to imagine a faultless love
 Or the life to come, what I hear is the murmur
 Of underground streams, what I see is a limestone landscape.

14†

Look in your heart and see:
 There lies the answer,
 Though the heart like a clever
 Conjuror or dancer
 Deceive you with many
 A curious sleight,
 And motives like stowaways
 Are found too late.

14*

I'm afraid there's many a spectacled sod
 Prefers the BRITISH MUSEUM to God.

14† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These lines are a verse from Prof Auden's "The Witnesses".

14* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

15

15†

It is time for the destruction of error.
 The chairs are being brought in from the garden,
 The summer talk stopped on that savage coast
 Before the storms, after the guests & birds:
 In sanatoriums they laugh less & less,
 Less certain of cure; and the loud madman
 Sinks now into a more terrible calm.

The falling leaves know it, the children,
 At play on the fuming alkali-tip
 Or by the flooded football ground, know it –
 This is the dragon's day, the devourer's:
 Orders are given to the enemy for a time
 With underground proliferation of mould,
 With constant whisper & the casual question,
 To haunt the poisoned in his shunned house,
 To destroy the efflorescence of the flesh,
 To censor the play of the mind, to enforce
 Conformity with the orthodox bone,

With organised fear, the articulated skeleton.
 You whom I gladly walk with, touch,
 Or wait for as one certain of good,
 We know it, we know that love
 Needs more than the admiring excitement of union,
 More than the abrupt self-confident farewell,
 The heel on the finishing blade of grass,
 The self-confidence of the falling root,
 Needs death, death of the grain, our death.
 Death of the old gang; would leave them
 In sullen valley where is made no friend,
 The old gang to be forgotten in the spring,
 The hard bitch and the riding-master,
 Stiff underground; deep in clear lake
 The lolling bridegroom, beautiful, there.

15† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is the fourth and final section of Auden's "1929", written in the autumn of that year.

15†

Looking up at the stars, I know quite well
 That, for all they care, I can go to hell,
 But on earth indifference is the least
 We have to dread from man or beast.

How should we like it were stars to burn
 With a passion for us we could not return?
 If equal affection cannot be,
 Let the more loving one be me.

Admirer as I think I am
 Of stars that do not give a damn,
 I cannot, now I see them, say
 I missed one terribly all day.

Were all stars to disappear or die,
 I should learn to look at an empty sky
 And feel its total dark sublime,
 Though this might take me a little time.

15* Look if you like, but you will have to leap.

15† · “The More Loving One” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

15* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is a line from Prof Auden’s “Leap Before You Look”.

16

16‡

Ladies & gentlemen, you have made most remarkable
 Progress, and progress, I agree, is a boon;
 You have built more automobiles than are parkable,
 Crashed the sound-barrier, and may very soon
 Be setting up juke-boxes on the moon:
 But I beg to remind you that, despite all that,
 I, death, am & will always be cosmocrat.

Still I sport with the young & daring; at my whim
 The climber steps upon the rotten boulder;
 The undertow catches boys as they swim;
 The speeder steers onto the slippery shoulder:
 With others I wait until they are older,
 Before assigning, according to my humour,
 To one a coronary, to another a tumour.

Liberal my views on religion & race;
 Tax-posture, credit-rating, social ambition
 Cut no ice with me. We shall meet face to face
 Despite the drugs & lies of your physician,
 The costly euphemisms of the mortician:
 WESTCHESTER matron and BOWERY bum,
 Both shall dance with me when I rattle my drum.

16†

My second thoughts condemn
 And wonder how I dare
 To look you in the eye.
 What right have I to swear
 Even at one AM
 To love you till I die?

Earth meets too many crimes
 For fibs to interest her;
 If I can give my word,
 Forgiveness can recur
 Any number of times
 In time. Which is absurd.

16‡ · "Recitative by Death" · Prof Wýstan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *WH Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

16† · Prof Wýstan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of WH Auden]*.

Tempus fugit. Quite.
So finish up your drink.
‘All flesh is grass.’ It is.
But who on earth can think
With heavy heart or light
Of what will come of this?

16* Money cannot buy the fuel of love: but is excellent kindling.

16* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These words are a haiku from Prof Auden’s “Thanksgiving for a Habitat”.

I7

17‡

May with its light behaving
 Stirs vessel, eye & limb,
 The singular & sad
 Are willing to recover,
 And to each swan-delighting river
 The careless picnics come
 In living white & red.

Our dead, remote & hooded,
 In hollows rest, but we
 From their vague woods have broken,
 Forests where children meet
 And the white angel-vampires flit,
 Stand now with shaded eye,
 The dangerous apple taken.

The real world lies before us,
 Brave motions of the young,
 Abundant wish for death,
 The pleasing, pleased, haunted:
 A dying master sinks tormented
 In his admirers' ring,
 The unjust walk the earth.

And love that makes impatient
 Tortoise & roe, that lays
 The blonde beside the dark,
 Urges upon our blood,
 Before the evil & the good
 How insufficient is
 Touch, endearment, look.

17†

No one now imagines you answer idle questions
 – How long shall I live? How long remain single?
 Will butter be cheaper? – nor does your shout make
 Husbands uneasy.

17‡ · “May” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

17† · “Short Ode to the Cuckoo” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

Compared with arias by the great performas
Such as the merle, your two-note act is kid-stuff:
Our most hardened crooks are sincerely shocked by
Your nesting habits.

Science, aesthetics, ethics may huff & puff but they
Cannot extinguish your magic: you marvel
The commuter as you wondered the savage.
Hence, in my diary,

Where I normally enter nothing but social
Engagements and, lately, the death of friends, I
Scribble year after year when I first hear you,
Of a holy moment.

17* Music is international.

18

18†

No use invoking *Apollo* in a case like theirs;
 The pleasure-loving gods had died in their chairs
 And would not get up again, one of them, ever,
 Though guttural tribes had crossed the great river,
 Roasting their dead and with no name for the yew;
 No good expecting long-legged ancestors to
 Return with long swords from pelagic paradises
 (They would be left to their own devices,
 Supposing they had some); no point pretending
 One didn't foresee the probable ending
 As dog-food, or landless, submerged, a slave;
 Meanwhile, how should a cultured gentleman behave?
 It would have been an excusable failing
 Had they broken out into womanish wailing
 Or, dramatising their doom, held forth
 In sonorous clap-trap about death;
 To their credit, a reader will only perceive
 That the language they loved was coming to grief,
 Expiring in preposterous mechanical tricks,
 Epanaleptics, rhopalics, anacyclic acrostics:
 To their lasting honor the stuff they wrote
 Can safely be spanked in a scholar's footnote,
 Called shallow by a mechanised generation to whom
 Haphazard oracular grunts are profound wisdom.

18†

Over the heather the wet wind blows.
 I've lice in my tunic & a cold in my nose.

The rain comes pattering out of the sky,
 I'm a wall soldier. I don't know why.

The mist creeps over the hard grey stone.
 My girl's in Tungria; I sleep alone.

Aulus goes hanging around her place.
 I don't like his manners; I don't like his face.

18† · "The Epigoni" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

18† · "Roman Wall Blues" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. 16: The Tungrians were an ancient people within the Roman Empire, who inhabited an ill-defined region centred around the later settlement of Liège.

Piso's a christian; he worships a fish;
There'd be no kissing if he had his wish.

She gave me a ring but I diced it away;
I want my girl and I want my pay.

When I'm a veteran with only one eye
I shall do nothing but look at the sky.

18* No one hears his own remarks as prose.

18* · Prof Wýstan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of WH Auden]*. ¶ This is a line from Prof Auden's "At the Party".

19

19‡

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear
 Down in the valley drumming, drumming?
 Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
 The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear
 Over the distance brightly, brightly?
 Only the sun on their weapons, dear,
 As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear?
 What are they doing this morning, this morning?
 Only the usual manoeuvres, dear,
 Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there;
 Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?
 Perhaps a change in the orders, dear;
 Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care;
 Haven't they reined their horses, their horses?
 Why, they are none of them wounded, dear,
 None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want with white hair;
 Is it the parson, is it, is it?
 No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
 Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer who lives so near;
 It must be the farmer so cunning, so cunning.
 They have passed the farm already, dear,
 And now they are running.

O where are you going? Stay with me here!
 Were the vows you swore me deceiving, deceiving.
 No, I promised to love you, dear,
 But I must be leaving.

19‡ · "O What Is That Sound" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*. ¶ Note that Prof Auden consistently declined to add a question mark to the title of this poem.

O it's broken the lock & splintered the door;
 O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;
 Their feet are heavy on the floor
 And their eyes are burning.

19†

Perfection, of a kind, was what he was after,
 And the poetry he invented was easy to understand;
 He knew human folly like the back of his hand,
 As was greatly interested in armies & fleets;
 When he laughed, respectable senators burst with laughter,
 And when he cried the little children died in the streets.

19* One doubts the virtue, one the beauty of his wife.

19† · “Epitaph on a Tyrant” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

19* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is a line from Prof Auden’s sonnet “The Ship”.

20

20†

O where are you going? said reader to rider.
 That valley is fatal where furnaces burn;
 Younder's the midden whose odours will madden;
 That gap is the grave where the tall return.

O do you imagine, said fearer to farer,
 That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
 Your diligent looking discover the lacking
 Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?

O what was that bird? said horror to hearer.
 Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?
 Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly;
 That spot on your skin is a shocking disease.

Out of this house, said rider to reader;
 Yours never will, said farer to fearer;
 They're looking for you, said hearer to horror
 As he left him there, as he left him there.

20†

Pick a quarrel, go to war,
 Leave the hero in the bar;
 Hunt the lion, climb the peak:
 No one guesses you are weak.

20*

Sad is *Eros*, builder of cities,
 And weeping anarchic *Aphrodite*.

20† · “Epilogue” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*. ¶ Prof Auden was certainly inspired by the third Child Ballad (“The Fause Knight on the Road”) in writing this poem. It is an epilogue in the sense that it is the final piece in *The Orators*, the most enigmatic of his anthologies.

20† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

20* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is a couplet from Prof Auden’s “In Memory of Sigmund Freud”.

21

21[†]

On a mid-december day,
 Frying sausages
 For myself, I abruptly
 Felt under fingers
 Thirty years younger the rim
 Of a steering-wheel,
 On my cheek the parching wind
 Of an august noon,
 As passenger beside me
 You as then you were.

Slap across a veg'-growing
 Alluvial plain
 We raced in clouds of white dust,
 And geese fled screaming
 As we missed them by inches,
 Making a bee-line
 For mountains gradually
 Enlarging eastward,
 Joyfully certain nightfall
 Would occasion joy.

It did. In a flagged kitchen
 We were served broiled trout
 And a rank cheese: for a while
 We talked by the fire,
 Then, carrying candles, climbed
 Steep stairs. Love was made
 Then & there: so halcyoned,
 Soon we fell asleep
 To the sound of a river
 Swabbling through a gorge.

Since then, other enchantments
 Have blazed & faded,
 Enemies changed their address,
 And war made ugly
 An uncountable number
 Of unknown neighbours,

Precious as us to themselves:
But round your image
There is no fog, and the earth
Can still astonish.

Of what, then, should I complain,
Pottering about
A neat suburban kitchen?
Solitude? Rubbish!
It's social enough with real
Faces & landscapes
For whose friendly countenance
I at least can learn
To live with obesity
And a little fame.

21†

River, sooner or later,
All reach some ocean,
And in due season all men
Arrive at a death bed, but
Neither on purpose.

21* Some books are undeservedly forgotten; none are undeservedly remembered.

21† · Prof Wýstan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

21* · Prof Wýstan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *The Dyer's Hand*.

22

22‡

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle, moaning overhead,
Scribbling on the sky the message, He is dead;
Put **crêpe** bows round the white necks of the public doves;
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my north, my south, my east & west,
My working week and my sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

22†

That night when joy began
Our narrowest veins to flush,
We waited for the flash
Of morning's levelled gun.

But morning let us pass,
And day by day relief
Outgrows his nervous laugh,
Grown credulous of peace,

As mile by mile is seen
No trespasser's reproach,
And love's best glasses reach
No fields but are his own.

22* The truest poetry is the most feigning.

22‡ · "Funeral Blues" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

22† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

22* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is the title of one of Prof Auden's poems.

23

23[†]

Taller today, we remember similar evenings, evenings,
Walking together in the windless orchard
Where the brook runs over the gravel, far from the glacier.

Again in the room with the sofa hiding the grate,
Look down to the river when the rain is over,
See him turn to the window, hearing our last
Of Captain *Ferguson*.

It is seen how excellent hands have turned to commonness.
One staring too long, went blind in a tower,
One sold all his manors to fight, broke through, and faltered.

Nights come bringing the snow, and the dead howl
Under the headlands in their windy dwelling
Because the Adversary put too easy questions
On lonely roads

But happy now, though no nearer each other,
We see the farms lighted all along the valley;
Down at the mill-shed the hammering stops
And men go home.

Noises at dawn will bring
Freedom for some, but not this peace
No bird can contradict: passing, but is sufficient now
For something fulfilled this hour, loved or endured.

23[†]

The emperor's favourite concubine
Was in the eunuch's pay.
The wardens of the marches turned
Their spears the other way.
The vases crack; the ladies die;
The oracles are wrong.
We suck our thumbs or sleep; the show
Is gamey & too long.

23[†] · "Taller Today" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*. ¶ The text here follows that of the earliest published version. In later editions, Auden excised the second and third verses.

23[†] · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

But – music ho! – at last it comes,
The transformation scene:
A rather scruffy-looking god
Descends in a machine,
And, gabbling off his rustic rhymes,
Misplacing one or two,
Commands the prisoners to walk,
The enemies to screw.

23* There could be no question of living if we did not win.

23* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These words are drawn from two lines of Auden's early poem "Let History Be My Judge".

24

24[‡]

The piers are pummelled by the waves;
 In a lonely field the rain
 Lashes an abandoned train;
 Outlaws fill the mountain caves.

Fantastic grow the evening gowns;
 Agents of the Fisc pursue
 Absconding tax-defaulters through
 The sewers of provincial towns.

Private rites of magic send
 The temple prostitutes to sleep;
 All the literati keep
 An imaginary friend.

Cerebrotonic *Cato* may
 Extol the ancient disciplines,
 But the muscle-bound marines
 Mutiny for food & pay.

Caesar's double bed is warm
 While an unimportant clerk
 Writes, 'I do not like my work,'
 On a pink official form.

Unendowed with wealth or pity,
 Little birds with scarlet legs,
 Sitting on their speckled eggs,
 Eye each flu-infected city.

Altogether elsewhere, vast
 Herds of reindeer move across
 Miles & miles of golden moss,
 Silently and very fast.

24[‡] · "The Fall of Rome" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*.

¶ Prof Auden dedicated the poem to Cyril Connolly. Each verse seems to consider a reason frequently given by historians for the collapse of the Roman Empire. In particular, the last verse concerns the following theory: changes in the climate forced the migration of certain species (amongst them, reindeer) on the steppes of Eastern Europe, which in turn forced the migration of those tribes which depended on said species. This led to a chain of tribal migrations, culminating in the barbarian invasions of Late Antiquity which brought about the Empire's demise.

24†

The ogre does what ogres can,
 Deeds quite impossible for man,
 But one prize is beyond his reach;
 The ogre cannot master speech.
 About a subjugated plain,
 Among its desperate & slain,
 The ogre stands with hands on hips,
 While drivel gushes from his lips.

24*

Those to whom evil is done
 Do evil in return.

24† · “August 1968” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*. ¶ The Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia occurred in August 1968.

24* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Another Time*. ¶ This is a couplet from Prof Auden’s “September 1, 1939”.

25

25‡

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave & innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives;
Pardons cowardice, conceit,
Lays its honours at their feet.

Time that which this strange excuse
Pardoned *Kipling* & his views,
And will pardon *Paul Claudel*,
Pardons him for writing well.

In the nightmare of the dark
All the dogs of Europe bark,
And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate;

Intellectual disgrace
Stares from every human face,
And the seas of pity lie
Locked & frozen in each eye.

Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night;
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse;
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start;

25‡ · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *W H Auden: Poems Selected by John Fuller*. ¶ These lines constitute the third section of Prof Auden's "In Memory of W B Yeats", omitting the first verse. They were written shortly after Yeats's death in 1939.

In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

25†

These had stopped seeking
But went on speaking,
Have not contributed,
But have diluted.

These ordered light
But had no right,
And handed on
War & a son.

25*

Though one cannot always
Remember exactly why one has been happy,
There is no forgetting that one was.

25† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

25* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These are the closing words of Prof Auden's "Good-Bye to the Mezzogiorno".

26

26‡

Underneath an abject willow,
 Lover, sulk no more:
 Act from thought should quickly follow.
 What is thinking for?
 Your unique and moping station
 Proves you cold;
 Stand up and fold
 Your map of desolation.

Bells that toll across the meadows
 From the sombre spire
 Toll for these unloving shadows
 Love does not require.
 All that lives may love; why longer
 Bow to loss
 With arms across?
 Strike and you shall conquer.

Geese in flocks above you flying.
 Their direction know,
 Icy brooks beneath you flowing,
 To their ocean go.
 Dark & dull is your distraction:
 Walk then, come,
 No longer numb
 Into your satisfaction.

26†

They noticed that virginity was needed
 To trap the unicorn in every case,
 But not that, of those virgins who succeeded,
 A high percentage had an ugly face.

26*

To save your world, you asked this man to die:
 Would this man, could he see you now, ask why?

26‡ · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

26† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is the first verse of the tenth sonnet in Prof Auden's sequence "The Quest". The rest of the poem, sadly, does not live up to the promise of these marvellous first four lines.

26* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This was Prof Auden's suggestion for an epitaph for a tomb of the unknown soldier.

27

27‡

Who stands, the crux left of the watershed,
 On the wet road between the chafing grass
 Below him sees dismantled washing-floors,
 Snatches of tramline running to a wood,
 An industry already comatose,
 Yet sparsely living. A ramshackle engine
 At CASHWELL raises water; for 10 years
 It lay in flooded workings until this,
 Its latter office, grudgingly performed.
 And, further, here and there, though many dead
 Lie under the poor soil, some acts are chosen,
 Taken from recent winters; two there were
 Cleaned out a damaged shaft by hand, clutching
 The winch a gale would tear them from; one died
 During a storm, the fells impassable,
 Not at his village, but in wooden shape
 Through long abandoned levels nosed his way
 And in his final valley went to ground.

Go home, now, stranger, proud of your young stock,
 Stranger, turn back again, frustrate & vexed:
 This land, cut off, will not communicate,
 Be no accessory content to one
 Aimless for faces rather there than here.
 Beams from your car may cross a bedroom wall,
 They wake no sleeper; you may hear the wind
 Arriving driven from the ignorant sea
 To hurt itself on pane, on bark of elm
 Where sap un baffled rises, being spring;
 But seldom this. Near you, taller than the grass,
 Ears poise before decision, scenting danger.

27†

This lunar beauty
 Has no history,
 Is complete & early;
 If beauty later

27‡ · "The Watershed" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

27† · "This Lunar Beauty" · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ Prof Auden made minor, but semantically helpful, amendments to the punctuation of this poem in later editions.

Bear any feature,
It had a lover
And is another.

This like a dream
Keeps other time,
And daytime is
The loss of this;
For time is inches
And the heart's changes
Where ghost has haunted,
Lost & wanted.

But this was never
A ghost's endeavour
Nor, finished this,
Was ghost at ease;
And till it pass
Love shall not near
The sweetness here
Nor sorrow take
His endless look.

27* To some, ill health is a way to be important, others are stoics, a few fanatics who won't feel happy until they are cut open.

27* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is a verse from Prof Auden's "The Art of Healing", an elegy for a doctor.

28

28‡

Without me *Adam* would have fallen irrevocably with *Lucifer*.

He would never have been able to cry, ☉ *felix culpa*.

It was I who suggested his theft to *Prometheus*.

My frailty cost *Adonis* his life.

I heard *Orpheus* sing.

I was not quite as moved as they say.

I was not taken in by the sheep's eyes of *Narcissus*.

I was angry with *Psyche* when she struck a light.

I was in *Hector's* confidence;

So far as it went.

Had he listened to me *Oedipus* would never have left CORINTH.

I cast no vote at the trial of *Orestes*.

I fell asleep when *Diotima* spoke of love.

I was not responsible for the monsters which tempted St *Anthony*.

To me the Saviour permitted his fifth word from the cross.

To be a stumbling block to the stoics.

I was the unwelcome third at the meetings of *Tristan* with *Isolda*.

They tried to poison me.

I rode with *Galahad* on his quest for the **San Graal**

Without understanding I kept his vow.

I was the just impediment to the marriage of *Faustus* with *Helen*.

I know a ghost when I see one.

With *Hamlet* I had no patience;

But I forgave Don *Quixote* all for his admission in the cart.

I was the missing entry in Don *Giovanni's* list;

For which he could never account.

I assisted *Figaro* the barber in all his intrigues.

When Prince *Tamino* arrived at wisdom I too obtained my reward.

I was innocent of the sin of the ancient mariner.

Time after time I warned Captain *Ahab* to accept happiness.

As for Metropolis, that too-great city;

Her delusions are not mine.

Her speeches impress me little, her statistics less;

To all who dwell on the public side of her mirrors resentments & no peace.

At the place of my passion her photographers are gathered together;

But I shall rise again to hear her judged.

28‡ · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is the fourth and final part of Prof Auden's "Memorial for the City".

28†

Why thén, why thére,
 Why thús, we cry, did he die?
 The heavens are silent.

What he was, he was:
 What he is fated to become
 Depends on us.

Remembering his death,
 How we choose to live
 Will decide its meaning.

When a just man dies,
 Lamentation & praise,
 Sorrow & joy, are one.

28* We must love one another or die.

28† · “Elegy for JFK” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

28* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Another Time*. ¶ This is a line from Prof Auden’s “September 1, 1939”. He later amended the line to read, ‘We must love one another *and* die’, and later still omitted the poem altogether from collections of his poems.

29

29‡

Woken, I lay in the arms of my own warmth and listened
 To a storm enjoying its storminess in the winter dark
 Till my ear, as it can when half asleep or half sober,
 Set to work to unscramble that interjectory uproar,
 Construing its airy vowels & watery consonants
 Into a love-speech indicative of a Proper Name.

Scarcely the tongue I should have chosen, yet, as well
 As harshness & clumsiness would allow, it spoke in your praise,
 Kenning you a god-child of the moon and the west wind
 With power to tame both real & imaginary monsters,
 Likening your poise of being to an upland county,
 Here green on purpose, there pure blue for luck.

Loud though it was, alone as it certainly found me,
 It reconstructed a day of peculiar silence
 When a sneeze could be heard a mile off, and had me walking
 On a headland of lava beside you, the occasion as ageless
 As the stare of any rose, your presence exactly
 So once, so valuable, so very now.

This, moreover, at an hour when only too often
 A smirking devil annoys me in beautiful english,
 Predicting a world where every sacred location
 Is a sand-buried site all cultured texans do,
 Misinformed & thoroughly fleeced by their guides,
 And gentle hearts are extinct like hegelian bishops.

Grateful, I slept till a morning that would not say
 How much it believed of what I said the storm had said
 But quietly drew my attention to what had been done –
 So many cubic metres the more in my cistern
 Against a leonine summer – putting first things first:
 Thousands have lived without love, not one without water.

29†

Wishing no harm
 But to be warm,

29‡ · “First Things First” · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

29† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*.

These fell asleep
On the burning heap.

29* We would rather be ruined than changed

29* · Prof WYSTAN AUDEN (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of WH Auden]*. ¶ This is a line from the epilogue to Prof Auden's *The Age of Anxiety*.

30

30‡

You are the town & we are the clock.
We are the guardians of the gate in the rock,
 The two.
On your left & on your right,
In the day & in the night,
 We are watching you.

Wiser not to ask just what has occurred
To them who disobeyed our word;
 To those
We were the whirlpool, we were the reef,
We were the formal nightmare, grief
 And the unlucky rose.

Climb up the crane, learn the sailor's words
When the ships from the islands laden with birds
 Come in.
Tell your stories of fishing & other men's wives:
The expansive moments of constricted lives
 In the lighted inn.

But do not imagine we do not know
Nor that what you hide with such care won't show
 At a glance.
Nothing is done, nothing is said,
But don't make the mistake of believing us dead:
 I shouldn't dance.

We're afraid in that case you'll have a fall.
We've been watching you over the garden wall
 For hours.
The sky is darkening like a stain;
Something is going to fall like rain
 And it won't be flowers.

When the green field comes off like a lid
Revealing what was much better hid:
 Unpleasant.
And look, behind you without a sound

The woods have come up and are standing round
In deadly crescent.

The bolt is sliding in its groove;
Outside the window is the black remov-
-er's van.

And now with sudden swift emergence
Come the hooded women, humpbacked surgeons
And the scissor man.

This might happen any day;
So be careful what you say
And do:
Be clean, be tidy, oil the lock,
Trim the garden, wind the clock;
Remember the two.

30†

Lord *Byron*
Once succumbed to a siren:
His flesh was weak,
Hers greek.

30* You need not see what someone is doing to know if it is his vocation; you have only to watch his eyes.

30† · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ This is one of Prof Auden's "Academic Graffiti".

30* · Prof Wystan Auden (1907 – 1973) · *Collected Poems [of W H Auden]*. ¶ These are three lines from Prof Auden's "Horae Canonicae".

Part 2

Supplementary Material

ANNEXE A

Ecclesiastes

I of the month

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

II of the month

I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

This text is based on the King James Version. Where a verse diverges from that translation, a mark (⌘) is printed.

That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

III of the month

I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

IV of the month

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.

I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?

I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:

I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:

I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:

I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

☞ I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, concubines very many.

So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

V of the month

And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.

Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.

Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.

For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool.

Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

VI of the month

☞ I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.

Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.

For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.

For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?

For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.

VII of the month

There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.

For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?

For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

VIII of the month

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

☞ A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

IX of the month

What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

☞ He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set eternity in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.

And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

☞ That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God seeketh again that which is passed away.

X of the month

And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.

I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

☞ Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?

Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

XI of the month

So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.

Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

XII of the month

Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.

Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.

XIII of the month

Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.

There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.

XIV of the month

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?

And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

XV of the month

Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.

For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.

I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

XVI of the month

Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?

For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.

XVII of the month

If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.

Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field.

He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.

When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?

The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.

As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.

And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?

All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.

Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.

Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.

For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

XVIII of the month

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:

A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.

For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.

Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other.

Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?

XIX of the month

All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.

For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?

Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

☞ Whatsoever hath been, the name thereof was given long ago, and it is known what man is; neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?

For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

XX of the month

A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.

☞ Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a bribe destroyeth the heart.

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.

Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.

For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?

In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

XXI of the month

All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness.

Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?

Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?

It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city.

For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee:

For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me.

That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?

I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness:

And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.

Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account:

Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

XXII of the month

Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.

I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.

Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.

Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.

Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt.

XXIII of the month

And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity.

Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)

Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

XXIV of the month

☞ For all this I considered in my heart even to explore all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth whether it be love or hatred; all is before them.

All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.

This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

☞ Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.

Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

XXV of the month

This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me:

There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:

Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.

Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

XXVI of the month

Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.

A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.

Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.

If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler:

Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place.

I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.

Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.

If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

☞ If the serpent bite before it is enchanted, then is there no advantage in the charmer.

The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.

A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?

The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!

Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things.

Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

XXVII of the month

Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

XXVIII of the month

Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun:

But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

XXIX of the month

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about the streets:

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

XXX of the month

And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

The Song of Solomon

Firstday (I, VIII, XV and XXII of the month)

The song of songs, which is Solomon's.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

☞ Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: rightly do they love thee.

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.

We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.

While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.

The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

This text is based on the King James Version. Where a verse diverges from that translation, a mark (☞) is printed.

Secondday (II, IX, XVI and XXII of the month)

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

☞ Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick from love.

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.

My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

☞ The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land;

The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

Thirdday (III, X, XVII and XXIV of the month)

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.

He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown where-with his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

Fourth day (IV, XI, XVIII and XXV of the month)

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.

Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,

Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

Fifthday (V, XII, XIX and XXVI of the month)

I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

☞ My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my heart was moved for him.

I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

☞ I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick from love.

What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Sixthday (VI, XIII, XX and XXVII of the month)

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.

As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.

There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.

My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded.

Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.

Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.

Seventhday (VII, XIV, XXI and XXVIII of the month)

How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.

Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries.

How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy breath like apples;

And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.

Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

Eighthday (XXIX of the month)

O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me:
I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love,
until he please.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I
raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she
brought thee forth that bare thee.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as
death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a
most vehement flame.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would
give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in
the day when she shall be spoken for?

If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we
will inclose her with boards of cedar.

I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found
favour.

Ninthday (XXX of the month)

Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every
one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand,
and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me
to hear it.

Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the
mountains of spices.

Principles for Creating a Canon of English Poetry

General

- (1) Nothing in these principles shall exonerate any editor, or the manager, patron or controller thereof, of any barbarous, blockheaded, partisan, unimaginative, dogmatic or bigoted selections or omissions.
- (2) In construing and complying with these principles, due regard shall be had to the majesty, wit, sweetness, subtlety and pity of the best of English poetry, which taken together are the spirit of any anthology worthy of the name, and which may make a departure from these principles necessary in some cases.

Definitions

- (3) The *canon* of English poetry is the set of those poems and proverbs most needful for all men to know.¹
- (4) A *proverb* is no longer than two lines of poetry or a sentence of prose.
- (5) A *sonnet* is longer than a proverb, and is no longer sixteen lines of iambic pentameter, or the equivalent number of lines in another meter, or shorter.
- (6) A *song* longer than a sonnet, and is no longer than Milton's 'Lycidas'.
- (7) *Old English* is the language spoken and written before the Battle of Hastings (14 Oct 1066), then *Middle English* until the Battle of Bosworth Field (22 Aug 1485), *Classical English* until the death of Ted Hughes (28 Oct 1998), and *Late English* thereafter.²
- (8) The *golden age* of English poetry lasted from the Battle of Bosworth Field until the end of the First World War, and the *silver age* from the end of the First World War until the death of Ted Hughes.

1. Alfred the Great wrote to Bishop Wærferth in 890, when English literature was still in its infancy: 'Therefore it seems well to me, if ye think so, for us also to translate the books *most needful for all men to know* into the speech which all men know, and, as we are well able if we have peace, to make all the youth in England of free men rich enough to devote themselves to it, to learn while they are unfit for other occupation till they are well able to read English writing.'

2. *Archaic English* describes the union of Old and Middle English.

- (9) A given author is *of the golden age* if he was born during or after 1500,³ and before 1900.⁴
- (10) For the purposes of the canon, the border ballads are English.⁵
- (11) *Imperial folk* describes all those folk songs composed in English in territories which were at any time part of the British Empire, or by subjects or citizens belonging to such territories.
- (12) *Urmonotheismus* is the belief in a supreme being which, according to the Vienna School of ethnology,⁶ was the starting point for all subsequent religious thought.

Structure

- (13) The canon is to be limited in length by assigning poetry to each day of the year; hence the canon is also an almanac.
- (14) This almanac is to follow the Cyprian calendar.
- (15) A song, a sonnet and a proverb are to be selected for each day of the calendar year.
- (16) In addition to the twelve ordinary months, i.e. the four groups of three months for each of the four seasons, it will be necessary, in some years, to add a thirteenth intercalary month in order to synchronise the calendar with the solar year.
- (17) Only poems and proverbs written by authors of the golden age are to be assigned to the twelve ordinary months.
- (18) Only poems and proverbs written by Prof Wystan Auden are to be assigned to the thirteenth intercalary month.
- (19) The three spring months are to be assigned poems and proverbs written in a choleric mood; the three summer months, sanguine; the three autumn months, phlegmatic; and the three winter months, melancholic.
- (20) The songs assigned to the three summer months are to be folk songs, and the sonnets assigned to the middle month of said three summer months are to be sea shanties.
- (21) The folk songs assigned to the first of the three summer months are to be English folk; the second, Scots-Irish folk; and the third, imperial folk and hymns.⁷
- (22) The songs, sonnets and proverbs assigned to the middle month of the three autumn months are to be drawn from the King James Version of the Holy Bible and *The Book of Common Prayer* only.

3. The rule of thumb that Sir Thomas Wyatt – born in 1503 – was the first poet to write in modern English is basically sound. The Rev John Skelton, the preceding poet in the chronology of English literature, may have fired a few interesting shots in the direction of modernity, but he clearly belongs to the medieval world all the same.

4. Given that the Armistice of 1918 marks the end of the golden age, and given that British soldiers were not eligible to serve overseas before the age of nineteen, a useful rule of thumb is that no poet born in 1900 or thereafter is to be included in the golden age.

5. Without this appropriation, the body of Scots-Irish folks songs would make the English tradition look all too threadbare by contrast.

6. See Wilhelm Schmidt's *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (1912-1954) in particular.

7. Aim for a ratio of two parts imperial folk to one part hymns.

- (23) So far as the above restrictions will allow: the stronger poems and proverbs are to be gathered, in spring, towards the beginning of the season; in summer and autumn, to the middle; and in winter, to the end. Moreover, the weaker poems and proverbs are to be gathered, in spring and summer, towards the end of the season; and in autumn and winter, to the beginning.
- (24) Wherever it is necessary to add supernumerary poems and proverbs, these are to be taken from the works of authors of the silver age.

Selection

- (25) In choosing whether to include a given poem or proverb in the canon, the principle test shall be its memorability.⁸
- (26) Translations, except for translations of Bible, are not to be included; but paraphrases and poems based on other poems are entirely permitted.
- (27) Creating shorter poems out of longer works is to be avoided.⁹
- (28) No poem or proverb which expounds any specific religious doctrine, except for Urmonotheismus, is to be included in the canon.
- (29) No quota, apportionment, proscription or suppression – favouring or disfavouring any group defined by immutable characteristics – shall be used in selecting poems and proverbs for inclusion in the canon.
- (30) Nothing from either Ecclesiastes or the Song of Solomon shall be assigned to any given day of the lunisolar year.¹⁰

Orthography

- (31) Spellings shall conform to an Enhanced Johnsonian Orthography (EnJO), which shall be based on the fourth edition Dr Johnson's famous dictionary,¹¹ and which shall correct the few inconsistencies, oversights, omissions and misunderstandings present in the base document. Said EnJO shall also include any neologisms used in subsequent poetry worthy of inclusion in the canon.
- (32) No spelling shall be amended to conform to the EnJO such as to alter the pronunciation of the word in question; instead, a variant spelling shall be added to the EnJO.
- (33) Wherever the spelling of a given poem has been altered in transmission from its recorded source to the canon, that poem shall be marked as redacted.
- (34) The punctuation of any given poem may be amended without marking it as redacted, except where such an amendment would alter the meaning, or would change the sound of the poem when read aloud.

8. But bear in mind that this test is not infallible; irritating jingles can be difficult to forget, and masterpieces are sometimes overlooked on the first reading.

9. To be avoided, but not to be excluded altogether: it would be invidious not to include Prince Hamlet's famous soliloquy, just as it would be imprudent to start cutting strips out of *Paradise Lost*. On the other hand, selecting items from a longer poem already divided into sections, such as Meredith's *Modern Love*, is entirely permitted.

10. Since these books are divided among the days of each month and the days of each week respectively.

11. That is, the edition of 1773.

- (35) Capitalisation shall follow the Italian use as a rule of thumb.

ANNEXE D

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