Hamlet Act III scene 1

To be, or not to be, that is the question—  
Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer  
The Slings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune,  
Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles,  
And by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep—  
No more; and by a sleep, to say we end  
The Heart-ache, and the thousand Natural shocks  
That Flesh is heir to? 'Tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep,  
To sleep, perchance to Dream; Aye, there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause. There's the respect  
That makes Calamity of so long life:  
For who would bear the Whips and Scorns of time,  
The Oppressor's wrong, the *proud* man's Contumely,  
The pangs of *despised* Love, the Law’s delay,  
The insolence of Office, and the Spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his Quietus make  
With a bare Bodkin? Who would these 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 *pitch* and 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.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/To_be,_or_not_to_be#cite_note-4)

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| Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. 1807–1882 |
|  |
| 59. **The Village Blacksmith** |
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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| UNDER a spreading chestnut tree |  |
| The village smithy stands; |  |
| The smith, a mighty man is he, |  |
| With large and sinewy hands; |  |
| And the muscles of his brawny arms | *5* |
| Are strong as iron bands. |  |
|  |  |
| His hair is crisp, and black, and long, |  |
| His face is like the tan; |  |
| His brow is wet with honest sweat, |  |
| He earns whate'er he can, | *10* |
| And looks the whole world in the face, |  |
| For he owes not any man. |  |
|  |  |
| Week in, week out, from morn till night, |  |
| You can hear his bellows blow; |  |
| You can hear him swing his heavy sledge | *15* |
| With measured beat and slow, |  |
| Like a sexton ringing the village bell, |  |
| When the evening sun is low. |  |
|  |  |
| And children coming home from school |  |
| Look in at the open door; | *20* |
| They love to see the flaming forge, |  |
| And hear the bellows roar, |  |
| And watch the burning sparks that fly |  |
| Like chaff from a threshing-floor. |  |
|  |  |
| He goes on Sunday to the church, | *25* |
| And sits among his boys; |  |
| He hears the parson pray and preach, |  |
| He hears his daughter's voice, |  |
| Singing in the village choir, |  |
| And it makes his heart rejoice. | *30* |
|  |  |
| It sounds to him like her mother's voice, |  |
| Singing in Paradise! |  |
| He needs must think of her once more, |  |
| How in the grave she lies; |  |
| And with his hard, rough hand he wipes | *35* |
| A tear out of his eyes. |  |
|  |  |
| Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing, |  |
| Onward through life he goes; |  |
| Each morning sees some task begin, |  |
| Each evening sees it close; | *40* |
| Something attempted, something done, |  |
| Has earned a night's repose. |  |
|  |  |
| Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend, |  |
| For the lesson thou hast taught! |  |
| Thus at the flaming forge of life | *45* |
| Our fortunes must be wrought; |  |
| Thus on its sounding anvil shaped |  |
| Each burning deed and thought! |  |

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Jabberwocky

BY [LEWIS CARROLL](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/lewis-carroll)

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

      Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the borogoves,

      And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!

      The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!

Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun

      The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;

      Long time the manxome foe he sought—

So rested he by the Tumtum tree

      And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,

      The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,

Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,

      And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through

      The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!

He left it dead, and with its head

      He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?

      Come to my arms, my beamish boy!

O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”

      He chortled in his joy.

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

      Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the borogoves,

      And the mome raths outgrabe.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

BY [ROBERT FROST](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/robert-frost)

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound’s the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

# Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud

BY [JOHN DONNE](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/john-donne)

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

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| Ralph Waldo Emerson. 1803–1882 |
|  |
| 672. **Brahma** |
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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| IF the red slayer think he slays, |  |
| Or if the slain think he is slain, |  |
| They know not well the subtle ways |  |
| I keep, and pass, and turn again. |  |
|  |  |
| Far or forgot to me is near; | *5* |
| Shadow and sunlight are the same; |  |
| The vanish'd gods to me appear; |  |
| And one to me are shame and fame. |  |
|  |  |
| They reckon ill who leave me out; |  |
| When me they fly, I am the wings; | *10* |
| I am the doubter and the doubt, |  |
| And I the hymn the Brahmin sings. |  |
|  |  |
| The strong gods pine for my abode, |  |
| And pine in vain the sacred Seven; |  |
| But thou, meek lover of the good! | *15* |
| Find me, and turn thy back on heaven. |  |

**Polonius:**  
This above all: to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell, my blessing season this in thee!

**Laertes:**  
Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

[*Hamlet Act 1, scene 3, 78–82*](http://www.enotes.com/hamlet-text/act-i-scene-iii#ham-1-3-82)

# Break, Break, Break

Lord Alfred Tennyson, 1809 - 1892

Break, break, break,

On thy cold gray stones, O sea!

And I would that my tongue could utter

The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman’s boy,

That he shouts with his sister at play!

O, well for the sailor lad,

That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on

To their haven under the hill;

But O for the touch of a vanished hand,

And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,

At the foot of thy crags, O sea!

But the tender grace of a day that is dead

Will never come back to me.

## Alfred Lord Tennyson

[**←**](http://www.sparknotes.com/poetry/tennyson/section8.rhtml)

“The Charge of the Light Brigade”

[**→**](http://www.sparknotes.com/poetry/tennyson/section10.rhtml)

#### Complete Text

*Half a league, half a league,   
Half a league onward,   
All in the valley of Death   
   Rode the six hundred.   
‘Forward, the Light Brigade!   
Charge for the guns!’ he said:   
Into the valley of Death   
   Rode the six hundred.   
‘Forward, the Light Brigade!’   
Was there a man dismay’d?  
Not tho’ the soldier knew   
   Someone had blunder’d:   
Their’s not to make reply,   
Their’s not to reason why,   
Their’s but to do and die:   
Into the valley of Death   
   Rode the six hundred.   
Cannon to right of them,   
Cannon to left of them,   
Cannon in front of them   
   Volley’d and thunder’d;  
  
Storm’d at with shot and shell,   
Boldly they rode and well,   
Into the jaws of Death,   
Into the mouth of Hell   
   Rode the six hundred.   
Flash’d all their sabres bare,   
Flash’d as they turn’d in air   
Sabring the gunners there,   
Charging an army, while   
   All the world wonder’d:   
Plunged in the battery-smoke   
Right thro’ the line they broke;   
Cossack and Russian   
Reel’d from the sabre-stroke   
Shatter’d and sunder’d.   
Then they rode back, but not   
   Not the six hundred.   
Cannon to right of them,   
Cannon to left of them,   
Cannon behind them   
   Volley’d and thunder’d;   
Storm’d at with shot and shell,   
While horse and hero fell,   
They that had fought so well   
Came thro’ the jaws of Death,   
Back from the mouth of Hell,   
All that was left of them,   
   Left of six hundred.   
When can their glory fade ?   
O the wild charge they made!   
   All the world wonder’d.   
Honour the charge they made!   
Honour the Light Brigade,   
   Noble six hundred!*