

The Home Book of Verse, Volume 3

Burton Egbert Stevenson

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The Home Book of Verse, Volume 3

by Burton Egbert Stevenson

Contents of Volume I of the two volume set are in our Volume 1
This includes contents of Volumes 1 through 4 of our Etext editions.

PART III

POEMS OF NATURE

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
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;
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 wreathed horn.

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

MOTHER NATURE

THE BOOK OF THE WORLD

Of this fair volume which we World do name,
If we the sheets and leaves could turn with care,
Of him who it corrects, and did it frame,
We clear might read the art and wisdom rare;
Find out his power which wildest powers doth tame,
His providence extending everywhere,
His justice which proud rebels doth not spare,
In every page, no, period of the same.
But silly we, like foolish children, rest
Well pleased with colored vellum, leaves of gold,
Fair dangling ribbons, leaving what is best,
On the great Writer's sense ne'er taking hold;
Or, if by chance we stay our minds on aught,
It is some picture on the margin wrought.

William Drummond [1585-1649]

NATURE

The bubbling brook doth leap when I come by,
Because my feet find measure with its call;
The birds know when the friend they love is nigh,
For I am known to them, both great and small.
The flower that on the lonely hillside grows
Expects me there when spring its bloom has given;
And many a tree and bush my wanderings knows,
And e'en the clouds and silent stars of heaven;
For he who with his Maker walks aright,
Shall be their lord as Adam was before;
His ear shall catch each sound with new delight,
Each object wear the dress that then it wore;
And he, as when erect in soul he stood,
Hear from his Father's lips that all is good.

Jones Very [1813-1880]

COMPENSATION

In that new world toward which our feet are set,
Shall we find aught to make our hearts forget
Earth's homely joys and her bright hours of bliss?
Has heaven a spell divine enough for this?
For who the pleasure of the spring shall tell
When on the leafless stalk the brown buds swell,
When the grass brightens and the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song?

O sweet the dropping eve, the blush of morn,
The starlit sky, the rustling fields of corn,
The soft airs blowing from the freshening seas,
The sunflecked shadow of the stately trees,
The mellow thunder and the lulling rain,
The warm, delicious, happy summer rain,
When the grass brightens and the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song!

O beauty manifold, from morn till night,
Dawn's flush, noon's blaze and sunset's tender light!
O fair, familiar features, changes sweet
Of her revolving seasons, storm and sleet
And golden calm, as slow she wheels through space,
From snow to roses, - and how dear her face,
When the grass brightens, when the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song!

O happy earth! O home so well beloved!
What recompense have we, from thee removed?
One hope we have that overtops the whole, -
The hope of finding every vanished soul,
We love and long for daily, and for this
Gladly we turn from thee, and all thy bliss,
Even at thy loveliest, when the days are long,
And little birds break out in rippling song.

Celia Thaxter [1835-1894]

THE LAST HOUR

O joys of love and joys of fame,
It is not you I shall regret;
I sadden lest I should forget
The beauty woven in earth's name:

The shout and battle of the gale,
The stillness of the sun-rising,
The sound of some deep hidden spring,
The glad sob of the filling sail,

The first green ripple of the wheat,
The rain-song of the lifted leaves,
The waking birds beneath the eaves,
The voices of the summer heat.

Ethel Clifford [18 -

NATURE

O Nature! I do not aspire
To be the highest in thy choir, -
To be a meteor in thy sky,
Or comet that may range on high;
Only a zephyr that may blow
Among the reeds by the river low;

Give me thy most privy place
Where to run my airy race.

In some withdrawn, unpublic mead
Let me sigh upon a reed,
Or in the woods, with leafy din,
Whisper the still evening in:
Some still work give me to do, -
Only - be it near to you!

For I'd rather be thy child
And pupil, in the forest wild,
Than be the king of men elsewhere,
And most sovereign slave of care;
To have one moment of thy dawn,
Than share the city's year forlorn.

Henry David Thoreau [1817-1862]

SONG OF NATURE

Mine are the night and morning,
The pits of air, the gull of space,
The sportive sun, the gibbous moon,
The innumerable days.

I hide in the solar glory,
I am dumb in the pealing song,
I rest on the pitch of the torrent,
In slumber I am strong.

No numbers have counted my tallies,
No tribes my house can fill,
I sit by the shining Fount of Life
And pour the deluge still;

And ever by delicate powers
Gathering along the centuries
From race on race the rarest flowers,
My wreath shall nothing miss.

And many a thousand summers
My gardens ripened well,
And light from meliorating stars
With firmer glory fell.

I wrote the past in characters
Of rock and fire the scroll,
The building in the coral sea,
The planting of the coal.

And thefts from satellites and rings
And broken stars I drew,
And out of spent and aged things
I formed the world anew;

What time the gods kept carnival,

Tricked out in star and flower,
And in cramp elf and saurian forms
They swathed their too much power.

Time and Thought were my surveyors,
They laid their courses well,
They boiled the sea, and piled the layers
Of granite, marl and shell.

But he, the man-child glorious, -
Where tarries he the while?
The rainbow shines his harbinger,
The sunset gleams his smile.

My boreal lights leap upward,
Forthright my planets roll,
And still the man-child is not born,
The summit of the whole.

Must time and tide forever run?
Will never my winds go sleep in the west?
Will never my wheels which whirl the sun
And satellites have rest?

Too much of donning and doffing,
Too slow the rainbow fades,
I weary of my robe of snow,
My leaves and my cascades;

I tire of globes and races,
Too long the game is played;
What without him is summer's pomp,
Or winter's frozen shade?

I travail in pain for him,
My creatures travail and wait;
His couriers come by squadrons,
He comes not to the gate.

Twice I have moulded an image,
And thrice outstretched my hand,
Made one of day and one of night
And one of the salt sea-sand.

One in a Judaeen manger,
And one by Avon stream,
One over against the mouths of Nile,
And one in the Academe.

I moulded kings and saviors,
And bards o'er kings to rule; -
But fell the starry influence short,
The cup was never full.

Yet whirl the glowing wheels once more,
And mix the bowl again;
Seethe, Fate! the ancient elements,
Heat, cold, wet, dry, and peace, and pain.

Let war and trade and creeds and song
Blend, ripen race on race,
The sunburnt world a man shall breed
Of all the zones and countless days.

No ray is dimmed, no atom worn,
My oldest force is good as new,
And the fresh rose on yonder thorn
Gives back the bending heavens in dew.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

"GREAT NATURE IS AN ARMY GAY"

Great nature is an army gay,
Resistless marching on its way;
I hear the bugles clear and sweet,
I hear the tread of million feet.
Across the plain I see it pour;
It tramples down the waving grass;
Within the echoing mountain-pass
I hear a thousand cannon roar.
It swarms within my garden gate;
My deepest well it drinketh dry.
It doth not rest; it doth not wait;
By night and day it sweepeth by;
Ceaseless it marcheth by my door;
It heeds me not, though I implore.
I know not whence it comes, nor where
It goes. For me it doth not care -
Whether I starve, or eat, or sleep,
Or live, or die, or sing, or weep.
And now the banners all are bright,
Now torn and blackened by the fight.
Sometimes its laughter shakes the sky,
Sometimes the groans of those who die.
Still through the night and through the livelong day
The infinite army marches on its remorseless way.

Richard Watson Gilder [1844-1909]

TO MOTHER NATURE

Nature, in thy largess, grant
I may be thy confidant!
Taste who will life's roadside cheer
(Though my heart doth hold it dear -
Song and wine and trees and grass,
All the joys that flash and pass),
I must put within my prayer
Gifts more intimate and rare.
Show me how dry branches throw
Such blue shadows on the snow, -
Tell me how the wind can fare
On his unseen feet of air, -

Show me how the spider's loom
Weaves the fabric from her womb, -
Lead me to those brooks of morn
Where a woman's laugh is born, -
Let me taste the sap that flows
Through the blushes of a rose,
Yea, and drain the blood which runs
From the heart of dying suns, -
Teach me how the butterfly
Guessed at immortality, -
Let me follow up the track
Of Love's deathless Zodiac
Where Joy climbs among the spheres
Circled by her moon of tears, -
Tell me how, when I forget
All the schools have taught me, yet
I recall each trivial thing
In a golden far off Spring, -
Give me whispered hints how I
May instruct my heart to fly
Where the baffling Vision gleams
Till I overtake my dreams,
And the impossible be done
When the Wish and Deed grow one!

Frederic Lawrence Knowles [1869-1905]

QUIET WORK

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity -
Of toil unsevered from tranquillity;
Of labor, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil;
Laborers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

Matthew Arnold [1822-1888]

NATURE

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,

Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

"AS AN OLD MERCER"

As an old mercer in some sleepy town
Swings wide his windows new day after day,
Sets all his wares around in arch array
To please the taste of passers up and down, -
His hoard of handy things of trite renown,
Of sweets and spices and of faint perfumes,
Of silks and prints, - and at the last illumines
His tiny panes to foil the evening's frown;
So Nature spreads her proffered treasures: such
As daily dazzle at the morning's rise, -
Fair show of isle and ocean merchandise,
And airy offerings filmy to the touch;
Then, lest we like not these, in Dark's bazaars
She nightly tempts us with her store of stars.

Mahlon Leonard Fisher [1874-

GOOD COMPANY

To-day I have grown taller from walking with the trees,
The seven sister-poplars who go softly in a line;
And I think my heart is whiter for its parley with a star
That trembled out at nightfall and hung above the pine.
The call-note of a redbird from the cedars in the dusk
Woke his happy mate within me to an answer free and fine;
And a sudden angel beckoned from a column of blue smoke -
Lord, who am I that they should stoop - these holy folk of thine?

Karle Wilson Baker [1878-

"HERE IS THE PLACE WHERE LOVELINESS KEEPS HOUSE"

Here is the place where Loveliness keeps house,
Between the river and the wooded hills,
Within a valley where the Springtime spills
Her firstling wind-flowers under blossoming boughs:
Where Summer sits braiding her warm, white brows
With bramble-roses; and where Autumn fills
Her lap with asters; and old Winter frills
With crimson haw and hip his snowy blouse.
Here you may meet with Beauty. Here she sits
Gazing upon the moon, or all the day
Tuning a wood-thrush flute, remote, unseen;

Or when the storm is out, 'tis she who flits
From rock to rock, a form of flying spray,
Shouting, beneath the leaves' tumultuous green.

Madison Cawein [1865-1914]

GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide gray skies!
Thy mists, that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with color! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, world, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all
But never knew I this.
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me - let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

Edna St. Vincent Millay [1892-

WILD HONEY

Where hints of racy sap and gum
Out of the old dark forest come;
Where birds their beaks like hammers wield,
And pith is pierced and bark is peeled;
Where the green walnut's outer rind
Gives precious bitterness to the wind;
There lurks the sweet creative power,
As lurks the honey in the flower.
In winter's bud that bursts in spring,
In nut of autumn's ripening,
In acrid bulb beneath the mold,
Sleeps the elixir, strong and old,
That Rosicrucians sought in vain, -
Life that renews itself again!
What bottled perfume is so good
As fragrance of split tulip-wood?
What fabled drink of god or muse
Was rich as purple mulberry juice?
And what school-polished gem of thought
Is like the rune from Nature caught?
He is a poet strong and true
Who loves wild thyme and honey-dew;
And like a brown bee works and sings
With morning freshness on his wings,
And a golden burden on his thighs, -
The pollen-dust of centuries!

Maurice Thompson [1844-1901]

PATMOS

All around him Patmos lies,
Who hath spirit-gifted eyes,
Who his happy sight can suit
To the great and the minute.
Doubt not but he holds in view
A new earth and heaven new;
Doubt not but his ear doth catch
Strain nor voice nor reed can match:
Many a silver, sphery note
Shall within his hearing float.
All around him Patmos lies,
Who unto God's priestess flies:
Thou, O Nature, bid him see,
Through all guises worn by thee,
A divine apocalypse.
Manifold his fellowships:
Now the rocks their archives ope;
Voiceless creatures tell their hope
In a language symbol-wrought;
Groves to him sigh out their thought;
Musings of the flower and grass
Through his quiet spirit pass.
'Twixt new earth and heaven new
He hath traced and holds the clue,
Number his delights ye may not;
Fleets the year but these decay not.
Now the freshets of the rain,
Bounding on from hill to plain,
Show him earthly streams have rise
In the bosom of the skies.
Now he feels the morning thrill,
As upmounts, unseen and still,
Dew the wing of evening drops.
Now the frost, that meets and stops
Summer's feet in tender sward,
Greets him, breathing heavenward.
Hieroglyphics writes the snow,
Through the silence falling slow;
Types of star and petaled bloom
A white missal-page illumine.
By these floating symbols fine,
Heaven-truth shall be divine.

All around him Patmos lies,
Who hath spirit-gifted eyes;
He need not afar remove,
He need not the times reprove,
Who would hold perpetual lease
Of an isle in seas of peace.

Edith M. Thomas [1854-1925]

DAWN AND DARK

SONG

Phoebus, arise,
And paint the sable skies
With azure, white, and red:
Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed,
That she thy career may with roses spread:
The nightingales thy coming each where sing,
Make an eternal Spring!
Give life to this dark world which lieth dead;
Spread forth thy golden hair
In larger locks than thou wast wont before,
And, emperor-like, decore
With diadem of pearl thy temples fair:
Chase hence the ugly night,
Which serves but to make dear thy glorious light.

This is that happy morn,
That day, long-wished day,
Of all my life so dark,
(If cruel stars have not my ruin sworn,
And fates not hope betray,)
Which, only white, deserves
A diamond for ever should it mark.
This is the morn should bring unto this grove
My Love, to hear and recompense my love.
Fair king, who all preserves,
But show thy blushing beams,
And thou two sweeter eyes
Shalt see, than those which by Peneus' streams
Did once thy heart surprise.
Nay, suns, which shine as clear
As thou, when two thou didst to Rome appear.
Now, Flora, deck thyself in fairest guise:
If that ye, winds, would hear
A voice surpassing far Amphion's lyre,
Your stormy chiding stay;
Let Zephyr only breathe,
And with her tresses play,
Kissing sometimes these purple ports of death.
- The winds all silent are,
And Phoebus in his chair
Ensafroning sea and air,
Makes vanish every star:
Night like a drunkard reels
Beyond the hills, to shun his flaming wheels;
The fields with flowers are decked in every hue,
The clouds bespangle with bright gold their blue:

Here is the pleasant place,
And everything save her, who all should grace.

William Drummond [1585-1649]

HYMN OF APOLLO

The sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries,
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes, -
Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green Earth to my embraces bare.

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
All men who do or even imagine ill
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of Night.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows, and the flowers,
With their ethereal colors; the Moon's globe,
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers,
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine,
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven;
Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;
For grief that I depart they weep and frown:
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle?

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself, and knows it is divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine, is mine,
All light of art or nature; - to my song
Victory and praise in its own right belong.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

PRELUDE

From "The New Day"

The night was dark, though sometimes a faint star
A little while a little space made bright.

The night was dark and still the dawn seemed far,
When, o'er the muttering and invisible sea,
Slowly, within the East, there grew a light
Which half was starlight, and half seemed to be
The herald of a greater. The pale white
Turned slowly to pale rose, and up the height
Of heaven slowly climbed. The gray sea grew
Rose-colored like the sky. A white gull flew
Straight toward the utmost boundary of the East
Where slowly the rose gathered and increased.
There was light now, where all was black before:
It was as on the opening of a door
By one who in his hand a lamp doth hold
(Its flame being hidden by the garment's fold), -
The still air moves, the wide room is less dim.
More bright the East became, the ocean turned
Dark and more dark against the brightening sky -
Sharper against the sky the long sea line.
The hollows of the breakers on the shore
Were green like leaves whereon no sun doth shine,
Though sunlight make the outer branches hoar.
From rose to red the level heaven burned;
Then sudden, as if a sword fell from on high,
A blade of gold flashed on the ocean's rim.

Richard Watson Gilder [1844-1909]

DAWN ON THE HEADLAND

Dawn - and a magical stillness: on earth, quiescence profound;
On the waters a vast Content, as of hunger appeased and stayed;
In the heavens a silence that seems not mere privation of sound,
But a thing with form and body, a thing to be touched and weighed!
Yet I know that I dwell in the midst of the roar of the cosmic wheel,
In the hot collision of Forces, and clangor of boundless Strife,
Mid the sound of the speed of the worlds, the rushing worlds, and the peal
Of the thunder of Life.

William Watson [1858-1935]

THE MIRACLE OF THE DAWN

What would it mean for you and me
If dawn should come no more!
Think of its gold along the sea,
Its rose above the shore!
That rose of awful mystery,
Our souls bow down before.

What wonder that the Inca kneeled,
The Aztec prayed and pled
And sacrificed to it, and sealed, -
With rites that long are dead, -
The marvels that it once revealed
To them it comforted.

What wonder, yea! what awe, behold!
What rapture and what tears
Were ours, if wild its rivered gold, -
That now each day appears, -
Burst on the world, in darkness rolled,
Once every thousand years!

Think what it means to me and you
To see it even as God
Evolved it when the world was new!
When Light rose, earthquake-shod,
And slow its gradual splendor grew
O'er deeps the whirlwind trod.

What shoutings then and cymballings
Arose from depth and height!
What worship-solemn trumpetings,
And thunders, burning-white,
Of winds and waves, and anthemings
Of Earth received the Light.

Think what it meant to see the dawn!
The dawn, that comes each day! -
What if the East should ne'er grow wan,
Should nevermore grow gray!
That line of rose no more be drawn
Above the ocean's spray!

Madison Cawein [1865-1914]

DAWN-ANGELS

All night I watched awake for morning,
At last the East grew all a flame,
The birds for welcome sang, or warning,
And with their singing morning came.

Along the gold-green heavens drifted
Pale wandering souls that shun the light,
Whose cloudy pinions, torn and rifted,
Had beat the bars of Heaven all night.

These clustered round the moon, but higher
A troop of shining spirits went,
Who were not made of wind or fire,
But some divine dream-element.

Some held the Light, while those remaining
Shook out their harvest-colored wings,
A faint unusual music raining,
(Whose sound was Light) on earthly things.

They sang, and as a mighty river
Their voices washed the night away,
From East to West ran one white shiver,
And waxen strong their song was Day.

A. Mary F. Robinson [1857-

MUSIC OF THE DAWN
At Sea, October 23, 1907

In far forests' leafy twilight, now is stealing gray dawn's shy light,
And the misty air is tremulous with songs of many a bird;
While from mountain steeps descending, every streamlet's voice is blending
With the anthems of great pine trees, by the breath of daylight stirred.

But I turn from Fancy's dreaming of the green earth, to the gleaming
Of the fluttering wings of morning rushing o'er the jewelled deep;
And the ocean's rhythmic pounding, with each lucent wave resounding,
Seems the music made when God's own hands His mighty harpstrings sweep.

Virginia Bioren Harrison [1847-

SUNRISE ON MANSFIELD MOUNTAIN

O swift forerunners, rosy with the race!
Spirits of dawn, divinely manifest
Behind your blushing banners in the sky,
Daring invaders of Night's tenting-ground, -
How do ye strain on forward-bending foot,
Each to be first in heralding of joy!
With silence sandalled, so they weave their way,
And so they stand, with silence panoplied,
Chanting, through mystic symbolings of flame,
Their solemn invocation to the light.

O changeless guardians! O ye wizard firs!
What strenuous philter feeds your potency,
That thus ye rest, in sweet wood-hardiness.
Ready to learn of all and utter naught?
What breath may move ye, or what breeze invite
To odorous hot lendings of the heart?
What wind - but all the winds are yet afar,
And e'en the little tricky zephyr sprites,
That fleet before them, like their elfin locks,
Have lagged in sleep, nor stir nor waken yet
To pluck the robe of patient majesty.

Too still for dreaming, too divine for sleep,
So range the firs, the constant, fearless ones.
Warders of mountain secrets, there they wait,
Each with his cloak about him, breathless, calm,
And yet expectant, as who knows the dawn,
And all night thrills with memory and desire,
Searching in what has been for what shall be:
The marvel of the ne'er familiar day,
Sacred investiture of life renewed,
The chrism of dew, the coronal of flame.

Low in the valley lies the conquered rout
Of man's poor trivial turmoil, lost and drowned
Under the mist, in gleaming rivers rolled,

Where oozy marsh contends with frothing main.
And rounding all, springs one full, ambient arch,
One great good limpid world - so still, so still!
For no sound echoes from its crystal curve
Save four clear notes, the song of that lone bird
Who, brave but trembling, tries his morning hymn,
And has no heart to finish, for the awe
And wonder of this pearling globe of dawn.

Light, light eternal! veiling-place of stars!
Light, the revealer of dread beauty's face!
Weaving whereof the hills are lambent clad!
Mighty libation to the Unknown God!
Cup whereat pine-trees slake their giant thirst
And little leaves drink sweet delirium!
Being and breath and potion! Living soul
And all-informing heart of all that lives!
How can we magnify thine awful name
Save by its chanting: Light! and light! and light!
An exhalation from far sky retreats,
It grows in silence, as 'twere self-create,
Suffusing all the dusky web of night.
But one lone corner it invades not yet,
Where low above a black and rimy crag
Hangs the old moon, thin as a battered shield,
The holy, useless shield of long-past wars,
Dinted and frosty, on the crystal dark.
But lo! the east, - let none forget the east,
Pathway ordained of old where He should tread.
Through some sweet magic common in the skies
The rosy banners are with saffron tinct:
The saffron grows to gold, the gold is fire,
And led by silence more majestic
Than clash of conquering arms, He comes! He comes!
He holds his spear benignant, sceptrewise,
And strikes out flame from the adoring hills.

Alice Brown [1857-

ODE TO EVENING

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales;

O Nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises, 'midst the twilight path

Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and Elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car:

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,
Or upland fallows gray
Reflect its last cool gleam.

Or, if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
That, from the mountain's side,
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as of the wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While fallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes:

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

William Collins [1721-1759]

"IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE"

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in his tranquility;

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea;
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder - everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

GLOAMING

Skies to the West are stained with madder;
Amber light on the rare blue hills;
The sigh of the pines is growing sadder;
From the meadow-lands sound the whippoorwills.
Air is sweet with the breath of clover;
Dusk is on, and the day is over.

Skies to the East are streaked with golden;
Tremulous light on the darkening pond;
Glow-worms pale, to the dark beholden;
Twitterings hush in the hedge beyond.
Air is sweet with the breath of clover;
Silver the hills where the moon climbs over.

Robert Adger Bowen [1868-

EVENING MELODY

O that the pines which crown yon steep
Their fires might ne'er surrender!
O that yon fervid knoll might keep,
While lasts the world, its splendor!

Pale poplars on the breeze that lean,
And in the sunset shiver,
O that your golden stems might screen
For aye yon glassy river!

That yon white bird on homeward wing
Soft-sliding without motion,
And now in blue air vanishing
Like snow-flake lost in ocean,

Beyond our sight might never flee,
Yet forward still be flying;
And all the dying day might be
Immortal in its dying!

Pellucid thus in saintly trance,
Thus mute in expectation,
What waits the earth? Deliverance?

Ah no! Transfiguration!

She dreams of that "New Earth" divine,
Conceived of seed immortal;
She sings "Not mine the holier shrine,
Yet mine the steps and portal!"

Aubrey Thomas de Vere [1814-1902]

"IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING"

In the cool of the evening, when the low sweet whispers waken,
When the laborers turn them homeward, and the weary have their will,
When the censers of the roses o'er the forest aisles are shaken,
Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far green hill?

For they say 'tis but the sunset winds that wander through the heather,
Rustle all the meadow-grass and bend the dewy fern;
They say 'tis but the winds that bow the reeds in prayer together,
And fill the shaken pools with fire along the shadowy burn.

In the beauty of the twilight, in the Garden that He loveth,
They have veiled His lovely vesture with the darkness of a name!
Through His Garden, through His Garden, it is but the wind that moveth,
No more! But O the miracle, the miracle is the same.

In the cool of the evening, when the sky is an old story,
Slowly dying, but remembered, ay, and loved with passion still . . .
Hush! . . . the fringes of His garment, in the fading golden glory
Softly rustling as He cometh o'er the far green hill.

Alfred Noyes [1880-

TWILIGHT

Spirit of Twilight, through your folded wings
I catch a glimpse of your averted face,
And rapturous on a sudden, my soul sings
"Is not this common earth a holy place?"

Spirit of Twilight, you are like a song
That sleeps, and waits a singer, - like a hymn
That God finds lovely and keeps near Him long,
Till it is choired by aureoled cherubim.

Spirit of Twilight, in the golden gloom
Of dreamland dim I sought you, and I found
A woman sitting in a silent room
Full of white flowers that moved and made no sound.

These white flowers were the thoughts you bring to all,
And the room's name is Mystery where you sit,
Woman whom we call Twilight, when night's pall
You lift across our Earth to cover it.

Olive Custance [1874-

TWILIGHT AT SEA

The twilight hours, like birds, flew by,
As lightly and as free,
Ten thousand stars were in the sky,
Ten thousand on the sea;
For every wave, with dimpled face,
That leaped upon the air,
Had caught a star in its embrace,
And held it trembling there.

Amelia C. Welby [1819-1852]

"THIS IS MY HOUR"

I

The ferries ply like shuttles in a loom,
And many barques come in across the bay
To lights and bells that signal through the gloom
Of twilight gray;

And like the brown soft flutter of the snow
The wide-winged sea-birds droop from closing skies,
And hover near the water, circling low,
As the day dies.

The city like a shadowed castle stands,
Its turrets indistinctly touching night;
Like earth-born stars far fetched from faerie lands,
Its lamps are bright.

This is my hour, - when wonder springs anew
To see the towers ascending, pale and high,
And the long seaward distances of blue,
And the dim sky.

II

This is my hour, between the day and night;
The sun has set and all the world is still,
The afterglow upon the distant hill
Is as a holy light.

This is my hour, between the sun and moon;
The little stars are gathering in the sky,
There is no sound but one bird's startled cry, -
One note that ceases soon.

The gardens and, far off, the meadow-land,
Are like the fading depths beneath a sea,
While over waves of misty shadows we
Drift onward, hand in hand.

This is my hour, that you have called your own;
Its hushed beauty silently we share, -
Touched by the wistful wonder in the air

That leaves us so alone.

III

In rain and twilight mist the city street,
Hushed and half-hidden, might this instant be
A dark canal beneath our balcony,
Like one in Venice, Sweet.

The street-lights blossom, star-wise, one by one;
A lofty tower the shadows have not hid
Stands out - part column and part pyramid -
Holy to look upon.

The dusk grows deeper, and on silver wings
The twilight flutters like a weary gull
Toward some sea-island, lost and beautiful,
Where a sea-siren sings.

"This is my hour," you breathe with quiet lips;
And filled with beauty, dreaming and devout,
We sit in silence, while our thoughts go out -
Like treasure-seeking ships.

Zoe Akins [1886-

SONG TO THE EVENING STAR

Star that bringest home the bee,
And sett'st the weary laborer free!
If any star shed peace, 'tis thou
That send'st it from above,
Appearing when Heaven's breath and brow
Are sweet as hers we love.

Come to the luxuriant skies,
Whilst the landscape's odors rise,
Whilst far-off lowing herds are heard
And songs when toil is done,
From cottages whose smoke unstirred
Curls yellow in the sun.

Star of love's soft interviews,
Parted lovers on thee muse;
Their remembrancer in Heaven
Of thrilling vows thou art,
Too delicious to be riven
By absence from the heart.

Thomas Campbell [1777-1844]

THE EVENING CLOUD

A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun,
A gleam of crimson tinged its braided snow;
Long had I watched the glory moving on
O'er the still radiance of the lake below.

Tranquil its spirit seemed, and floated slow!
Even in its very motion there was rest;
While every breath of eve that chanced to blow
Wafted the traveller to the beauteous west.
Emblem, methought, of the departed soul!
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given,
And by the breath of mercy made to roll
Right onwards to the golden gates of heaven,
Where to the eye of faith it peaceful lies,
And tells to man his glorious destinies.

John Wilson [1785-1854]

SONG: TO CYNTHIA
From "Cynthia's Revels"

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear, when day did close:
Bless us then with wished sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright.

Ben Jonson [1573?-1637]

MY STAR

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue,
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

NIGHT

The sun descending in the West,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have ta'en delight;
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright:
Unseen, they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
On each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.
But, if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold:
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold,
Saying: "Wrath by His meekness,
And by His health, sickness,
Are driven away
From our immortal day.

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep.
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep.
For, washed in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold,
As I guard o'er the fold."

William Blake [1757-1827]

TO NIGHT

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand -
Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
"Would'st thou me?"
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
"Shall I nestle near thy side?
Would'st thou me?" - And I replied,
"No, not thee."
Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon -
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night -
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

TO NIGHT

Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath the curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! creation widened on man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed

Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
While fly, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind!
Why do we, then, shun Death with anxious strife? -
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?

Joseph Blanco White [1775-1841]

NIGHT

Mysterious night! Spread wide thy silvery plume!
Soft as swan's down, brood o'er the sapphirine
Breadth of still shadowy waters dark as wine;
Smooth out the liquid heavens that stars illumine!
Come with fresh airs breathing the faint perfume
Of deep-walled gardens, groves of whispering pine;
Scatter soft dews, waft pure sea-scent of brine;
In sweet repose man's pain, man's love resume!
Deep-bosomed night! Not here where down the marge
Marble with palaces those lamps of earth
Tremble on trembling blackness; nay, far hence,
There on the lake where space is lone and large,
And man's life lost in broad indifference,
Lilt thou the soul to spheres that gave her birth!

John Addington Symonds [1840-1893]

NIGHT

Night is the time for rest;
How sweet, when labors close,
To gather round an aching breast
The curtain of repose,
Stretch the tired limbs, and lay the head
Down on our own delightful bed!

Night is the time for dreams;
The gay romance of life,
When truth that is, and truth that seems,
Blend in fantastic strife;
Ah! visions, less beguiling far
Than waking dreams by daylight are!

Night is the time for toil;
To plough the classic field,
Intent to find the buried spoil
Its wealthy furrows yield;
Till all is ours that sages taught,
That poets sang, or heroes wrought.

Night is the time to weep;
To wet with unseen tears
Those graves of Memory, where sleep
The joys of other years;
Hopes, that were Angels at their birth,
But perished young, like things of earth.

Night is the time to watch;
O'er ocean's dark expanse,
To hail the Pleiades, or catch
The full moon's earliest glance,
That brings into the homesick mind
All we have loved and left behind.

Night is the time for care;
Brooding on hours misspent,
To see the spectre of Despair
Come to our lonely tent;
Like Brutus, 'midst his slumbering host,
Summoned to die by Caesar's ghost.

Night is the time to think;
When, from the eye, the soul
Takes flight; and, on the utmost brink,
Of yonder starry pole
Descries beyond the abyss of night
The dawn of uncreated light.

Night is the time to pray;
Our Saviour oft withdrew
To desert mountains far away;
So will his followers do, -
Steal from the throng to haunts untrod,
And hold communion there with God.

Night is the time for Death;
When all around is peace,
Calmly to yield the weary breath,
From sin and suffering cease,
Think of heaven's bliss, and give the sign
To parting friends; - such death be mine!

James Montgomery [1771-1854]

HE MADE THE NIGHT

Vast Chaos, of old, was God's dominion,
'Twas His beloved child, His own first born;
And He was aged ere the thought of morn
Shook the sheer steep of dim Oblivion.
Then all the works of darkness being done
Through countless aeons hopelessly forlorn,
Out to the very utmost verge and bourne,
God at the last, reluctant, made the sun.
He loved His darkness still, for it was old;
He grieved to see His eldest child take flight;
And when His Fiat Lux the death-knell tolled,
As the doomed Darkness backward by Him rolled,
He snatched a remnant flying into light
And strewed it with the stars, and called it Night.

Lloyd Mifflin [1846-1921]

HYMN TO THE NIGHT

I heard the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there, -
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

NIGHT'S MARDI GRAS

Night is the true democracy. When day
Like some great monarch with his train has passed.
In regal pomp and splendor to the last,
The stars troop forth along the Milky Way,
A jostling crowd, in radiant disarray,
On heaven's broad boulevard in pageants vast.
And things of earth, the hunted and outcast,
Come from their haunts and hiding-places; yea,
Even from the nooks and crannies of the mind
Visions uncouth and vagrant fancies start,
And specters of dead joy, that shun the light,
And impotent regrets and terrors blind,
Each one, in form grotesque, playing its part
In the fantastic Mardi Gras of Night.

Edward J. Wheeler [1859-1922]

DAWN AND DARK

God with His million cares
Went to the left or right,
Leaving our world; and the day
Grew night.

Back from a sphere He came
Over a starry lawn,
Looked at our world; and the dark
Grew dawn.

Norman Gale [1862-

DAWN

His radiant fingers so adorning
Earth that in silent joy she thrills,
The ancient day stands every morning
Above the flowing eastern hills.

This day the new-born world hath taken
Within his mantling arms of white,
And sent her forth by fear unshaken
To walk among the stars in light.

Risen with laughter unto leaping,
His feet untired, undimmed his eyes,
The old, old day comes up from sleeping,
Fresh as a flower, for new emprise.

The curtain of the night is parted
That once again the dawn may tread,
In spotless garments, ways uncharted
And death a million times is dead.

Slow speechless music robed in splendor
The deep sky sings eternally,
With childlike wonderment to render
Its own unwearied symphony.

Reborn between the great suns spinning
Forever where men's prayers ascend,
God's day in love hath its beginning,
And the beginning hath no end.

George B. Logan, Jr. [1892-

A WOOD SONG

Now one and all, you Roses,
Wake up, you lie too long!
This very morning closes
The Nightingale his song;

Each from its olive chamber
His babies every one
This very morning clamber

Into the shining sun.

You Slug-a-beds and Simples,
Why will you so delay!
Dears, doff your olive wimples,
And listen while you may.

Ralph Hodgson [1871-

THE CHANGING YEAR

A SONG FOR THE SEASONS

When the merry lark doth gild
With his song the summer hours,
And their nests the swallows build
In the roofs and tops of towers,
And the golden broom-flower burns
All about the waste,
And the maiden May returns
With a pretty haste, -
Then, how merry are the times!
The Spring times! the Summer times!

Now, from off the ashy stone
The chilly midnight cricket crieth,
And all merry birds are flown,
And our dream of pleasure dieth;
Now the once blue, laughing sky
Saddens into gray,
And the frozen rivers sigh,
Pining all away!
Now, how solemn are the times!
The Winter times! the Night times!

Yet, be merry; all around
Is through one vast change revolving;
Even Night, who lately frowned,
Is in paler dawn dissolving;
Earth will burst her fetters strange,
And in Spring grow free;
All things in the world will change,
Save - my love for thee!
Sing then, hopeful are all times!
Winter, Spring, Summer times!

Bryan Waller Procter [1787-1874]

A SONG OF THE SEASONS

Sing a song of Spring-time,
The world is going round,
Blown by the south wind:
Listen to its sound.
"Gurgle" goes the mill-wheel,
"Cluck" clucks the hen;
And it's O for a pretty girl
To kiss in the glen.

Sing a song of Summer,
The world is nearly still,
The mill-pond has gone to sleep,
And so has the mill.
Shall we go a-sailing,
Or shall we take a ride,
Or dream the afternoon away
Here, side by side?

Sing a song of Autumn,
The world is going back;
They glean in the corn-field,
And stamp on the stack.
Our boy, Charlie,
Tall, strong, and light:
He shoots all the day
And dances all the night.

Sing a song of Winter,
The world stops dead;
Under snowy coverlid
Flowers lie abed.
There's hunting for the young ones
And wine for the old,
And a sexton in the churchyard
Digging in the cold.

Cosmo Monkhouse [1840-1901]

TURN O' THE YEAR

This is the time when bit by bit
The days begin to lengthen sweet
And every minute gained is joy -
And love stirs in the heart of a boy.

This is the time the sun, of late
Content to lie abed till eight,
Lifts up betimes his sleepy head -
And love stirs in the heart of a maid.

This is the time we dock the night
Of a whole hour of candlelight;
When song of linnet and thrush is heard -

And love stirs in the heart of a bird.

This is the time when sword-blades green,
With gold and purple damascene,
Pierce the brown crocus-bed a-row -
And love stirs in a heart I know.

Katherine Tynan Hinkson [1861-1931]

THE WAKING YEAR

A lady red upon the hill
Her annual secret keeps;
A lady white within the field
In placid lily sleeps!

The tidy breezes with their brooms
Sweep vale, and hill, and tree!
Prithee, my pretty housewives!
Who may expected be?

The neighbors do not yet suspect!
The woods exchange a smile, -
Orchard, and buttercup, and bird,
In such a little while!

And yet how still the landscape stands,
How nonchalant the wood,
As if the resurrection
Were nothing very odd!

Emily Dickinson [1830-1886]

SONG

From "Pippa Passes"

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His Heaven -
All's right with the world!

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

EARLY SPRING

Once more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plowed hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The thrushes too.

Opens a door in Heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
Flung through the woods,

The woods with living airs
How softly fanned,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

O, follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up,
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snow-drops, pure!

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Through some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell;
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell!

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirred,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts

Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

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

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

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

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

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

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

IN EARLY SPRING

O Spring, I know thee! Seek for sweet surprise
In the young children's eyes.
But I have learnt the years, and know the yet
Leaf-folded violet.
Mine ear, awake to silence, can foretell
The cuckoo's fitful bell.
I wander in a gray time that encloses
June and the wild hedge-roses.
A year's procession of the flowers doth pass
My feet, along the grass.
And all you sweet birds silent yet, I know
The notes that stir you so,
Your songs yet half devised in the dim dear
Beginnings of the year.
In these young days you meditate your part;
I have it all by heart.
I know the secrets of the seeds of flowers
Hidden and warm with showers,
And how, in kindling Spring, the cuckoo shall
Alter his interval.
But not a flower or song I ponder is
My own, but memory's.
I shall be silent in those days desired
Before a world inspired.
O dear brown birds, compose your old song-phrases,
Earth, thy familiar daisies.

The poet mused upon the dusky height,
Between two stars towards night,
His purpose in his heart. I watched, a space,
The meaning of his face:
There was the secret, fled from earth and skies,
Hid in his gray young eyes.
My heart and all the Summer wait his choice,
And wonder for his voice.
Who shall foretell his songs, and who aspire
But to divine his lyre?
Sweet earth, we know thy dimmest mysteries,
But he is lord of his.

Alice Meynell [1850-1922]

SPRING

From "Summer's Last Will and Testament"

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing -
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay -
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet -
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-too!
Spring, the sweet Spring!

Thomas Nashe [1567-1601]

A STARLING'S SPRING RONDEL

I clink my castanet
And beat my little drum;
For spring at last has come,
And on my parapet,
Of chestnut, gummy-wet,
Where bees begin to hum,
I clink my castanet,
And beat my little drum.

"Spring goes," you say, "suns set."
So be it! Why be glum?
Enough, the spring has come;
And without fear or fret
I clink my castanet,
And beat my little drum.

James Cousins [1873-

"WHEN DAFFODILS BEGIN TO PEER"
From "The Winter's Tale"

When daffodils begin to peer,
With heigh! the doxy, over the dale,
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,
With heigh! the sweet birds, O, how they sing!
Doth set my pugging tooth on edge;
For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.

The, lark, that tirra-lirra chants,
With heigh! with heigh! the thrush and the jay,
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,
While we lie tumbling in the hay.

William Shakespeare [1564-1616]

SPRING
From "In Memoriam"

LXXXIII
Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year, delaying long;
Thou doest expectant Nature wrong,
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the fox-glove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

CXV
Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail,
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too: and my regret
Become an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

"THE SPRING RETURNS"

The Spring returns! What matters then that War
On the horizon like a beacon burns,
That Death ascends, man's most desired star,
That Darkness is his hope? The Spring returns!
Triumphant through the wider-arched cope
She comes, she comes, unto her tyranny,
And at her coronation are set ope
The prisons of the mind, and man is free!
The beggar-garbed or over-bent with snows,
Each mortal, long defeated, disallowed,
Feeling her touch, grows stronger limbed, and knows
The purple on his shoulders and is proud.
The Spring returns! O madness beyond sense,
Breed in our bones thine own omnipotence!

Charles Leonard Moore [1854-

"WHEN THE HOUNDS OF SPRING" Chorus from "Atalanta in Calydon"

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 and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and 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 and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and 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 and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hooped 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 and 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.

Algernon Charles Swinburne [1837-1909]

SONG

Again rejoicing Nature sees
Her robe assume its vernal hues;
Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
All freshly steeped in morning dews.

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
In vain to me the violets spring;

In vain to me in glen or shaw,
The mavis and the lintwhite sing.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
Wi' joy the tentie seedsman stalks,
But life to me's a weary dream,
A dream of ane that never wauks.

The wanton coot the water skims,
Among the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
And everything is blest but I.

The shepherd steeks his faulding slap,
And owre the moorland whistles shrill;
Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step
I meet him on the dewy hill.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
Blithe waukens by the daisy's side,
And mounts and sings on flittering wings,
A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide.

Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree;
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
When Nature all is sad like me!

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

TO SPRING

O thou with dewy locks, who lookest down
Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell one another, and the listening
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth
And let thy holy feet visit our clime!

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumed garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls
Upon our lovesick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languished head,
Whose modest tresses are bound up for thee!

William Blake [1757-1827]

AN ODE ON THE SPRING

Lo! where the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring:
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool Zephyrs through the clear blue sky
Their gathered fragrance fling.

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

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

To Contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of Man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the Busy and the Gay
But flutter through life's little day,
In Fortune's varying colors dressed:
Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chilled by Age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

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

Thomas Gray [1716-1771]

SPRING

Spring, with that nameless pathos in the air
Which dwells with all things fair,
Spring, with her golden suns and silver rain,
Is with us once again.

Out in the lonely woods the jasmine burns
Its fragrant lamps, and turns
Into a royal court with green festoons
The banks of dark lagoons.

In the deep heart of every forest tree
The blood is all alee,
And there's a look about the leafless bowers
As if they dreamed of flowers.

Yet still on every side we trace the hand
Of Winter in the land,
Save where the maple reddens on the lawn,
Flushed by the season's dawn;

Or where, like those strange semblances we find
That age to childhood bind,
The elm puts on, as if in Nature's scorn,
The brown of Autumn corn.

As yet the turf is dark, although you know
That, not a span below,
A thousand germs are groping through the gloom,
And soon will burst their tomb.

Already, here and there, on frailest stems
Appear some azure gems,
Small as might deck, upon a gala day,
The forehead of a fay.

In gardens you may note amid the dearth,
The crocus breaking earth;
And near the snowdrop's tender white and green,
The violet in its screen.

But many gleams and shadows needs must pass
Along the budding grass,
And weeks go by, before the enamored South
Shall kiss the rose's mouth.

Still there's a sense of blossoms yet unborn
In the sweet airs of morn;
One almost looks to see the very street
Grow purple at his feet.

At times a fragrant breeze comes floating by,
And brings, you know not why,
A feeling as when eager crowds await
Before a palace gate

Some wondrous pageant; and you scarce would start,

If from a beech's heart
A blue-eyed Dryad, stepping forth, should say,
"Behold me! I am May!"

Henry Timrod [1829-1867]

THE MEADOWS IN SPRING

'Tis a dull sight
To see the year dying,
When winter winds
Set the yellow wood sighing:
Sighing, oh! sighing.

When such a time cometh,
I do retire
Into an old room
Beside a bright fire:
Oh, pile a bright fire!

And there I sit
Reading old things,
Of knights and lorn damsels,
While the wind sings -
Oh, drearily sings!

I never look out
Nor attend to the blast;
For all to be seen
Is the leaves falling fast:
Falling, falling!

But close at the hearth,
Like a cricket, sit I,
Reading of summer
And chivalry -
Gallant chivalry!

Then with an old friend
I talk of our youth!
How 'twas gladsome, but often
Foolish, forsooth:
But gladsome, gladsome!

Or to get merry
We sing some old rhyme,
That made the wood ring again
In summer time -
Sweet summer time!

Then go we to smoking,
Silent and snug:
Naught passes between us,
Save a brown jug -
Sometimes!

And sometimes a tear

Will rise in each eye,
Seeing the two old friends
So merrily -
So merrily!

And ere to bed
Go we, go we,
Down on the ashes
We kneel on the knee,
Praying together!

Thus, then, live I,
Till, 'mid all the gloom,
By heaven! the bold sun
Is with me in the room
Shining, shining!

Then the clouds part,
Swallows soaring between;
The spring is alive,
And the meadows are green!

I jump up, like mad,
Break the old pipe in twain,
And away to the meadows,
The meadows again!

Edward Fitzgerald [1809-1883]

THE SPRING

When wintry weather's all a-done,
An' brooks do sparkle in the zun,
An' naisy-builden rooks do vlee
Wi' sticks toward their elem tree;
When birds do zing, an' we can zee
Upon the boughs the buds o' spring, -
Then I'm as happy as a king,
A-vield wi' health an' zunsheen.

Vor then the cowl'sip's hangen flower
A-wetted in the zunny shower,
Do grow wi' vi'lets, sweet o' smell,
Beside the wood-screened graegle's bell;
Where drushes' aggs, wi' sky-blue shell,
Do lie in mossy nest among
The thorns, while they do zing their zong
At evenen in the zunsheen.

An' God do meake his win' to blow
An' rain to vall vor high an' low,
An' bid his mornen zun to rise
Vor all alike, an' groun' an' skies
Ha' colors vor the poor man's eyes:
An' in our trials He is near,
To hear our mwoan an' zee our tear,
An' turn our clouds to zunsheen.

An' many times when I do vind
Things all goo wrong, an' v'ok unkind,
To zee the happy veeden herds,
An' hear the zingen o' the birds,
Do soothe my sorrow mwore than words;
Vor I do zee that 'tis our sin
Do meake woone's soul so dark 'ithin,
When God would gi'e woone zunsheen.

William Barnes [1801-1886]

"WHEN SPRING COMES BACK TO ENGLAND"

When Spring comes back to England
And crowns her brows with May,
Round the merry moonlit world
She goes the greenwood way:
She throws a rose to Italy,
A fleur-de-lys to France;
But round her regal morris-ring
The seas of England dance.

When Spring comes back to England
And dons her robe of green,
There's many a nation garlanded
But England is the Queen;
She's Queen, she's Queen of all the world
Beneath the laughing sky,
For the nations go a-Maying
When they hear the New Year cry -

"Come over the water to England,
My old love, my new love,
Come over the water to England,
In showers of flowery rain;
Come over the water to England,
April, my true love;
And tell the heart of England
The Spring is here again!"

Alfred Noyes [1880-

NEW LIFE

Spring comes laughing down the valley
All in white, from the snow
Where the winter's armies rally
Loth to go.
Beauty white her garments shower
On the world where they pass, -
Hawthorn hedges, trees in flower,
Daisies in the grass.
Tremulous with longings dim,
Thickets by the river's rim
Have begun to dream of green.

Every tree is loud with birds.
Bourgeon, heart, - do thy part!
Raise a slender stalk of words
From a root unseen.

Amelia Josephine Burr [1878-

"OVER THE WINTRY THRESHOLD"

Over the wintry threshold
Who comes with joy today,
So frail, yet so enduring,
To triumph o'er dismay?

Ah, quick her tears are springing,
And quickly they are dried,
For sorrow walks before her,
But gladness walks beside.

She comes with gusts of laughter, -
The music as of rills;
With tenderness and sweetness,
The wisdom of the hills.

Her hands are strong to comfort,
Her heart is quick to heed;
She knows the signs of sadness,
She knows the voice of need;

There is no living creature,
However poor or small,
But she will know its trouble,
And hearken to its call.

Oh, well they fare forever,
By mighty dreams possessed,
Whose hearts have lain a moment
On that eternal breast.

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

MARCH

Slayer of winter, art thou here again?
O welcome, thou that bring'st the summer nigh!
The bitter wind makes not thy victory vain,
Nor will we mock thee for thy faint blue sky.
Welcome, O March! whose kindly days and dry
Make April ready for the thristle's song,
Thou first redresser of the winter's wrong!

Yea, welcome, March! and though I die ere June,
Yet for the hope of life I give thee praise,
Striving to swell the burden of the tune
That even now I hear thy brown birds raise,
Unmindful of the past or coming days;

Who sing, "O joy! a new year is begun!
What happiness to look upon the sun!"

O, what begetteth all this storm of bliss,
But Death himself, who, crying solemnly,
Even from the heart of sweet Forgetfulness,
Bids us, "Rejoice! lest pleasureless ye die.
Within a little time must ye go by.
Stretch forth your open hands, and, while ye live,
Take all the gifts that Death and Life may give."

William Morris [1834-1896]

SONG IN MARCH

Now are the winds about us in their glee,
Tossing the slender tree;
Whirling the sands about his furious car,
March cometh from afar;
Breaks the sealed magic of old Winter's dreams,
And rends his glassy streams;
Chafing with potent airs, he fiercely takes
Their fetters from the lakes,
And, with a power by queenly Spring supplied,
Wakens the slumbering tide.

With a wild love he seeks young Summer's charms
And clasps her to his arms;
Lifting his shield between, he drives away
Old Winter from his prey; -
The ancient tyrant whom he boldly braves,
Goes howling to his caves;
And, to his northern realm compelled to fly,
Yields up the victory;
Melted are all his bands, o'erthrown his towers,
And March comes bringing flowers.

William Gilmore Simms [1806-1870]

MARCH

Blossom on the plum,
Wild wind and merry;
Leaves upon the cherry,
And one swallow come.

Red windy dawn,
Swift rain and sunny;
Wild bees seeking honey,
Crocus on the lawn;
Blossom on the plum.

Grass begins to grow,
Dandelions come;
Snowdrops haste to go
After last month's snow;

Rough winds beat and blow,
Blossom on the plum.

Nora Hopper [1871-1906]

WRITTEN IN MARCH

The Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The ploughboy is whooping - anon - anon
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

THE PASSING OF MARCH

The braggart March stood in the season's door
With his broad shoulders blocking up the way,
Shaking the snow-flakes from the cloak he wore,
And from the fringes of his kirtle gray.
Near by him April stood with tearful face,
With violets in her hands, and in her hair
Pale, wild anemones; the fragrant lace
Half-parted from her breast, which seemed like fair,
Dawn-tinted mountain snow, smooth-drifted there.

She on the blusterer's arm laid one white hand,
But he would none of her soft blandishment,
Yet did she plead with tears none might withstand,
For even the fiercest hearts at last relent.
And he, at last, in ruffian tenderness,
With one swift, crushing kiss her lips did greet.
Ah, poor starved heart! - for that one rude caress,
She cast her violets underneath his feet.

Robert Burns Wilson [1850-1916]

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and 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 white-throat 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!

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

SONG

April, April,
Laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then, the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears!
April, that mine ears
Like a lover greetest,
If I tell thee, sweetest,
All my hopes and fears,
April, April,
Laugh thy golden laughter,
But, the moment after,
Weep thy golden tears!

William Watson [1858-1935]

AN APRIL ADORATION

Sang the sun rise on an amber morn -
"Earth, be glad! An April day is born.

"Winter's done, and April's in the skies,
Earth, look up with laughter in your eyes!"

Putting off her dumb dismay of snow,
Earth bade all her unseen children grow.

Then the sound of growing in the air
Rose to God a liturgy of prayer;

And the thronged succession of the days
Uttered up to God a psalm of praise.

Laughed the running sap in every vein,
Laughed the running flurries of warm rain,

Laughed the life in every wandering root,
Laughed the tingling cells of bud and shoot.

God in all the concord of their mirth
Heard the adoration-song of Earth.

Charles G. D. Roberts [1860-

SWEET WILD APRIL

O sweet wild April
Came over the hills,
He skipped with the winds
And he tripped with the rills;
His raiment was all
Of the daffodils.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

O sweet wild April
Came down the lea,
Dancing along
With his sisters three:
Carnation, and Rose,
And tall Lily.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

O sweet wild April,
On pastoral quill
Came piping in moonlight
By hollow and hill,
In starlight at midnight,
By dingle and rill.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

Where sweet wild April
His melody played,
Trooped cowslip, and primrose,
And iris, the maid,
And silver narcissus,
A star in the shade.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

When sweet wild April

Dipped down the dale,
Pale cuckoopint brightened,
And windflower trail,
And white-thorn, the wood-bride,
In virginal veil.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

When sweet wild April
Through deep woods pressed,
Sang cuckoo above him,
And lark on his crest,
And Philomel fluttered
Close under his breast.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

O sweet wild April,
Wherever you went
The bondage of winter
Was broken and rent,
Sank elfin ice-city
And frost-goblin's tent.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

Yet sweet wild April,
The blithe, the brave,
Fell asleep in the fields
By a windless wave
And Jack-in-the-Pulpit
Preached over his grave.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

O sweet wild April,
Farewell to thee!
And a deep sweet sleep
To thy sisters three, -
Carnation, and Rose,
And tall Lily.
Sing hi,
Sing hey,
Sing ho!

William Force Stead [18 -

SPINNING IN APRIL

Moon in heaven's garden, among the clouds that wander,
Crescent moon so young to see, above the April ways,
Whiten, bloom not yet, not yet, within the twilight yonder;
All my spinning is not done, for all the loitering days.

Oh, my heart has two wild wings that ever would be flying!
Oh, my heart's a meadow-lark that ever would be free!
Well it is that I must spin until the light be dying;
Well it is the little wheel must turn all day for me!

All the hill-tops beckon, and beyond the western meadows
Something calls me ever, calls me ever, low and clear:
A little tree as young as I, the coming summer shadows, -
The voice of running waters that I ever thirst to hear.

Oftentime the plea of it has set my wings a-beating;
Oftentimes it coaxes, as I sit in weary-wise,
Till the wild life hastens out to wild things all entreating,
And leaves me at the spinning-wheel, with dark, unseeing eyes.

Josephine Preston Peabody [1874-1922]

SONG: ON MAY MORNING

Now the bright morning-star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire!
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

John Milton [1608-1674]

A MAY BURDEN

Though meadow-ways as I did tread,
The corn grew in great lustihead,
And hey! the beeches burgeoned.
By Goddes fay, by Goddes fay!
It is the month, the jolly month,
It is the jolly month of May.

God ripe the wines and corn, I say,
And wenches for the marriage-day,
And boys to teach love's comely play.
By Goddes fay, by Goddes fay!
It is the month, the jolly month,
It is the jolly month of May.

As I went down by lane and lea,
The daisies reddened so, pardie!
"Blushets!" I said, "I well do see,
By Goddes fay, by Goddes fay!
The thing ye think of in this month,
Heigho! this jolly month of May."

As down I went by rye and oats,
The blossoms smelt of kisses; throats
Of birds turned kisses into notes;
By Goddes fay, by Goddes fay!
The kiss it is a growing flower,
I trow, this jolly month of May.

God send a mouth to every kiss,
Seeing the blossom of this bliss
By gathering doth grow, certes!
By Goddes fay, by Goddes fay!
Thy brow-garland pushed all aslant
Tells - but I tell not, wanton May!

Francis Thompson [1859?-1907]

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

Get up, get up for shame, the blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colors through the air:
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept, and bowed toward the east,
Above an hour since: yet you not dressed;
Nay! not so much as out of bed;
When all the birds have matins said
And sung their thankful hymns: 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,
When as a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair:
Fear not; the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you:
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
Come, and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night,
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying:
Few beads are best, when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park
Made green and trimmed with trees; see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch: each porch, each door, ere this,
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn, neatly interwove;
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street

And open fields, and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May:
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl, this day,
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
Some have despatched their cakes and cream
Before that we have left to dream:
And some have wept, and wooed and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth:
Many a green gown has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even:
Many a glance, too, has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks picked, yet we're not a-Maying.

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless folly of the time.
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun;
And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again:
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

"SISTER, AWAKE!"

Sister, awake! close not your eyes!
The day her light discloses,
And the bright morning doth arise
Out of her bed of roses.

See the clear sun, the world's bright eye,
In at our window peeping:
Lo, how he blusheth to espy
Us idle wenches sleeping!

Therefore awake! make haste, I say,
And let us, without staying,
All in our gowns of green so gay
Into the Park a-maying!

Unknown

MAY

May! queen of blossoms,
And fulfilling flowers,
With what pretty music
Shall we charm the hours?
Wilt thou have pipe and reed,
Blown in the open mead?
Or to the lute give heed
In the green bowers?

Thou hast no need of us,
Or pipe or wire;
Thou hast the golden bee
Ripened with fire;
And many thousand more
Songsters, that thee adore,
Filling earth's grassy floor
With new desire.

Thou hast thy mighty herds,
Tame and free-livers;
Doubt not, thy music too
In the deep rivers,
And the whole plumy flight
Warbling the day and night -
Up at the gates of light,
See, the lark quivers!

Edward Hovell-Thurlow [1781-1829]

MAY

Come walk with me along this willowed lane,
Where, like lost coinage from some miser's store,
The golden dandelions more and more
Glow, as the warm sun kisses them again!
For this is May! who with a daisy chain
Leads on the laughing Hours; for now is o'er
Long winter's trance. No longer rise and roar
His forest-wrenching blasts. The hopeful swain,
Along the furrow, sings behind his team;
Loud pipes the redbreast - troubadour of spring,
And vocal all the morning copses ring;
More blue the skies in lucent lakelets gleam;
And the glad earth, caressed by murmuring showers,
Wakes like a bride, to deck herself with flowers!

Henry Sylvester Cornwell [1831-1886]

A SPRING LILT

Through the silver mist
Of the blossom-spray
Trill the orioles: list

To their joyous lay!
"What in all the world, in all the world," they say,
Is half so sweet, so sweet, is half so sweet as May?"

"June! June! June!"
Low croon
The brown bees in the clover.
"Sweet! sweet! sweet!"
Repeat
The robins, nested over.

Unknown

SUMMER LONGINGS

Ah! my heart is weary waiting,
Waiting for the May, -
Waiting for the pleasant rambles
Where the fragrant hawthorn-brambles,
With the woodbine alternating,
Scent the dewy way.
Ah! my heart is weary waiting,
Waiting for the May.

Ah! my heart is sick with longing,
Longing for the May, -
Longing to escape from study
To the young face fair and ruddy,
And the thousand charms belonging
To the summer's day.
Ah! my heart is sick with longing,
Longing for the May.

Ah! my heart is sore with sighing,
Sighing for the May, -
Sighing for their sure returning,
When the summer beams are burning,
Hopes and flowers that, dead or dying,
All the winter lay.
Ah! my heart is sore with sighing,
Sighing for the May.

Ah! my heart is pained with throbbing,
Throbbing for the May, -
Throbbing for the seaside billows,
Or the water-wooing willows;
Where, in laughing and in sobbing,
Glide the streams away.
Ah! my heart, my heart is throbbing,
Throbbing for the May.

Waiting sad, dejected, weary,
Waiting for the May:
Spring goes by with wasted warnings, -
Moonlit evenings, sunbright mornings, -
Summer comes, yet dark and dreary
Life still ebbs away;

Man is ever weary, weary,
Waiting for the May!

Denis Florence MacCarthy [1817-1882]

MIDSUMMER

Around this lovely valley rise
The purple hills of Paradise.

O, softly on yon banks of haze,
Her rosy face the Summer lays!

Becalmed along the azure sky,
The argosies of cloudland lie,
Whose shores, with many a shining rift,
Far off their pearl-white peaks uplift.

Through all the long midsummer-day
The meadow-sides are sweet with hay.
I seek the coolest sheltered seat,
Just where the field and forest meet,-
Where grow the pine-trees tall and bland,
The ancient oaks austere and grand,
And fringy roots and pebbles fret
The ripples of the rivulet.

I watch the mowers, as they go
Through the tall grass, a white-sleeved row.
With even stroke their scythes they swing,
In tune their merry whetstones ring.
Behind the nimble youngsters run,
And toss the thick swaths in the sun.
The cattle graze, while, warm and still,
Slopes the broad pasture, basks the hill,
And bright, where summer breezes break,
The green wheat crinkles like a lake.

The butterfly and humblebee
Come to the pleasant woods with me;
Quickly before me runs the quail,
Her chickens skulk behind the rail;
High up the lone wood-pigeon sits,
And the woodpecker pecks and flits.
Sweet woodland music sinks and swells,
The brooklet rings its tinkling bells,
The swarming insects drone and hum,
The partridge beats its throbbing drum.
The squirrel leaps among the boughs,
And chatters in his leafy house.
The oriole flashes by; and, look!
Into the mirror of the brook,
Where the vain bluebird trims his coat,
Two tiny feathers fall and float.

As silently, as tenderly,
The down of peace descends on me.

O, this is peace! I have no need
Of friend to talk, of book to read:
A dear Companion here abides;
Close to my thrilling heart He hides;
The holy silence is His Voice:
I lie and listen, and rejoice.

John Townsend Trowbridge [1827-1916]

A MIDSUMMER SONG

O, Father's gone to market-town, he was up before the day,
And Jamie's after robins, and the man is making hay,
And whistling down the hollow goes the boy that minds the mill,
While mother from the kitchen-door is calling with a will:
"Polly! - Polly! - The cows are in the corn!
O, where's Polly?"

From all the misty morning air there comes a summer sound -
A murmur as of waters from skies and trees and ground.
The birds they sing upon the wing, the pigeons bill and coo,
And over hill and hollow rings again the loud halloo:
"Polly! - Polly! - The cows are in the corn!
O, where's Polly?"

Above the trees the honey-bees swarm by with buzz and boom,
And in the field and garden a thousand blossoms bloom.
Within the farmer's meadow a brown-eyed daisy blows,
And down at the edge of the hollow a red and thorny rose.
But Polly! - Polly! - The cows are in the corn!
O, where's Polly?

How strange at such a time of day the mill should stop its clatter!
The farmer's wife is listening now and wonders what's the matter.
O, wild the birds are singing in the wood and on the hill,
While whistling up the hollow goes the boy that minds the mill.
But Polly! - Polly! - The cows are in the corn!
O, where's Polly?

Richard Watson Glider [1844-1909]

JUNE

From the Prelude to "The Vision of Sir Launfal"

Over his keys the musing organist,
Beginning doubtfully and far away,
First lets his fingers wander as they list,
And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:
Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,
First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent
Along the wavering vista of his dream.

Not only around our infancy
Doth heaven with all its splendors lie;
Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,

We Sinais climb and know it not.

Over our manhood bend the skies;
Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies;
With our faint hearts the mountain strives;
Its arms outstretched, the druid wood
Waits with its benedicite;
And to our age's drowsy blood
Still shouts the inspiring sea.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
No price is set on the lavish summer;
June may be had by the poorest corner.
And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays;
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world and she to her nest, -
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbd away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;

We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891]

JUNE

When the bubble moon is young,
Down the sources of the breeze,
Like a yellow lantern hung
In the tops of blackened trees,
There is promise she will grow
Into beauty unforetold,
Into all unthought-of gold.
Heigh ho!

When the Spring has dipped her foot,
Like a bather, in the air,
And the ripples warm the root
Till the little flowers dare,
There is promise she will grow
Sweeter than the Springs of old,
Fairer than was ever told.
Heigh ho!

But the moon of middle night,
Risen, is the rounded moon;
And the Spring of budding light
Eddies into just a June.
Ah, the promise - was it so?
Nay, the gift was fairy gold;
All the new is over-old.
Heigh ho!

Harrison Smith Morris [1856-

HARVEST

Sweet, sweet, sweet,
Is the wind's song,
Astir in the rippled wheat
All day long,
It hath the brook's wild gayety,
The sorrowful cry of the sea.
Oh, hush and hear!

Sweet, sweet and clear,
Above the locust's whirr
And hum of bee
Rises that soft, pathetic harmony.

In the meadow-grass
The innocent white daisies blow,
The dandelion plume doth pass
Vaguely to and fro, -
The unquiet spirit of a flower
That hath too brief an hour.

Now doth a little cloud all white,
Or golden bright,
Drift down the warm, blue sky;
And now on the horizon line,
Where dusky woodlands lie,
A sunny mist doth shine,
Like to a veil before a holy shrine,
Concealing, half-revealing, things divine.

Sweet, sweet, sweet,
Is the wind's song,
Astir in the rippled wheat
All day long.
That exquisite music calls
The reaper everywhere -
Life and death must share.
The golden harvest falls.

So doth all end, -
Honored Philosophy,
Science and Art,
The bloom of the heart; -
Master, Consoler, Friend,
Make Thou the harvest of our days
To fall within Thy ways.

Ellen Mackay Hutchinson Cortissoz [?-1933]

SCYTHE SONG

Mowers, weary and brown, and blithe,
What is the word methinks ye know,
Endless over-word that the Scythe
Sings to the blades of the grass below?
Scythes that swing in the grass and clover,
Something, still, they say as they pass;
What is the word that, over and over,
Sings the Scythe to the flowers and grass?

Hush, ah hush, the Scythes are saying,
Hush, and heed not, and fall asleep;
Hush, they say to the grasses swaying,
Hush, they sing to the clover deep!
Hush - 'tis the lullaby Time is singing -
Hush, and heed not, for all things pass,

Hush, ah hush! and the Scythes are swinging
Over the clover, over the grass!

Andrew Lang [1844-1912]

SEPTEMBER

Sweet is the voice that calls
From babbling waterfalls
In meadows where the downy seeds are flying;
And soft the breezes blow,
And eddying come and go,
In faded gardens where the rose is dying.

Among the stubbled corn
The blithe quail pipes at morn,
The merry partridge drums in hidden places,
And glittering insects gleam
Above the reedy stream,
Where busy spiders spin their filmy laces.

At eve, cool shadows fall
Across the garden wall,
And on the clustered grapes to purple turning;
And pearly vapors lie
Along the eastern sky,
Where the broad harvest-moon is redly burning.

Ah, soon on field and hill
The winds shall whistle chill,
And patriarch swallows call their flocks together
To fly from frost and snow,
And seek for lands where blow
The fairer blossoms of a balmier weather.

The pollen-dusted bees
Search for the honey-lees
That linger in the last flowers of September,
While plaintive mourning doves
Coo sadly to their loves
Of the dead summer they so well remember.

The cricket chirps all day,
"O fairest summer, stay!"
The squirrel eyes askance the chestnuts browning;
The wild fowl fly afar
Above the foamy bar,
And hasten southward ere the skies are frowning.

Now comes a fragrant breeze
Through the dark cedar-trees,
And round about my temples fondly lingers,
In gentle playfulness,
Like to the soft caress
Bestowed in happier days by loving fingers.

Yet, though a sense of grief

Comes with the falling leaf,
And memory makes the summer doubly pleasant,
In all my autumn dreams
A future summer gleams,
Passing the fairest glories of the present!

George Arnold [1834-1865]

INDIAN SUMMER

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June, -
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

Emily Dickinson [1830-1886]

PREVISION

Oh, days of beauty standing veiled apart,
With dreamy skies and tender, tremulous air,
In this rich Indian summer of the heart
Well may the earth her jewelled halo wear.

The long brown fields - no longer drear and dull -
Burn with the glow of these deep-hearted hours.
Until the dry weeds seem more beautiful,
More spiritlike than even summer's flowers.

But yesterday the world was stricken bare,
Left old and dead in gray, enshrouding gloom;
To-day what vivid wonder of the air
Awakes the soul of vanished light and bloom?

Sharp with the clean, fine ecstasy of death,
A mightier wind shall strike the shrinking earth,
An exhalation of creative breath

Wake the white wonder of the winter's birth.

In her wide Pantheon - her temple place -
Wrapped in strange beauty and new comforting,
We shall not miss the Summer's full-blown grace,
Nor hunger for the swift, exquisite Spring.

Ada Foster Murray [1857-1936]

A SONG OF EARLY AUTUMN

When late in summer the streams run yellow,
Burst the bridges and spread into bays;
When berries are black and peaches are mellow,
And hills are hidden by rainy haze;

When the goldenrod is golden still,
But the heart of the sunflower is darker and sadder;
When the corn is in stacks on the slope of the hill,
And slides o'er the path the striped adder;

When butterflies flutter from clover to thicket,
Or wave their wings on the drooping leaf;
When the breeze comes shrill with the call of the cricket,
Grasshopper's rasp, and rustle of sheaf;

When high in the field the fern-leaves wrinkle,
And brown is the grass where the mowers have mown;
When low in the meadow the cow-bells tinkle,
And small brooks crinkle o'er stock and stone;

When heavy and hollow the robin's whistle
And shadows are deep in the heat of noon;
When the air is white with the down o' the thistle,
And the sky is red with the harvest moon;

O, then be chary, young Robert and Mary,
No time let slip, not a moment wait!
If the fiddle would play it must stop its tuning;
And they who would wed must be done with their mooning;
So let the churn rattle, see well to the cattle,
And pile the wood by the barn-yard gate!

Richard Watson Gilder [1844-1909]

TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves 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'erbrimmed 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 cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozyings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
While barred 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-crickets sing, and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

John Keats [1795-1821]

ODE TO AUTUMN

I saw old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn; -
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

Where are the songs of Summer? - With the sun,
Oping the dusky eyelids of the South,
Till shade and silence waken up as one,
And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth.
Where are the merry birds? - Away, away,
On panting wings through the inclement skies,
Lest owls should prey
Undazzled at noonday,
And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes.

Where are the blooms of Summer? - In the West,
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is pressed
Like tearful Prosperine, snatched from her flowers,
To a most gloomy breast.
Where is the pride of Summer, - the green prime, -
The many, many leaves all twinkling? - Three

On the mossed elm; three on the naked lime
Trembling, - and one upon the old oak-tree!
Where is the Dryad's immortality? -
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through
In the smooth holly's green eternity.

The squirrel gloats on his accomplished hoard,
The ants have brimmed their garner with ripe grain,
And honey bees have stored
The sweets of Summer in their luscious cells;
The swallows all have winged across the main;
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,
And sighs her tearful spells
Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.
Alone, alone,
Upon a mossy stone,
She sits and reckons up the dead and gone,
With the last leaves for a love-rosary,
Whilst all the withered world looks drearily,
Like a dim picture of the drowned past
In the hushed mind's mysterious far away,
Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last
Into that distance, gray upon the gray.

O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded
Under the languid downfall of her hair:
She wears a coronal of flowers faded
Upon her forehead, and a face of care; -
There is enough of withered everywhere
To make her bower, - and enough of gloom;
There is enough of sadness to invite,
If only for the rose that died, whose doom
Is Beauty's, - she that with the living bloom
Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the light:
There is enough of sorrowing, and quite
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear, -
Enough of chilly droppings for her bowl;
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul!

Thomas Hood [1799-1845]

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

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

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

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

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

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

II

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

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

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

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

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

III

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

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

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

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

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

IV

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

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

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,

As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision - I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
O! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee - tameless, and swift, and proud.

V
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?

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

AUTUMN: A DIRGE

The warm sun is failing; the bleak wind is wailing;
The bare boughs are sighing; the pale flowers are dying;
And the Year
On the earth, her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying.
Come, months, come away,
From November to May;
In your saddest array
Follow the bier
Of the dead, cold Year,
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

The chill rain is falling; the nipped worm is crawling;
The rivers are swelling; the thunder is knelling
For the Year;
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
To his dwelling;
Come, months, come away;
Put on white, black, and gray;
Let your light sisters play -
Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead, cold Year,
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

AUTUMN

The morns are meeker than they were,
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.
The maple wears a gayer scarf,
The field a scarlet gown.
Lest I should be old-fashioned,
I'll put a trinket on.

Emily Dickinson [1830-1886]

"WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN"

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyock and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmufere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here -
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airy autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock -
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries - kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below - the clover overhead! -
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

Then your apples all is getherd, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the celler-floor in red and yeller heaps;
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With their mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage, too! . . .
I don't know how to tell it - but ef sich a thing could be
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on
me -
I'd want to 'commodate 'em - all the whole-indurin' flock -
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

James Whitcomb Riley [1849-1916]

KORE

Yea, she hath passed hereby, and blessed the sheaves,
And the great garths, and stacks, and quiet farms,
And all the tawny, and the crimson leaves.
Yea, she hath passed with poppies in her arms,
Under the star of dusk, through stealing mist,
And blessed the earth, and gone, while no man wist.

With slow, reluctant feet, and weary eyes,
And eye-lids heavy with the coming sleep,
With small breasts lifted up in stress of sighs,
She passed, as shadows pass, among the sheep;
While the earth dreamed, and only I was ware
Of that faint fragrance blown from her soft hair.

The land lay steeped in peace of silent dreams;
There was no sound amid the sacred boughs.
Nor any mournful music in her streams:
Only I saw the shadow on her brows,
Only I knew her for the yearly slain,
And wept, and weep until she come again.

Frederic Manning [18 -

OLD OCTOBER

Hail, old October, bright and chill,
First freedman from the summer sun!
Spice high the bowl, and drink your fill!
Thank heaven, at last the summer's done!

Come, friend, my fire is burning bright,
A fire's no longer out of place,
How clear it glows! (there's frost to-night,)
It looks white winter in the face.

You've been to "Richard" Ah! you've seen
A noble play: I'm glad you went;
But what on earth does Shakespeare mean
By "winter of our discontent?"

Be mine the tree that feeds the fire!
Be mine the sun knows when to set!
Be mine the months when friends desire
To turn in here from cold and wet!

The sentry sun, that glared so long
O'erhead, deserts his summer post;
Ay, you may brew it hot and strong:
"The joys of winter" - come, a toast!

Shine on the kangaroo, thou sun!
Make far New Zealand faint with fear!
Don't hurry back to spoil our fun,

Thank goodness, old October's here!

Thomas Constable [1812-1881]

NOVEMBER

When thistle-blows do lightly float
About the pasture-height,
And shrills the hawk a parting note,
And creeps the frost at night,
Then hilly ho! though singing so,
And whistle as I may,
There comes again the old heart pain
Through all the livelong day.

In high wind creaks the leafless tree
And nods the fading fern;
The knolls are dun as snow-clouds be,
And cold the sun does burn.
Then ho, hollo! though calling so,
I cannot keep it down;
The tears arise unto my eyes,
And thoughts are chill and brown.

Far in the cedars' dusky stoles,
Where the sere ground-vine weaves,
The partridge drums funereal rolls
Above the fallen leaves.
And hip, hip, ho! though cheering so,
It stills no whit the pain;
For drip, drip, drip, from bare-branch tip,
I hear the year's last rain.

So drive the cold cows from the hill,
And call the wet sheep in;
And let their stamping clatter fill
The barn with warming din.
And ho, folk, ho! though it be so
That we no more may roam,
We still will find a cheerful mind
Around the fire at home!

C. L. Cleaveland [18 - ?]

NOVEMBER

Hark you such sound as quivers? Kings will hear,
As kings have heard, and tremble on their thrones;
The old will feel the weight of mossy stones;
The young alone will laugh and scoff at fear.
It is the tread of armies marching near,
From scarlet lands to lands forever pale;
It is a bugle dying down the gale;
It is the sudden gushing of a tear.
And it is hands that grope at ghostly doors;
And romp of spirit-children on the pave;

It is the tender sighing of the brave
Who fell, ah! long ago, in futile wars;
It is such sound as death; and, after all,
'Tis but the forest letting dead leaves fall.

Mahlon Leonard Fisher [1874-

STORM FEAR

When the wind works against us in the dark,
And pelts with snow
The lower chamber window on the east,
And whispers with a sort of stifled bark,
The beast,
"Come out! Come out!" -
It costs no inward struggle not to go,
Ah, no!
I count our strength,
Two and a child,
Those of us not asleep subdued to mark
How the cold creeps as the fire dies at length, -
How drifts are piled,
Dooryard and road ungraded,
Till even the comforting barn grows far away
And my heart owns a doubt
Whether 'tis in us to arise with day
And save ourselves unaided.

Robert Frost [1875-

WINTER: A DIRGE

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blow;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snow:
While, tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"
The joyless winter day.
Let others fear, - to me more dear
Than all the pride of May;
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, - they must be best,
Because they are Thy will.
Then all I want (oh, do Thou grant
This one request of mine!)

Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign!

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

OLD WINTER

Old Whiter sad, in snow yclad,
Is making a doleful din;
But let him howl till he crack his jowl,
We will not let him in.

Ay, let him lift from the billowy drift
His hoary, haggard form,
And scowling stand, with his wrinkled hand
Outstretching to the storm.

And let his weird and sleety beard
Stream loose upon the blast,
And, rustling, chime to the tinkling rime
From his bald head falling fast.

Let his baleful breath shed blight and death
On herb and flower and tree;
And brooks and ponds in crystal bonds
Bind fast, but what care we?

Let him push at the door, - in the chimney roar,
And rattle the window-pane;
Let him in at us spy with his icicle eye,
But he shall not entrance gain.

Let him gnaw, forsooth, with his freezing tooth,
On our roof-tiles, till he tire;
But we care not a whit, as we jovial sit
Before our blazing fire.

Come, lads, let's sing, till the rafters ring;
Come, push the can about; -
From our snug fire-side this Christmas-tide
We'll keep old Winter out.

Thomas Noel [1799-1861]

THE FROST

The Frost looked forth, one still, clear night,
And he said, "Now I shall be out of sight;
So through the valley and over the height
In silence I'll take my way.
I will not go like that blustering train,
The wind and the snow, the hail and the rain,
Who make so much bustle and noise in vain,
But I'll be as busy as they!"

Then he went to the mountain, and powdered its crest,

He climbed up the trees, and their boughs he dressed
With diamonds and pearls, and over the breast
Of the quivering lake he spread
A coat of mail, that it need not fear
The downward point of many a spear
That he hung on its margin, far and near,
Where a rock could rear its head.

He went to the windows of those who slept,
And over each pane like a fairy crept;
Wherever he breathed, wherever he stepped,
By the light of the moon were seen
Most beautiful things. There were flowers and trees,
There were beves of birds and swarms of bees,
There were cities, thrones, temples, and towers, and these
All pictured in silver sheen!

But he did one thing that was hardly fair, -
He peeped in the cupboard, and, finding there
That all had forgotten for him to prepare, -
"Now, just to set them a-thinking,
I'll bite this basket of fruit," said he;
"This costly pitcher I'll burst in three,
And the glass of water they've left for me
Shall 'tchick!' to tell them I'm drinking."

Hannah Flagg Gould [1789-1865]

THE FROSTED PANE

One night came Winter noiselessly and leaned
Against my window-pane.
In the deep stillness of his heart convened
The ghosts of all his slain.

Leaves, and ephemera, and stars of earth,
And fugitives of grass, -
White spirits loosed from bonds of mortal birth,
He drew them on the glass.

Charles G. D. Roberts [1860-

THE FROST SPIRIT

He comes, - he comes, - the Frost Spirit comes! You may trace his
footsteps now
On the naked woods and the blasted fields and the brown hill's
withered brow.
He has smitten the leaves of the gray old trees where their pleasant
green came forth,
And the winds, which follow wherever he goes, have shaken them down
to earth.

He comes, - he comes, - the Frost Spirit comes! from the frozen Labrador,
From the icy bridge of the Northern seas, which the white bear
wanders o'er,

Where the fisherman's sail is stiff with ice and the luckless forms below
In the sunless cold of the lingering night into marble statues grow!

He comes, - he comes, - the Frost Spirit comes! on the rushing
Northern blast,
And the dark Norwegian pines have bowed as his fearful breath went past.
With an unscorched wing he has hurried on, where the fires of Hecla glow
On the darkly beautiful sky above and the ancient ice below.

He comes, - he comes, - the Frost Spirit comes! and the quiet lake
shall feel
The torpid touch of his glazing breath, and ring to the skater's heel;
And the streams which danced on the broken rocks, or sang to the
leaning grass,
Shall bow again to their winter chain, and in mournful silence pass.

He comes, - he comes, - the Frost Spirit comes! Let us meet him as we may,
And turn with the light of the parlor-fire his evil power away;
And gather closer the circle round, when that firelight dances high,
And laugh at the shriek of the baffled Fiend as his sounding wing goes by!

John Greenleaf Whittier [1807-1892]

SNOW

Lo, what wonders the day hath brought,
Born of the soft and slumbrous snow!
Gradual, silent, slowly wrought;
Even as an artist, thought by thought,
Writes expression on lip and brow.

Hanging garlands the eaves o'erbrim,
Deep drifts smother the paths below;
The elms are shrouded, trunk and limb,
And all the air is dizzy and dim
With a whirl of dancing, dazzling snow.

Dimly out of the baffled sight
Houses and church-spires stretch away;
The trees, all spectral and still and white,
Stand up like ghosts in the failing light,
And fade and faint with the blinded day.

Down from the roofs in gusts are hurled
The eddy drifts to the waste below;
And still is the banner of storm unfurled,
Till all the drowned and desolate world
Lies dumb and white in a trance of snow.

Slowly the shadows gather and fall,
Still the whispering snow-flakes beat;
Night and darkness are over all:
Rest, pale city, beneath their pall!
Sleep, white world, in thy winding-sheet!

Clouds may thicken, and storm-winds breathe:
On my wall is a glimpse of Rome, -

Land of my longing! - and underneath
Swings and trembles my olive-wreath;
Peace and I are at home, at home!

Elizabeth Akers [1832-1911]

TO A SNOW-FLAKE

What heart could have thought you? -
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal!)
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapor? -
God was my shaper.
Passing surmised,
He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapor,
To lust of His mind: -
Thou couldst not have thought me!
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly,
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind,
And His graver of frost."

Francis Thompson [1859?-1907]

THE SNOW-SHOWER

Stand here by my side and turn, I pray,
On the lake below thy gentle eyes;
The clouds hang over it, heavy and gray,
And dark and silent the water lies;
And out of that frozen mist the snow
In wavering flakes begins to flow;
Flake after flake
They sink in the dark and silent lake.

See how in a living swarm they come
From the chambers beyond that misty veil;
Some hover in air awhile, and some
Rush prone from the sky like summer hail.
All, dropping swiftly, or settling slow,
Meet, and are still in the depths below;
Flake after flake
Dissolved in the dark and silent lake.

Here delicate snow-stars, out of the cloud,
Come floating downward in airy play,
Like spangles dropped from the glistening crowd

That whiten by night the Milky Way;
There broader and burlier masses fall;
The sullen water buries them all, -
Flake after flake, -
All drowned in the dark and silent lake.

And some, as on tender wings they glide
From their chilly birth-cloud, dim and gray,
Are joined in their fall, and, side by side,
Come clinging along their unsteady way;
As friend with friend, or husband with wife,
Makes hand in hand the passage of life;
Each mated flake
Soon sinks in the dark and silent lake.

Lo! while we are gazing, in swifter haste
Stream down the snows, till the air is white,
As, myriads by myriads madly chased,
They fling themselves from their shadowy height.
The fair, frail creatures of middle sky,
What speed they make, with their grave so nigh;
Flake after flake
To lie in the dark and silent lake.

I see in thy gentle eyes a tear;
They turn to me in sorrowful thought;
Thou thinkest of friends, the good and dear,
Who were for a time, and now are not;
Like these fair children of cloud and frost,
That glisten a moment and then are lost, -
Flake after flake, -
All lost in the dark and silent lake.

Yet look again, for the clouds divide;
A gleam of blue on the water lies;
And far away, on the mountain-side,
A sunbeam falls from the opening skies;
But the hurrying host that flew between
The cloud and the water no more is seen;
Flake after flake,
At rest in the dark and silent lake.

William Cullen Bryant [1794-1878]

MIDWINTER

The speckled sky is dim with snow,
The light flakes falter and fall slow;
Athwart the hill-top, rapt and pale,
Silently drops a silvery veil;
And all the valley is shut in
By flickering curtains gray and thin.

But cheerily the chickadee
Singeth to me on fence and tree;
The snow sails round him as he sings,
White as the down of angels' wings.

I watch the slow flakes as they fall
On bank and brier and broken wall;
Over the orchard, waste and brown,
All noiselessly they settle down,
Tipping the apple-boughs, and each
Light quivering twig of plum and peach.

On turf and curb and bower-roof
The snow-storm spreads its ivory woof;
It paves with pearl the garden-walk;
And lovingly round tattered stalk
And shivering stem its magic weaves
A mantle fair as lily-leaves.

The hooded beehive, small and low,
Stands like a maiden in the snow;
And the old door-slab is half hid
Under an alabaster lid.
All day it snows: the sheeted post
Gleams in the dimness like a ghost;
All day the blasted oak has stood
A muffled wizard of the wood;
Garland and airy cap adorn
The sumach and the wayside thorn,
And clustering spangles lodge and shine
In the dark tresses of the pine.

The ragged bramble, dwarfed and old,
Shrinks like a beggar in the cold;
In surplice white the cedar stands,
And blesses him with priestly hands.

Still cheerily the chickadee
Singeth to me on fence and tree:
But in my inmost ear is heard
The music of a holier bird;
And heavenly thoughts, as soft and white
As snow-flakes, on my soul alight,
Clothing with love my lonely heart,
Healing with peace each bruised part,
Till all my being seems to be
Transfigured by their purity.

John Townsend Trowbridge [1827-1916]

A GLEE FOR WINTER

Hence, rude Winter! crabbed old fellow,
Never merry, never mellow!
Well-a-day! in rain and snow
What will keep one's heart aglow?
Groups of kinsmen, old and young,
Oldest they old friends among;
Groups of friends, so old and true
That they seem our kinsmen too;
These all merry all together

Charm away chill Winter weather.

What will kill this dull old fellow?
Ale that's bright, and wine that's mellow!
Dear old songs for ever new;
Some true love, and laughter too;
Pleasant wit, and harmless fun,
And a dance when day is done.
Music, friends so true and tried,
Whispered love by warm fireside,
Mirth at all times all together,
Make sweet May of Winter weather.

Alfred Domett [1811-1887]

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing:
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still, he doth not move;
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above,
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He frothed his bumpers to the brim;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But though his eyes are waxing dim,
And though his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-year, blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro:
The cricket chirps; the light burns low;
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you.
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes; tie up his chin;
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

"Orphan Hours, the Year is dead:
Come and sigh, come and weep."
"Merry Hours, smile instead,
For the Year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping."

"As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So white Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold Year to-day;
Solemn Hours! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud."

"As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the Year: - be calm and mild,
Trembling Hours; she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

"January gray is here,
Like a sexton by her grave;
February bears the bier;
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps - but, O, ye Hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers."

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

WOOD AND FIELD AND RUNNING BROOK

WALDEINSAMKEIT

I do not count the hours I spend
In wandering by the sea;
The forest is my loyal friend,
Like God it useth me.

In plains that room for shadows make
Of skirting hills to lie,
Bound in by streams which give and take
Their colors from the sky;

Or on the mountain-crest sublime,
Or down the oaken glade,
O what have I to do with time?
For this the day was made.

Cities of mortals woe-begone
Fantastic care derides,
But in the serious landscape lone
Stern benefit abides.

Sheen will tarnish, honey cloy,
And merry is only a mask of sad,
But, sober on a fund of joy,
The woods at heart are glad.

There the great Planter plants
Of fruitful worlds the grain,
And with a million spells enchants
The souls that walk in pain.

Still on the seeds of all he made
The rose of beauty burns;
Through times that wear and forms that fade,
Immortal youth returns.

The black ducks mounting from the lake,
The pigeon in the pines,
The bittern's boom, a desert make
Which no false art refines.

Down in yon watery nook,
Where bearded mists divide,
The gray old gods whom Chaos knew,
The sires of Nature, hide.

Aloft, in secret veins of air,
Blows the sweet breath of song,
O, few to scale those uplands dare,
Though they to all belong!

See thou bring not to field or stone
The fancies found in books;
Leave authors' eyes, and fetch your own,
To brave the landscape's looks.

Oblivion here thy wisdom is,
Thy thrift, the sleep of cares;
For a proud idleness like this
Crowns all thy mean affairs.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

"WHEN IN THE WOODS I WANDER ALL ALONE"

When in the woods I wander all alone,
The woods that are my solace and delight,
Which I more covet than a prince's throne,
My toil by day and canopy by night;
(Light heart, light foot, light food, and slumber light,
These lights shall light us to old age's gate,
While monarchs, whom rebellious dreams affright,
Heavy with fear, death's fearful summons wait;)
Whilst here I wander, pleased to be alone,
Weighing in thought the world's no-happiness,
I cannot choose but wonder at its moan,
Since so plain joys the woody life can bless:
Then live who may where honied words prevail,
I with the deer, and with the nightingale!

Edward Hovell-Thurlow [1781-1829]

OUT IN THE FIELDS

The little cares that fretted me,
I lost them yesterday
Among the fields above the sea,
Among the winds at play,
Among the lowing of the herds,
The rustling of the trees,
Among the singing of the birds,
The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what might pass
I cast them all away
Among the clover-scented grass,
Among the new-mown hay,
Among the hushing of the corn,
Where drowsy poppies nod,
Where ill thoughts die and good are born -
Out in the fields of God.

Unknown

[Has been erroneously attributed to Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Louise Imogen Guiney]

ASPECTS OF THE PINES

Tall, somber, grim, against the morning sky
They rise, scarce touched by melancholy airs,
Which stir the fadeless foliage dreamfully,
As if from realms of mystical despairs.

Tall, somber, grim, they stand with dusky gleams
Brightening to gold within the woodland's core,
Beneath the gracious noontide's tranquil beams, -
But the weird winds of morning sigh no more.

A stillness, strange, divine, ineffable,
Broods round and o'er them in the wind's surcease,
And on each tinted copse and shimmering dell
Rests the mute rapture of deep hearted peace.

Last, sunset comes - the solemn joy and might
Borne from the West when cloudless day declines -
Low, flute-like breezes sweep the waves of light,
And, lifting dark green tresses of the pines,

Till every lock is luminous, gently float,
Fraught with hale odors up the heavens afar,
To faint when twilight on her virginal throat
Wears for a gem the tremulous vespers star.

Paul Hamilton Hayne [1830-1886]

UNDER THE LEAVES

Oft have I walked these woodland paths,
Without the blessed foreknowing
That underneath the withered leaves
The fairest buds were growing.

To-day the south-wind sweeps away
The types of autumn's splendor,
And shows the sweet arbutus flowers, -
Spring's children, pure and tender.

O prophet-flowers! - with lips of bloom,
Outvying in your beauty
The pearly tints of ocean shells, -
Ye teach me faith and duty!

Walk life's dark ways, ye seem to say,
With love's divine foreknowing
That where man sees but withered leaves,
God sees sweet flowers growing.

Albert Loughton [1829-1887]

"ON WENLOCK EDGE"

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble;
His forest fleece the Wrekin heaves;
The gale, it plies the saplings double,
And thick on Severn snow the leaves.

'Twould blow like this through holt and hanger
When Uricon the city stood:
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,
But then it threshed another wood.

Then, 'twas before my time, the Roman
At yonder heaving hill would stare:
The blood that warms an English yeoman,
The thoughts that hurt him, they were there.

There, like the wind through woods in riot,
Through him the gale of life blew high;
The tree of man was never quiet:
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

The gale, it plies the saplings double,
It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone:
To-day the Roman and his trouble
Are ashes under Uricon.

Alfred Edward Housman [1859-1936]

"WHAT DO WE PLANT?"

What do we plant when we plant the tree?
We plant the ship, which will cross the sea.
We plant the mast to carry the sails;
We plant the planks to withstand the gales -
The keel, the keelson, the beam, the knee;
We plant the ship when we plant the tree.

What do we plant when we plant the tree?
We plant the houses for you and me.
We plant the rafters, the shingles, the floors,
We plant the studding, the lath, the doors,
The beams and siding, all parts that be;
We plant the house when we plant the tree.

What do we plant when we plant the tree?
A thousand things that we daily see;
We plant the spire that out-towers the crag,
We plant the staff for our country's flag,
We plant the shade, from the hot sun free;
We plant all these when we plant the tree.

Henry Abbey [1842-1911]

THE TREE

I love thee when thy swelling buds appear,
And one by one their tender leaves unfold,
As if they knew that warmer suns were near,
Nor longer sought to hide from winter's cold;
And when with darker growth thy leaves are seen
To veil from view the early robin's nest,
I love to lie beneath thy waving screen,
With limbs by summer's heat and toil oppressed;
And when the autumn winds have stripped thee bare,
And round thee lies the smooth, untrodden snow,
When naught is thine that made thee once so fair,
I love to watch thy shadowy form below,
And through thy leafless arms to look above
On stars that brighter beam when most we need their love.

Jones Very [1813-1880]

THE BRAVE OLD OAK

A song to the oak, the brave old oak,
Who hath ruled in the greenwood long;
Here's health and renown to his broad green crown,
And his fifty arms so strong.
There's fear in his frown when the sun goes down,
And the fire in the west fades out;
And he showeth his might on a wild midnight,
When the storms through his branches shout.

Then here's to the oak, the brave old oak,
Who stands in his pride alone;
And still flourish he, a hale green tree,
When a hundred years are gone!
In the days of old, when the spring with cold
Had, brightened his branches gray,
Through the grass at his feet crept maidens sweet,
To gather the dew of May.
And on that day to the rebeck gay
They frolicked with lovesome swains;
They are gone, they are dead, in the churchyard laid,
But the tree it still remains.

He saw the rare times when the Christmas chimes
Were a merry sound to hear,
When the squire's wide hall and the cottage small
Were filled with good English cheer.
Now gold hath sway we all obey,
And a ruthless king is he;
But he never shall send our ancient friend
To be tossed on the stormy sea.

Henry Fothergill Chorley [1808-1872]

"THE GIRT WOAK TREE THAT'S IN THE DELL"

The girt woak tree that's in the dell!
There's noo tree I do love so well;
Vor times an' times when I wer young,
I there've a-climbed, an' there've a-zwung,
An' picked the eacorns green, a-shed
In wrestlen storms vrom his broad head.
An' down below's the cloty brook
Where I did vish with line an' hook,
An' beat, in playsome dips and zwims,
The foamy stream, wi' white-skinned lim's.
An' there my mother nimbly shot
Her knitten-needles, as she zot
At evenen down below the wide
Woak's head, wi' father at her zide.
An' I've a-played wi' many a bwoy,
That's now a man an' gone away;
Zoo I do like noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

An' there, in leater years, I roved
Wi' thik poor maid I fondly loved, -
The maid too fear to die so soon, -
When evenen twilight, or the moon,
Cast light enough 'ithin the pleace
To show the smiles upon her feace,
Wi' eyes so clear's the glassy pool,
An' lips an' cheeks so soft as wool.
There han' in han', wi' bosoms warm,
Wi' love that burned but thought noo harm,
Below the wide-boughed tree we passed
The happy hours that went too vast;
An' though she'll never be my wife,
She's still my leaden star o' life.
She's gone: an' she've a-left to me
Her mem'ry in the girt woak tree;
Zoo I do love noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

An' oh! mid never ax nor hook
Be brought to spweil his steately look;
Nor ever roun' his ribby zides
Mid cattle rub ther heairy hides;
Nor pigs rout up his turf, but keep
His lwonesome sheade vor harmless sheep;
An' let en grow, an' let en spread,
An' let en live when I be dead.
But oh! if men should come an' vell
The girt woak tree that's in the dell,
An' build his planks 'ithin the zide
O' zome girt ship to plough the tide,
Then, life or death! I'd goo to sea,
A sailen wi' the girt woak tree:
An' I upon his planks would stand,
An' die a-fighten vor the land, -
The land so dear, - the land so free, -
The land that bore the girt woak tree;
Vor I do love noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

William Barnes [1801-1886]

TO THE WILLOW-TREE

Thou art to all lost love the best,
The only true plant found,
Wherewith young men and maids distressed,
And left of love, are crowned.

When once the lover's rose is dead,
Or laid aside forlorn:
Then willow-garlands 'bout the head
Bedewed with tears are worn.

When with neglect, the lovers' bane,
Poor maids rewarded be
For their love lost, their only gain
Is but a wreath from thee.

And underneath thy cooling shade,
When weary of the light,
The love-spent youth and love-sick maid
Come to weep out the night.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

ENCHANTMENT

The deep seclusion of this forest path, -
O'er which the green boughs weave a canopy;
Along which bluet and anemone
Spread dim a carpet; where the Twilight hath
Her cool abode; and, sweet as aftermath,
Wood-fragrance roams, - has so enchanted me,
That yonder blossoming bramble seems to be
A Sylvan resting, rosy from her bath:
Has so enspelled me with tradition's dreams,
That every foam-white stream that, twinkling, flows,
And every bird that flutters wings of tan,
Or warbles hidden, to my fancy seems
A Naiad dancing to a Faun who blows
Wild woodland music on the pipes of Pan.

Madison Cawein [1865-1914]

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day

And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer [1886-1918]

THE HOLLY-TREE

O reader! hast thou ever stood to see
The Holly-tree?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
Its glossy leaves
Ordered by an Intelligence so wise
As might confound the Atheist's sophistries.

Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen,
Wrinkled and keen;
No grazing cattle, through their prickly round,
Can reach to wound;
But, as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
And moralize;
And in this wisdom of the Holly-tree
Can emblem see
Wherewith, perchance, to make a pleasant rhyme, -
One which may profit in the after-time.

Thus, though abroad, perchance, I might appear
Harsh and austere;
To those who on my leisure would intrude,
Reserved and rude;
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be,
Like the high leaves upon the Holly-tree.

And should my youth - as youth is apt, I know, -
Some harshness show,
All vain asperities I, day by day,
Would wear away,
Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly-tree.

And as, when all the summer trees are seen
So bright and green,
The Holly-leaves their fadeless hues display
Less bright than they;
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the Holly-tree? -

So, serious should my youth appear among
The thoughtless throng;
So would I seem, amid the young and gay,
More grave than they;
That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the Holly-tree.

Robert Southey [1774-1843]

THE PINE

The elm lets fall its leaves before the frost,
The very oak grows shivering and sere,
The trees are barren when the summer's lost:
But one tree keeps its goodness all the year.

Green pine, unchanging as the days go by,
Thou art thyself beneath whatever sky:
My shelter from all winds, my own strong pine,
'Tis spring, 'tis summer, still, while thou art mine.

Augusta Webster [1837-1894]

"WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE"

Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy axe shall harm it not!

That old familiar tree,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea, -
And wouldst thou hew it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
Cut not its earth-bound ties;
O, spare that aged oak,
Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy
Here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kissed me here;
My father pressed my hand -
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand!

My heart-strings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild-bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.

Old tree! the storm still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save,
Thy axe shall harm it not.

George Pope Morris [1802-1864]

THE BEECH TREE'S PETITION

O leave this barren spot to me!
Spare, woodman, spare the beechen tree!
Though bush or floweret never grow
My dark unwarming shade below;
Nor summer bud perfume the dew
Of rosy blush, or yellow hue;
Nor fruits of autumn, blossom-born,
My green and glossy leaves adorn;
Nor murmuring tribes from me derive
Th' ambrosial amber of the hive;
Yet leave this barren spot to me:
Spare, woodman, spare the beechen tree!

Thrice twenty summers I have seen
The sky grow bright, the forest green;
And many a wintry wind have stood
In bloomless, fruitless solitude,
Since childhood in my pleasant bower
First spent its sweet and sportive hour;
Since youthful lovers in my shade
Their vows of truth and rapture made,
And on my trunk's surviving frame
Carved many a long-forgotten name.
Oh! by the sighs of gentle sound,
First breathed upon this sacred ground;
By all that Love has whispered here,
Or Beauty heard with ravished ear;
As Love's own altar honor me:
Spare, woodman, spare the beechen tree!

Thomas Campbell [1777-1844]

THE POPLAR FIELD

The poplars are felled; farewell to the shade;
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
Of my favorite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat;
And the scene where his melody charmed me before

Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.

William Cowper [1731-1800]

THE PLANTING OF THE APPLE-TREE

Come, let us plant the apple-tree.
Cleave the tough greensward with the spade;
Wide let its hollow bed be made;
There gently lay the roots, and there
Sift the dark mould with kindly care,
And press it o'er them tenderly,
As, round the sleeping infant's feet,
We softly fold the cradle-sheet;
So plant we the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Buds, which the breath of summer days
Shall lengthen into leafy sprays;
Boughs where the thrush, with crimson breast,
Shall haunt, and sing, and hide her nest;
We plant, upon the sunny lea,
A shadow for the noontide hour,
A shelter from the summer shower,
When we plant the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Sweets for a hundred flowery springs
To load the May-winds restless wings,
When, from the orchard-row, he pours
Its fragrance through our open doors;
A world of blossoms for the bee,
Flowers for the sick girl's silent room,
For the glad infant sprigs of bloom,
We plant with the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree?
Fruits that shall swell in sunny June,
And redden in the August noon,
And drop, when gentle airs come by,
That fan the blue September sky,
While children come, with cries of glee,
And seek them where the fragrant grass
Betrays their bed to those who pass,
At the foot of the apple-tree.

And when, above this apple-tree,

The winter stars are quivering bright,
And winds go howling through the night,
Girls, whose young eyes o'erflow with mirth,
Shall peel its fruit by cottage-hearth,
And guests in prouder homes shall see,
Heaped with the grape of Cintra's vine
And golden orange of the line,
The fruit of the apple-tree.

The fruitage of this apple-tree
Winds and our flag of stripe and star
Shall bear to coasts that lie afar,
Where men shall wonder at the view,
And ask in what fair groves they grew;
And sojourners beyond the sea
Shall think of childhood's careless day,
And long, long hours of summer play,
In the shade of the apple-tree.

Each year shall give this apple-tree
A broader flush of roseate bloom,
A deeper maze of verdurous gloom,
And loosen, when the frost-clouds lower,
The crisp brown leaves in thicker shower.
The years shall come and pass, but we
Shall hear no longer, where we lie,
The summer's songs, the autumn's sigh,
In the boughs of the apple-tree.

And time shall waste this apple-tree.
Oh, when its aged branches throw
Thin shadows on the ground below,
Shall fraud and force and iron will
Oppress the weak and helpless still?
What shall the tasks of mercy be,
Amid the toils, the strifes, the tears
Of those who live when length of years
Is wasting this little apple-tree?

"Who planted this old apple-tree?"
The children of that distant day
Thus to some aged man shall say;
And, gazing on its mossy stem,
The gray-haired man shall answer them:
"A poet of the land was he,
Born in the rude but good old times;
'Tis said he made some quaint old rhymes,
On planting the apple-tree."

William Cullen Bryant [1794-1878]

OF AN ORCHARD

Good is an Orchard, the Saint saith,
To meditate on life and death,
With a cool well, a hive of bees,
A hermit's grot below the trees.

Good is an Orchard: very good,
Though one should wear no monkish hood.
Right good, when Spring awakes her flute,
And good in yellowing time of fruit.

Very good in the grass to lie
And see the network 'gainst the sky,
A living lace of blue and green,
And boughs that let the gold between.

The bees are types of souls that dwell
With honey in a quiet cell;
The ripe fruit figures goldenly
The soul's perfection in God's eye.

Prayer and praise in a country home,
Honey and fruit: a man might come,
Fed on such meats, to walk abroad,
And in his Orchard talk with God.

Katherine Tynan Hinkson [1861-1931]

AN ORCHARD AT AVIGNON

The hills are white, but not with snow:
They are as pale in summer time,
For herb or grass may never grow
Upon their slopes of lime.

Within the circle of the hills
A ring, all flowering in a round,
An orchard-ring of almond fills
The plot of stony ground.

More fair than happier trees, I think,
Grown in well-watered pasture land
These parched and stunted branches, pink
Above the stones and sand.

O white, austere, ideal place,
Where very few will care to come,
Where spring hath lost the waving grace
She wears for us at home!

Fain would I sit and watch for hours
The holy whiteness of thy hills,
Their wreath of pale auroral flowers,
Their peace the silence fills.

A place of secret peace thou art,
Such peace as in an hour of pain
One moment fills the amazed heart,
And never comes again.

A. Mary F. Robinson [1857-

THE TIDE RIVER
From "The Water Babies"

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow and dreaming pool;
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle and foaming weir;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church-bell rings,
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl;
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
Darker and darker the farther I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child.

Strong and free, strong and free,
The flood-gates are open, away to the sea.
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along,
To the golden sands, and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar.
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again,
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Charles Kingsley [1819-1875]

THE BROOK'S SONG
From "The Brook"

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery water-break
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

ARETHUSA

Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains, -
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks

With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams:
And gliding and springing,
She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The Earth seemed to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook,
And opened a chasm
In the rocks; - with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
And the black south wind
It unsealed behind
The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below:
And the beard and the hair
Of the River-god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

"Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
And bid the deep hide me!
For he grasps me now by the hair!"
The loud Ocean heard,
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam;
Behind her descended,
Her billows, unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream.
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main,
Alpheus rushed behind, -
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearled thrones;
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones;
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams

Weave a network of colored light;
And under the caves
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night: -
Outspeeding the shark,
And the swordfish dark, -
Under the Ocean's foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain cliffs,
They passed to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill;
At noontide they flow
Through the woods below
And the meadows of asphodel;
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore; -
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky.
When they love but live no more.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

THE CATARACT OF LODORE

"How does the water
Come down at Lodore?"
My little boy asked me
Thus, once on a time;
And moreover he tasked me
To tell him in rhyme.
Anon, at the word,
There first came one daughter,
And then came another,
To second and third
The request of their brother,
And to hear how the water
Comes down at Lodore,
With its rush and its roar,
As many a time
They had seen it before.
So I told them in rhyme,
For of rhymes I had store;
And 'twas in my vocation
For their recreation
That so I should sing;
Because I was Laureate
To them and the King.

From its sources which well
In the tarn on the fell;
From its fountains
In the mountains,
Its rills and its gills;
Through moss and through brake,
It runs and it creeps
For a while, till it sleeps
In its own little lake.
And thence at departing,
Awakening and starting,
It runs through the reeds,
And away it proceeds,
Through meadow and glade,
In sun and in shade,
And through the wood-shelter,
Among crags in its flurry,
Helter-skelter,
Hurry-scurry.
Here it comes sparkling,
And there it lies darkling;
Now smoking and frothing
Its tumult and wrath in,
Till, in this rapid race
On which it is bent,
It reaches the place
Of its steep descent.

The cataract strong
Then plunges along,
Striking and raging
As if a war raging
Its caverns and rocks among;
Rising and leaping,
Sinking and creeping,
Swelling and sweeping,
Showering and springing,
Flying and flinging,
Writhing and ringing,
Eddying and whisking,
Spouting and frisking,
Turning and twisting,
Around and around
With endless rebound:
Smiting and fighting,
A sight to delight in;
Confounding, astounding,
Dizzying and deafening the ear with its sound.

Collecting, projecting,
Receding and speeding,
And shocking and rocking,
And darting and parting,
And threading and spreading,
And whizzing and hissing,
And dripping and skipping,
And hitting and splitting,

And shining and twining,
And rattling and battling,
And shaking and quaking,
And pouring and roaring,
And waving and raving,
And tossing and crossing,
And flowing and going,
And running and stunning,
And foaming and roaming,
And dinning and spinning,
And dropping and hopping,
And working and jerking,
And guggling and struggling,
And heaving and cleaving,
And moaning and groaning;

And glittering and frittering,
And gathering and feathering,
And whitening and brightening,
And quivering and shivering,
And hurrying and skurrying,
And thundering and floundering;

Dividing and gliding and sliding,
And falling and brawling and sprawling,
And driving and riving and striving,
And sprinkling and twinkling and wrinkling,
And sounding and bounding and rounding,
And bubbling and troubling and doubling,
And grumbling and rumbling and tumbling,
And clattering and battering and shattering;

Retreating and beating and meeting and sheeting,
Delaying and straying and playing and spraying,
Advancing and prancing and glancing and dancing,
Recoiling, turmoiling and toiling and boiling,
And gleaming and streaming and steaming and beaming,
And rushing and flushing and brushing and gushing,
And flapping and rapping and clapping and slapping,
And curling and whirling and purling and twirling,
And thumping and plumping and bumping and jumping,
And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing;
And so never ending, but always descending,
Sounds and motions for ever and ever are blending
All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar, -
And this way the water comes down at Lodore.

Robert Southey [1774-1843]

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,

And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried Abide, abide,
The wilful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laying laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said Stay,
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed Abide, abide,
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, Pass not, so cold, these manifold
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
- Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst -
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call -
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main.
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

Sidney Lanier [1842-1881]

"FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON"

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes;
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds through the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear;
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear-winding rill;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft as mild evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes;
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

CANADIAN BOAT-SONG

Written On The River St. Lawrence

Faintly as tolls the evening chime
Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time.
Soon as the woods on shore look dim,
We'll sing at St. Ann's our parting hymn.
Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast,
The rapids are near and the daylight's past.

Why should we yet our sail unfurl?
There is not a breath the blue wave to curl,
But, when the wind blows off the shore,
Oh, sweetly we'll rest our weary oar.
Blow, breezes, blow, the stream runs fast,
The rapids are near and the daylight's past.

Utawas' tide! this trembling moon
Shall see us float over thy surges soon.
Saint of this green isle! hear our prayers,
Oh, grant us cool heavens and favoring airs.
Blow, breezes, blow, the stream runs fast,
The rapids are near and the daylight's past.

Thomas Moore [1779-1852]

THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs, -
Emerald twilights, -
Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
The wide sea-marshes of Glynn; -
Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noonday fire, -
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves, -
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good; -

O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noonday sun of the June-day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine;
But now when the noon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream, -
Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn
Will work me no fear like the fear they have wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth was but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the plain, -

Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face
The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a belt of the dawn,
For a mete and a mark
To the forest-dark: -

So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low, -
Thus - with your favor - soft, with a reverent hand,
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of the land!)
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds
of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines
linger and curl
As a silver wrought garment that clings to and follows the firm sweet
limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,

Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy;
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvelous marshes of Glynn.

Sidney Lanier [1842-1881]

THE TROSACHS

There's not a nook within this solemn Pass
But were an apt confessional for one
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

William Wordsworth [1700-1850]

HYMN

Before Sunrise, In The Vale Of Chamouni

Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald, awful head, O sovereign Blanc!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form,
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee and above
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshiped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my thought,
Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing - there,
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my Heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the Vale!
O, struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink:
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who called you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shattered and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain -
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet? -
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain-storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the elements!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Off from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene,
Into the depth of clouds that veil thy breast -
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow traveling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapory cloud,
To rise before me - Rise, O ever rise!
Rise like a cloud of incense, from the Earth!
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,

Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

THE PEAKS

In the night
Gray, heavy clouds muffled the valleys,
And the peaks looked toward God alone.
"O Master, that movest the wind with a finger,
Humble, idle, futile peaks are we.
Grant that we may run swiftly across the world
To huddle in worship at Thy feet."

In the morning
A noise of men at work came through the clear blue miles,
And the little black cities were apparent.
"O Master, that knowest the meaning of raindrops,
Humble, idle, futile peaks are we.
Give voice to us, we pray, O Lord,
That we may sing Thy goodness to the sun."

In the evening
The far valleys were sprinkled with tiny lights.
"O Master,
Thou that knowest the value of kings and birds,
Thou hast made us humble, idle, futile peaks.
Thou only needest eternal patience;
We bow to Thy wisdom, O Lord -
Humble, idle, futile peaks."

In the night
Gray, heavy clouds muffled the valleys,
And the peaks looked toward God alone.

Stephen Crane [1871-1900]

KINCHINJUNGA

Next To Everest Highest Of Mountains

O white priest of Eternity, around
Whose lofty summit veiling clouds arise
Of the earth's immemorial sacrifice
To Brahma, in whose breath all lives and dies;
O hierarch enrobed in timeless snows,
First-born of Asia, whose maternal throes
Seem changed now to a million human woes,
Holy thou art and still! Be so, nor sound
One sigh of all the mystery in thee found.

For in this world too much is overclear,
Immortal ministrant to many lands,
From whose ice altars flow, to fainting sands,
Rivers that each libation poured expands.

Too much is known, O Ganges-giving sire:
Thy people fathom life, and find it dire;
Thy people fathom death, and, in it, fire
To live again, though in Illusion's sphere,
Behold concealed as grief is in a tear.

Wherefore continue, still enshrined, thy rites,
Though dark Tibet, that dread ascetic, falls,
In strange austerity, whose trance appals, -
Before thee, and a suppliant on thee calls.
Continue still thy silence high and sure,
That something beyond fleeting may endure -
Something that shall forevermore allure
Imagination on to mystic flights
Wherein alone no wing of evil lights.

Yea, wrap thy awful gulfs and acolytes
Of lifted granite round with reachless snows.
Stand for eternity, while pilgrim rows
Of all the nations envy thy repose.
Ensheath thy swart sublimities, unscaled;
Be that alone on earth which has not failed;
Be that which never yet has yearned nor ailed,
But since primeval Power upreared thy heights
Has stood above all deaths and all delights.

And though thy loftier brother shall be king,
High-priest be thou to Brahma unrevealed,
While thy white sanctity forever sealed
In icy silence leaves desire congealed.
In ghostly ministrations to the sun,
And to the mendicant stars and the moon-nun,
Be holy still, till east to west has run,
And till no sacrificial suffering
On any shrine is left to tell life's sting.

Cale Young Rice [1872-

THE HILLS

Mussoorie and Chakrata Hill
The Jumna flows between
And from Chakrata's hills afar
Mussoorie's vale is seen.
The mountains sing together
In cloud or sunny weather,
The Jumna, through their tether,
Foams white or plunges green.

The mountains stand and laugh at Time,
They pillar up the Earth,
They watch the ages pass, they bring
New centuries to birth.
They feel the daybreak shiver,
They see Time passing ever,
As flows the Jumna River
As breaks the white sea-surf.

They drink the sun in a golden cup
And in blue mist the rain;
With a sudden brightening they meet the lightning
Or ere it strikes the plain.
They seize the sullen thunder
And take it up for plunder
And cast it down and under,
And up and back again. . . .

. . . Here, in the hills of ages
I met thee face to face;
O mother Earth, O lover Earth,
Look down on me with grace.
Give me thy passion burning,
And thy strong patience, turning
All wrath to power, all yearning
To truth, thy dwelling-place.

Julian Grenfell [1888-1915]

HEMLOCK MOUNTAIN

By orange grove and palm-tree, we walked the southern shore,
Each day more still and golden than was the day before.
That calm and languid sunshine! How faint it made us grow
To look on Hemlock Mountain when the storm hangs low!

To see its rocky pastures, its sparse but hardy corn,
The mist roll off its forehead before a harvest morn;
To hear the pine-trees crashing across its gulfs of snow
Upon a roaring midnight when the whirlwinds blow.

Tell not of lost Atlantis, or fabled Avalon;
The olive, or the vineyard, no winter breathes upon;
Away from Hemlock Mountain we could not well forego,
For all the summer islands where the gulf tides flow.

Sarah N. Cleghorn [1876-

SUNRISE ON RYDAL WATER

Come down at dawn from windless hills
Into the valley of the lake,
Where yet a larger quiet fills
The hour, and mist and water make
With rocks and reeds and island boughs
One silence and one element,
Where wonder goes surely as once
It went
By Galilean prow.

Moveless the water and the mist,
Moveless the secret air above,
Hushed, as upon some happy tryst
The poised expectancy of love;

What spirit is it that adores
What mighty presence yet unseen?
What consummation works apace
Between
These rapt enchanted shores?

Never did virgin beauty wake
Devouter to the bridal feast
Than moves this hour upon the lake
In adoration to the east.
Here is the bride a god may know,
The primal will, the young consent,
Till surely upon the appointed mood Intent
The god shall leap - and, lo,

Over the lake's end strikes the sun -
White, flameless fire; some purity
Thrilling the mist, a splendor won
Out of the world's heart. Let there be
Thoughts, and atonements, and desires;
Proud limbs, and undeliberate tongue;
Where now we move with mortal care Among
Immortal dew and fires.

So the old mating goes apace,
Wind with the sea, and blood with thought,
Lover with lover; and the grace
Of understanding comes unsought
When stars into the twilight steer,
Or thrushes build among the may,
Or wonder moves between the hills,
And day
Comes up on Rydal mere.

John Drinkwater [1882-

THE DESERTED PASTURE

I love the stony pasture
That no one else will have.
The old gray rocks so friendly seem,
So durable and brave.

In tranquil contemplation
It watches through the year,
Seeing the frosty stars arise,
The slender moons appear.

Its music is the rain-wind,
Its choristers the birds,
And there are secrets in its heart
Too wonderful for words.

It keeps the bright-eyed creatures
That play about its walls,
Though long ago its milking herds
Were banished from their stalls.

Only the children come there,
For buttercups in May,
Or nuts in autumn, where it lies
Dreaming the hours away.

Long since its strength was given
To making good increase,
And now its soul is turned again
To beauty and to peace.

There in the early springtime
The violets are blue,
And adder-tongues in coats of gold
Are garmented anew.

There bayberry and aster
Are crowded on its floors,
When marching summer halts to praise
The Lord of Out-of-doors.

And there October passes
In gorgeous livery, -
In purple ash, and crimson oak,
And golden tulip tree.

And when the winds of winter
Their bugle blasts begin,
The snowy hosts of heaven arrive
To pitch their tents therein.

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

TO MEADOWS

Ye have been fresh and green;
Ye have been filled with flowers;
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

Ye have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home.

Ye've heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round,
Each virgin, like a Spring,
With honeysuckles crowned.

But now we see none here
Whose silvery feet did tread,
And with dishevelled hair
Adorned this smoother mead.

Like unthrifths, having spent
Your stock, and needy grown,

Ye're left here to lament
Your poor estates, alone.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under;
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is 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 and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain-crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And, when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,

Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The Stars peep behind her and peer.
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the Stars reel and swim,
When the Whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof;
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march,
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The Sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky:
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb
I arise, and unbuild it again.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

APRIL RAIN

It is not raining rain for me,
It's raining daffodils;
In every dimpled drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills.

The clouds of gray engulf the day
And overwhelm the town;
It is not raining rain to me,
It's raining roses down.

It is not raining rain to me,
But fields of clover bloom,

Where any buccaneering bee
Can find a bed and room.

A health unto the happy,
A fig for him who frets!
It is not raining rain to me,
It's raining violets.

Robert Loveman [1864-1923]

SUMMER INVOCATION

O gentle, gentle summer rain,
Let not the silver lily pine,
The drooping lily pine in vain
To feel that dewy touch of thine, -
To drink thy freshness once again,
O gentle, gentle summer rain!

In heat the landscape quivering lies;
The cattle pant beneath the tree;
Through parching air and purple skies
The earth looks up, in vain, for thee;
For thee - for thee, it looks in vain
O gentle, gentle summer rain.

Come thou, and brim the meadow streams,
And soften all the hills with mist,
O falling dew! from burning dreams
By thee shall herb and flower be kissed,
And Earth shall bless thee yet again,
O gentle, gentle summer rain.

William Cox Bennett [1820-1895]

APRIL RAIN

The April rain, the April rain,
Comes slanting down in fitful showers,
Then from the furrow shoots the grain,
And banks are edged with nestling flowers;
And in gray shaw and woodland bowers
The cuckoo through the April rain
Calls once again.

The April sun, the April sun,
Glints through the rain in fitful splendor,
And in gray shaw and woodland dun
The little leaves spring forth and tender
Their infant hands, yet weak and slender,
For warmth towards the April sun,
One after one.

And between shower and shine hath birth
The rainbow's evanescent glory;
Heaven's light that breaks on mist of earth!

Frail symbol of our human story,
It flowers through showers where, looming hoary,
The rain-clouds flash with April mirth,
Like Life on earth.

Mathilde Blind [1841-1896]

TO THE RAINBOW

Triumphal arch, that fill'st the sky
When storms prepare to part,
I ask not proud Philosophy
To teach me what thou art; -

Still seem; as to my childhood's sight,
A midway station given
For happy spirits to alight
Betwixt the earth and heaven.

Can all that Optics teach unfold
Thy form to please me so,
As when I dreamt of gems and gold
Hid in thy radiant bow?

When Science from Creation's face
Enchantment's veil withdraws,
What lovely visions yield their place
To cold material laws!

And yet, fair bow, no fabling dreams,
But words of the Most High,
Have told why first thy robe of beams
Was woven in the sky.

When o'er the green, undeluged earth
Heaven's covenant thou didst shine,
How came the world's gray fathers forth
To watch thy sacred sign!

And when its yellow luster smiled
O'er mountains yet untrod,
Each mother held aloft her child
To bless the bow of God.

Methinks, thy jubilee to keep,
The first-made anthem rang
On earth, delivered from the deep,
And the first poet sang.

Nor ever shall the Muse's eye
Unraptured greet thy beam;
Theme of primeval prophecy,
Be still the prophet's theme!

The earth to thee her incense yields,
The lark thy welcome sings,
When, glittering in the freshened fields,

The snowy mushroom springs.

How glorious is thy girdle, cast
O'er mountain, tower, and town,
Or mirrored in the ocean vast,
A thousand fathoms down!

As fresh in yon horizon dark,
As young thy beauties seem,
As when the eagle from the ark
First sported in thy beam:

For, faithful to its sacred page,
Heaven still rebuilds thy span;
Nor lets the type grow pale with age,
That first spoke peace to man.

Thomas Campbell [1777-1844]

GREEN THINGS GROWING

MY GARDEN

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot -
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contentends that God is not -
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign:
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

Thomas Edward Brown [1830-1897]

THE GARDEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such was that happy Garden-state
While man there walked without a mate:
After a place so pure and sweet,

What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one,
To live in Paradise alone.

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

Andrew Marvell [1621-1678]

A GARDEN

Written After The Civil Wars

See how the flowers, as at parade,
Under their colors stand displayed:
Each regiment in order grows,
That of the tulip, pink, and rose.
But when the vigilant patrol
Of stars walks round about the pole,
Their leaves, that to the stalks are curled,
Seem to their staves the ensigns furled.
Then in some flower's beloved hut
Each bee, as sentinel, is shut,
And sleeps so too; but if once stirred,
She runs you through, nor asks the word.
O thou, that dear and happy Isle,
The garden of the world erewhile,
Thou Paradise of the four seas
Which Heaven planted us to please,
But, to exclude the world, did guard
With watery if not flaming sword;
What luckless apple did we taste
To make us mortal and thee waste!
Unhappy! shall we never more
That sweet militia restore,
When gardens only had their towers,
And all the garrisons were flowers;
When roses only arms might bear,
And men did rosy garlands wear?

Andrew Marvell [1621-1678]

A GARDEN SONG

Here, in this sequestered close
Bloom the hyacinth and rose;
Here beside the modest stock
Flaunts the flaring hollyhock;
Here, without a pang, one sees

Ranks, conditions, and, degrees.

All the seasons run their race
In this quiet resting-place;
Peach, and apricot, and fig
Here will ripen, and grow big;
Here is store and overplus, -
More had not Alcinous!

Here, in alleys cool and green,
Far ahead the thrush is seen;
Here along the southern wall
Keeps the bee his festival;
All is quiet else - afar
Sounds of toil and turmoil are.

Here be shadows large and long;
Here be spaces meet for song;
Grant, O garden-god, that I,
Now that none profane is nigh, -
Now that mood and moment please,
Find the fair Pierides!

Austin Dobson [1840-1921]

"IN GREEN OLD GARDENS"

In green old gardens, hidden away
From sight of revel and sound of strife,
Where the bird may sing out his soul ere he die,
Nor fears for the night, so he lives his day;
Where the high red walls, which are growing gray
With their lichen and moss embroideries,
Seem sadly and sternly to shut out life,
Because it is often as red as they;

Where even the bee has time to glide
(Gathering gayly his honey's store)
Right to the heart of the old-world flowers -
China-asters and purple stocks,
Dahlias and tall red hollyhocks,
Laburnums raining their golden showers,
Columbines prim of the folded core,
And lupins, and larkspurs, and "London pride";

Where the heron is waiting amongst the reeds,
Grown tame in the silence that reigns around,
Broken only, now and then,
By shy woodpecker or noisy jay,
By the far-off watch-dog's muffled bay;
But where never the purposeless laughter of men,
Or the seething city's murmurous sound
Will float up over the river-weeds.

Here may I live what life I please,
Married and buried out of sight, -
Married to pleasure, and buried to pain, -

Hidden away amongst scenes like these,
Under the fans of the chestnut trees;
Living my child-life over again,
With the further hope of a fallen delight,
Blithe as the birds and wise as the bees.

In green old gardens, hidden away
From sight of revel and sound of strife, -
Here have I leisure to breathe and move,
And to do my work in a nobler way;
To sing my songs, and to say my say;
To dream my dreams, and to love my love;
To hold my faith, and to live my life,
Making the most of its shadowy day.

Violet Fane [1843-1905]

A BENEDICTINE GARDEN

Through all the wind-blown aisles of May,
Faint bells of perfume swing and fall.
Within this apple-petalled wall
(A gray east, flecked with rosy day)
The pink laburnum lays her cheek
In married, matchless, lovely bliss,
Against her golden mate, to seek
His airy kiss.

Tulips, in faded splendor drest,
Brood o'er their beds, a slumbrous gloom.
Dame Peony, red and ripe with bloom,
Swells the silk housing of her breast.
The Lilac, drunk to ecstasy,
Breaks her full flagons on the air,
And drenches home the reeling bee
Who found her fair.

O cowed Legion of the Cross,
What solemn pleasantries are thine,
Vowing to seek the life divine
Through abnegation and through loss!
Men but make monuments of sin
Who walk the earth's ambitious round;
Thou hast the richer realm within
This garden ground.

No woman's voice takes sweeter note
Than chanting of this plumed choir.
No jewel ever wore the fire
Hung on a dewdrop's quivering throat.
A ruddier pomp and pageantry
Than world's delight o'erfleets thy sod;
And choosing this, thou hast in fee
The peace of God.

Alice Brown [1857-

AN AUTUMN GARDEN

My tent stands in a garden
Of aster and golden-rod,
Tilled by the rain and the sunshine,
And sown by the hand of God, -
An old New England pasture
Abandoned to peace and time,
And by the magic of beauty
Reclaimed to the sublime.

About it are golden woodlands
Of tulip and hickory;
On the open ridge behind it
You may mount to a glimpse of sea, -
The far-off, blue, Homeric
Rim of the world's great shield,
A border of boundless glamor
For the soul's familiar field.

In purple and gray-wrought lichen
The boulders lie in the sun;
Along its grassy footpath,
The white-tailed rabbits run.
The crickets work and chirrup
Through the still afternoon;
And the owl calls at twilight
Under the frosty moon.

The odorous wild grape clammers
Over the tumbling wall,
And through the autumnal quiet
The chestnuts open and fall.
Sharing time's freshness and fragrance,
Part of the earth's great soul,
Here man's spirit may ripen
To wisdom serene and whole.

Shall we not grow with the asters? -
Never reluctant nor sad,
Not counting the cost of being,
Living to dare and be glad.
Shall we not lift with the crickets
A chorus of ready cheer,
Braving the frost of oblivion,
Quick to be happy here?

The deep red cones of the sumach
And the woodbine's crimson sprays
Have bannered the common roadside
For the pageant of passing days.
These are the oracles Nature
Fills with her holy breath,
Giving them glory of color,
Transcending the shadow of death.

Here in the sifted sunlight

A spirit seems to brood
On the beauty and worth of being,
In tranquil, instinctive mood;
And the heart, athrob with gladness
Such as the wise earth knows,
Wells with a full thanksgiving
For the gifts that life bestows:

For the ancient and virile nurture
Of the teeming primordial ground,
For the splendid gospel of color,
The rapt revelations of sound;
For the morning-blue above us
And the rusted gold of the fern,
For the chickadee's call to valor
Bidding the faint-heart turn;

For fire and running water,
Snowfall and summer rain;
For sunsets and quiet meadows,
The fruit and the standing grain;
For the solemn hour of moonrise
Over the crest of trees,
When the mellow lights are kindled
In the lamps of the centuries.

For those who wrought aforetime,
Led by the mystic strain
To strive for the larger freedom,
And live for the greater gain;
For plenty and peace and playtime,
The homely goods of earth,
And for rare immaterial treasures
Accounted of little worth;

For art and learning and friendship,
Where beneficent truth is supreme,
Those everlasting cities
Built on the hills of dream;
For all things growing and goodly
That foster this life, and breed
The immortal flower of wisdom
Out of the mortal seed.

But most of all for the spirit
That can not rest nor bide
In stale and sterile convenience,
Nor safety proven and tried,
But still inspired and driven,
Must seek what better may be,
And up from the loveliest garden
Must climb for a glimpse of sea.

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

UNGUARDED

The Mistress of the Roses
Is haply far away,
And through her garden closes
What strange intruders stray.

See on its rustic spindles
The sundrop's amber fire!
And the goldenrod enkindles
The embers on its spire.

The dodder's shining tangle
From the meadow brook steals in,
Where in this shadowed angle
The pale lace-makers spin.

Here's Black-Eyed Susan weeping
Into exotic air,
And Bouncing Bet comes creeping
Back to her old parterre.

Now in this pleasant weather -
So sweetly reconciled -
They dwell and dream together,
The kin of court and wild.

Ada Foster-Murray [1857-1936]

THE DESERTED GARDEN

I mind me in the days departed,
How often underneath the sun,
With childish bounds I used to run
To a garden long deserted.

The beds and walks were vanished quite;
And wheresoe'er had struck the spade,
The greenest grasses Nature laid
To sanctify her right.

I called the place my wilderness;
For no one entered there but I;
The sheep looked in, the grass to espy,
And passed it ne'ertheless.

The trees were interwoven wild,
And spread their boughs enough about
To keep both sheep and shepherd out,
But not a happy child.

Adventurous joy it was for me!
I crept beneath the boughs, and found
A circle smooth of mossy ground
Beneath a poplar tree.

Old garden rose-trees hedged it in,
Bedropt with roses waxen-white,
Well satisfied with dew and light

And careless to be seen.

Long years ago, it might befall,
When all the garden flowers were trim,
The grave old gardener prided him
On these the most of all.

Some lady, stately overmuch,
Here moving with a silken noise,
Has blushed beside them at the voice
That likened her to such.

Or these, to make a diadem,
She often may have plucked and twined,
Half-smiling as it came to mind,
That few would look at them.

Oh, little thought that lady proud,
A child would watch her fair white rose,
When buried lay her whiter brows,
And silk was changed for shroud!

Nor thought that gardener, (full of scorns
For men unlearned and simple phrase,)
A child would bring it all its praise
By creeping through the thorns!

To me upon my low moss seat,
Though never a dream the roses sent,
Of science or love's compliment,
I ween they smelt as sweet.

It did not move my grief to see
The trace of human step departed:
Because the garden was deserted,
The blither place for me!

Friends, blame me not! a narrow ken
Hath childhood 'twixt the sun and sward;
We draw the moral afterward,
We feel the gladness then.

And gladdest hours for me did glide
In silence at the rose-tree wall:
A thrush made gladness musical
Upon the other side.

Nor he nor I did e'er incline
To peck or pluck the blossoms white;
How should I know but roses might
Lead lives as glad as mine?

To make my hermit-home complete,
I brought clear water from the spring
Praised in its own low murmuring,
And cresses glossy wet.

And so, I thought, my likeness grew

(Without the melancholy tale)
To "gentle hermit of the dale,"
And Angelina too.

For oft I read within my nook
Such minstrel stories; till the breeze
Made sounds poetic in the trees,
And then I shut the book.

If I shut this wherein I write,
I hear no more the wind athwart
Those trees, nor feel that childish heart
Delighting in delight.

My childhood from my life is parted,
My footstep from the moss which drew
Its fairy circle round: anew
The garden is deserted.

Another thrush may there rehearse
The madrigals which sweetest are;
No more for me! myself afar
Do sing a sadder verse.

Ah me, ah me! when erst I lay
In that child's-nest so greenly wrought,
I laughed unto myself and thought
"The time will pass away."

And still I laughed, and did not fear
But that, whene'er was passed away
The childish time, some happier play
My womanhood would cheer.

I knew the time would pass away,
And yet, beside the rose-tree wall,
Dear God, how seldom, if at all,
Did I look up to pray!

The time is past; and now that grows
The cypress high among the trees,
And I behold white sepulchres
As well as the white rose, -

When graver, meeker thoughts are given,
And I have learnt to lift my face,
Reminded how earth's greenest place
The color draws from heaven, -

It something saith for earthly pain,
But more for Heavenly promise free,
That I who was, would shrink to be
That happy child again.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning [1806-1861]

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and 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 and 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 gray, bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briers if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

The dense, hard passage is blind and 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 and wither
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
Only the sun and 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 and 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 and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and 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 and laughter,
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left naught living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and 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 and 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.

Algernon Charles Swinburne [1837-1909]

GREEN THINGS GROWING

O the green things growing, the green things growing,
The faint sweet smell of the green things growing!
I should like to live, whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life of my green things growing.

O the fluttering and the pattering of those green things growing!
How they talk each to each, when none of us are knowing;
In the wonderful white of the weird moonlight
Or the dim dreamy dawn when the cocks are crowing.

I love, I love them so - my green things growing!
And I think that they love me, without false showing;
For by many a tender touch, they comfort me so much,
With the soft mute comfort of green things growing.

And in the rich store of their blossoms glowing
Ten for one I take they're on me bestowing:
Oh, I should like to see, if God's will it may be,
Many, many a summer of my green things growing!

But if I must be gathered for the angel's sowing,
Sleep out of sight awhile, like the green things growing,
Though dust to dust return, I think I'll scarcely mourn,
If I may change into green things growing.

Dinah Maria Mulock Craik [1826-1887]

A CHANTED CALENDAR From "Balder"

First came the primrose,
On the bank high,
Like a maiden looking forth
From the window of a tower
When the battle rolls below,
So looked she,
And saw the storms go by.

Then came the wind-flower
In the valley left behind,
As a wounded maiden, pale
With purple streaks of woe,
When the battle has rolled by
Wanders to and fro,
So tottered she,
Dishevelled in the wind.

Then came the daisies,
On the first of May,
Like a bannered show's advance
While the crowd runs by the way,
With ten thousand flowers about them they came trooping
through the fields.

As a happy people come,
So came they,
As a happy people come
When the war has rolled away,
With dance and tabor, pipe and drum,
And all make holiday.

Then came the cowslip,
Like a dancer in the fair,
She spread her little mat of green,
And on it danced she.
With a fillet bound about her brow,
A fillet round her happy brow,
A golden fillet round her brow,
And rubies in her hair.

Sydney Dobell [1824-1874]

FLOWERS

Spare full well, in language quaint and olden
One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,

When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history,
As astrologers and seers of eld;
Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,
Like the burning stars, which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written in those stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
Stands the revelation of his love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Writ all over this great world of ours;
Making evident our own creation,
In these stars of earth, these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing,
See, alike in stars and flowers, a part
Of the self-same, universal being,
Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.

Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,
Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,
Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,
Buds that open only to decay;

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,
Flaunting gayly in the golden light;
Large desires, with most uncertain issues,
Tender wishes, blossoming at night!

These in flowers and men are more than seeming;
Workings are they of the self-same powers
Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,
Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing,
Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born;
Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn;

Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing,
And in Summer's green-emblazoned field,
But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing,
In the centre of his brazen shield;

Not alone in meadows and green alleys,
On the mountain-top, and by the brink
Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys,
Where the slaves of nature stoop to drink;

Not alone in her vast dome of glory,
Not on graves of bird and beast alone,
But in old cathedrals, high and hoary,
On the tombs of heroes, carved in stone;

In the cottage of the rudest peasant;
In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,
Speaking of the Past unto the Present,
Tell us of the ancient Games of Flowers;

In all places, then, and in all seasons,
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
How akin they are to human things.

And with childlike, credulous affection,
We behold their tender buds expand;
Emblems of our own great resurrection,
Emblems of the bright and better land.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

FLOWERS

I will not have the mad Clytie,
Whose head is turned by the sun;
The tulip is a courtly quean,
Whom, therefore, I will shun:
The cowslip is a country wench,
The violet is a nun; -
But I will woo the dainty rose,
The queen of every one.

The pea is but a wanton witch,
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand;
The wolfsbane I should dread;
Nor will I dreary rosemarye,
That always mourns the dead;
But I will woo the dainty rose,
With her cheeks of tender red.

The lily is all in white, like a saint,
And so is no mate for me;
And the daisy's cheek is tipped with a blush,
She is of such low degree;
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom's betrothed to the bee; -
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.

Thomas Hood [1799-1845]

A CONTEMPLATION UPON FLOWERS

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 and 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 and spruce!
You fragrant flowers! then teach me, that my breath
Like yours may sweeten and perfume my death.

(?) Henry King [1592-1669]

ALMOND BLOSSOM

Blossom of the almond trees,
April's gift to April's bees,
Birthday ornament of Spring,
Flora's fairest daughterling;
Coming when no flowerets dare
Trust the cruel outer air;
When the royal kingcup bold
Dares not don his coat of gold;
And the sturdy black-thorn spray
Keeps his silver for the May; -
Coming when no flowerets would,
Save thy lowly sisterhood,
Early violets; blue and white,
Dying for their love of light; -
Almond blossom, sent to teach us
That the spring days soon will reach us,
Lest, with longing over-tried,
We die, as the violets died; -
Blossom, clouding all the tree
With thy crimson broidery,
Long before a leaf of green
On the bravest bough is seen; -
Ah! when winter winds are swinging
All thy red bells into ringing,
With a bee in every bell,
Almond bloom, we greet thee well.

Edwin Arnold [1832-1904]

WHITE AZALEAS

Azaleas - whitest of white!
White as the drifted snow
Fresh-fallen out of the night,
Before the coming glow.
Tinges the morning light;
When the light is like the snow,

White,
And the silence is like the light:
Light, and silence, and snow, -
All - white!

White! not a hint
Of the creamy tint
A rose will hold,
The whitest rose, in its inmost fold;
Not a possible blush;
White as an embodied hush;
A very rapture of white;
A wedlock Of silence and light:
White, white as the wonder undefiled
Of Eve just wakened in Paradise;
Nay, white as the angel of a child
That looks into God's own eyes!

Harriet McEwen Kimball [1834-1917]

BUTTERCUPS

There must be fairy miners
Just underneath the mould,
Such wondrous quaint designers
Who live in caves of gold.

They take the shining metals,
And beat them into shreds,
And mould them into petals
To make the flowers' heads.

Sometimes they melt the flowers
To tiny seeds like pearls,
And store them up in bowers
For little boys and girls.

And still a tiny fan turns
Above a forge of gold,
To keep, with fairy lanterns,
The world from growing old.

Wilfrid Thorley [1878-

THE BROOM FLOWER

Oh the Broom, the yellow Broom,
The ancient poet sung it,
And dear it is on summer days
To lie at rest among it.

I know the realms where people say
The flowers have not their fellow;
I know where they shine out like suns,
The crimson and the yellow.

I know where ladies live enchained
In luxury's silken fetters,
And flowers as bright as glittering gems
Are used for written letters.

But ne'er was flower so fair as this,
In modern days or olden;
It groweth on its nodding stem
Like to a garland golden.

And all about my mother's door
Shine out its glittering bushes,
And down the glen, where clear as light
The mountain-water gushes.

Take all the rest; but give me this,
And the bird that nestles in it;
I love it, for it loves the Broom -
The green and yellow linnet.

Well call the rose the queen of flowers,
And boast of that of Sharon,
Of lilies like to marble cups,
And the golden rod of Aaron:

I care not how these flowers may be
Beloved of man and woman;
The Broom it is the flower for me,
That groweth on the common.

Oh the Broom, the yellow Broom,
The ancient poet sung it,
And dear it is on summer days
To lie at rest among it.

Mary Howitt [1799-1888]

THE SMALL CELANDINE

There is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distressed,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
And recognized it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold:
This neither is its courage, nor its choice,

But its necessity in being old.

"The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue."
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was gray.

To be a Prodigal's Favorite - then, worse truth,
A Miser's Pensioner - behold our lot!
O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE

Pansies, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as them, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out.
Little Flower! - I'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met,
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude:
Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty cottager,

Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home;
Spring is coming, Thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighborhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane; - there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as dost behave,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

I know a place where the sun is like gold,
And the cherry blossoms burst with snow,
And down underneath is the loveliest nook,
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,
And one is for love, you know,
And God put another in for luck, -
If you search, you will find where they grow.

But you must have hope, and you must have faith,
You must love and be strong - and so,
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

Ella Higginson [1862-

SWEET CLOVER

Within what weeks the melilot
Gave forth its fragrance, I, a lad,

Or never knew or quite forgot,
Save that 'twas while the year is glad.

Now know I that in bright July
It blossoms; and the perfume fine
Brings back my boyhood, until I
Am steeped in memory as with wine.

Now know I that the whole year long,
Though Winter chills or Summer cheers,
It writes along the weeks its song,
Even as my youth sings through my years.

Wallace Rice [1859-

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD"

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

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle in the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

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

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

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

TO DAFFODILS

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run

But to the even-song;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or any thing.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY
On Turing One Down With The Plough, In April 1786

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower,
Thou'st met me in an evil hour;
For I must crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonny gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonny lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' speckled breast,
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east!

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield
High sheltering woods and wa'st maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod, or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade!

By love's simplicity betrayed,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starred!
Unskillful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And overwhelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink,
Till, wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruined, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine - no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom.

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

A FIELD FLOWER

There is a flower, a little flower
With silver crest and golden eye,
That welcomes every changing hour,
And weathers every sky.

The prouder beauties of the field
In gay but quick succession shine;
Race after race their honors yield,
They flourish and decline.

But this small flower, to Nature dear,
While moons and stars their courses run,
Wreathes the whole circle of the year,
Companion of the Sun.

It smiles upon the lap of May,
To sultry August spreads its charms,
Lights pale October on his way,
And twines December's arms.

The purple heath and golden broom
On moory mountains catch the gale;
O'er lawns the lily sheds perfume,
The violet in the vale.

But this bold floweret climbs the hill,
Hides in the forest, haunts the glen,

Plays on the margin of the rill,
Peeps round the fox's den.

Within the garden's cultured round
It shares the sweet carnation's bed;
And blooms on consecrated ground
In honor of the dead.

The lambkin crops its crimson gem;
The wild bee murmurs on its breast;
The blue-fly bends its pensile stem
Light o'er the skylark's nest.

'Tis Flora's page, - in every place,
In every season, fresh and fair;
It opens with perennial grace,
And blossoms everywhere.

On waste and woodland, rock and plain,
Its humble buds unheeded rise;
The Rose has but a summer reign;
The Daisy never dies!

James Montgomery [1771-1854]

TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON

Shut not so soon; the dull-eyed night
Has not as yet begun
To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closed are,
No shadows great appear;
Nor doth the early shepherd's star
Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye,
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our heart free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their saying was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

TO THE DAISY

With little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy:
Thou unassuming common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which love makes for thee!

Of on the dappled turf at ease,
I sit, and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humor of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure, of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden of love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies dressed
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seem to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy -
That thought comes next - and instantly
The freak is over.
The shape will vanish, - and behold!
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some fairy bold
In fight to cover.

I see thee glittering from afar; -
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air, thou seem'st to rest; -
May peace come never to his nest
Who shall reprove thee!

Bright Flower! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

TO DAISIES

Ah, drops of gold in whitening flame
Burning, we know your lovely name -
Daisies, that little children pull!
Like all weak things, over the strong
Ye do not know your power for wrong,
And much abuse your feebleness.
Daisies, that little children pull,
As ye are weak, be merciful!
O hide your eyes! they are to me
Beautiful insupportably.
Or be but conscious ye are fair,
And I your loveliness could bear,
But, being fair so without art,
Ye vex the silted memories of my heart!

As a pale ghost yearning strays
With sundered gaze,
'Mid corporal presences that are
To it impalpable - such a bar
Sets you more distant than the morning-star.
Such wonder is on you, and amaze,
I look and marvel if I be
Indeed the phantom, or are ye?
The light is on your innocence
Which fell from me.
The fields ye still inhabit whence
My world-acquainted treading strays,
The country where I did commence;
And though ye shine to me so near,
So close to gross and visible sense, -
Between us lies impassable year on year.

To other time and far-off place
Belongs your beauty: silent thus,
Though to other naught you tell,
To me your ranks are rumorous
Of an ancient miracle.
Vain does my touch your petals graze,
I touch you not; and though ye blossom here,
Your roots are fast in alienated days.
Ye there are anchored, while Time's stream
Has swept me past them: your white ways
And infantile delights do seem
To look in on me like a face,
Dead and sweet, come back through dream,
With tears, because for old embrace
It has no arms.

These hands did toy,
Children, with you, when I was child,
And in each other's eyes we smiled:
Not yours, not yours the grievous-fair

Apparelling
With which you wet mine eyes; you wear,
Ah me, the garment of the grace
I wove you when I was a boy;
O mine, and not the year's your stolen Spring!
And since ye wear it,
Hide your sweet selves! I cannot bear it.
For when ye break the cloven earth
With your young laughter and endearment,
No blossomy carillon 'tis of mirth
To me; I see my slaughtered joy
Bursting its cerement.

Francis Thompson [1859?-1907]

TO THE DANDELION

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
With news from heaven, which he could bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891]

DANDELION

At dawn, when England's childish tongue
Lisped happy truths, and men were young,
Her Chaucer, with a gay content
Hummed through the shining fields, scarce bent
By poet's foot, and, plucking, set,
All lusty, sunny, dewy-wet,
A dandelion in his verse,
Like the first gold in childhood's purse.

At noon, when harvest colors die
On the pale azure of the sky,
And dreams through dozing grasses creep
Of winds that are themselves asleep,
Rapt Shelley found the airy ghost
Of that bright flower the spring loves most,
And ere one silvery ray was blown
From its full disk made it his own.

Now from the stubble poets glean
Scant flowers of thought; the Muse would wean
Her myriad nurslings, feeding them
On petals plucked from a dry stem.
For one small plumule still adrift,
The wind-blown dandelion's gift,
The fields once blossomy we scour
Where the old poets plucked the flower.

Annie Rankin Annan [1848-1925]

THE DANDELIONS

Upon a showery night and still,

Without a sound of warning,
A trooper band surprised the hill,
And held it in the morning.

We were not waked by bugle-notes,
No cheer our dreams invaded,
And yet, at dawn, their yellow coats
On the green slopes paraded.

We careless folk the deed forgot;
Till one day, idly walking,
We marked upon the self-same spot
A crowd of veterans talking.

They shook their trembling heads and gray
With pride and noiseless laughter;
When, well-a-day! they blew away,
And ne'er were heard of after!

Helen Gray Cone [1859-1934]

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night,

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frost and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue - blue - as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

William Cullen Bryant [1794-1878]

GOLDENROD

When the wayside tangles blaze
In the low September sun,
When the flowers of Summer days
Droop and wither, one by one,

Reaching up through bush and brier,
Sumptuous brow and heart of fire,
Flaunting high its wind-rocked plume,
Brave with wealth of native bloom, -
Goldenrod!

When the meadow, lately shorn,
Parched and languid, swoons with pain,
When her life-blood, night and morn,
Shrinks in every throbbing vein,
Round her fallen, tarnished urn
Leaping watch-fires brighter burn;
Royal arch o'er Autumn's gate,
Bending low with lustrous weight, -
Goldenrod!

In the pasture's rude embrace,
All o'errun with tangled vines,
Where the thistle claims its place,
And the straggling hedge confines,
Bearing still the sweet impress
Of unfettered loveliness,
In the field and by the wall,
Binding, clasping, crowning all, -
Goldenrod!

Nature lies disheveled pale,
With her feverish lips apart, -
Day by day the pulses fail,
Nearer to her bounding heart;
Yet that slackened grasp doth hold
Store of pure and genuine gold;
Quick thou comest, strong and free,
Type of all the wealth to be, -
Goldenrod!

Elaine Goodale Eastman [1863-

LESSONS FROM THE GORSE

Mountain gorses, ever-golden,
Cankered not the whole year long!
Do ye teach us to be strong,
Howsoever pricked and holden,
Like your thorny blooms, and so
Trodden on by rain and snow,
Up the hill-side of this life, as bleak as where ye grow?

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms,
Do ye teach us to be glad
When no summer can be had,
Blooming in our inward bosoms?
Ye whom God preserveth still,
Set as lights upon a hill,
Tokens to the wintry earth that Beauty liveth still!

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us

From that academic chair
Canopied with azure air,
That the wisest word man reaches
Is the humblest he can speak?
Ye, who live on mountain peak,
Yet live low along the ground, beside the grasses meek!

Mountain gorses, since Linnaeus
Knelt beside you on the sod,
For your beauty thanking God, -
For your teaching, ye should see us
Bowing in prostration new!
Whence arisen, - if one or two
Drops be on our cheeks - O world, they are not tears but dew.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning [1806-1861]

THE VOICE OF THE GRASS

Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere;
By the dusty roadside,
On the sunny hillside,
Close by the noisy brook,
In every shady nook,
I come creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, smiling everywhere;
All round the open door,
Where here sit the aged poor;
Here where the children play,
In the bright and merry May,
I come creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere;
In the noisy city street
My pleasant face you'll meet,
Cheering the sick at heart
Toiling his busy part, -
Silently creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere;
You cannot see me coming,
Nor hear my low sweet humming;
For in the starry night,
And the glad morning light,
I come quietly creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere;
More welcome than the flowers
In summer's pleasant hours;
The gentle cow is glad,
And the merry bird not sad,
To see me creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere;
When you're numbered with the dead
In your still and narrow bed,

In the happy spring I'll come
And deck your silent home, -
Creeping, silently creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere;
My humble song of praise
Most joyfully I raise
To Him at whose command
I beautify the land,
Creeping, silently creeping everywhere.

Sarah Roberts Boyle [1812-1869]

A SONG THE GRASS SINGS

The violet is much too shy,
The rose too little so;
I think I'll ask the buttercup
If I may be her beau.

When winds go by, I'll nod to her
And she will nod to me,
And I will kiss her on the cheek
As gently as may be.

And when the mower cuts us down,
Together we will pass,
I smiling at the buttercup,
She smiling at the grass.

Charles G. Blanden [1857-

THE WILD HONEYSUCKLE

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet:
No roving foot shall crush thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
And sent soft waters murmuring by;
Thus quietly thy summer goes,
Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,
I grieve to see your future doom;
They died - nor were those flowers more gay,
The flowers that did in Eden bloom;
Unpitying frosts and Autumn's power
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews

At first thy little being came;
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
For when you die you are the same;
The space between is but an hour,
The frail duration of a flower.

Philip Freneau [1752-1832]

THE IVY GREEN

Oh, a dainty plant is the Ivy green,
That creepeth o'er ruins old!
Of right choice food are his meals I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold.
The wall must be crumbled, the stone decayed,
To pleasure his dainty whim;
And the mouldering dust that years have made
Is a merry meal for him.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Fast he stealeth on, though he wears no wings,
And a staunch old heart has he.
How closely he twineth, how tight he clings
To his friend the huge Oak Tree!
And sliely he traileth along the ground,
And his leaves he gently waves,
As he joyously hugs and crawleth round
The rich mould of dead men's graves.
Creeping where grim death has been,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Whole ages have fled and their works decayed,
And nations have scattered been;
But the stout old Ivy shall never fade,
From its hale and hearty green.
The brave old plant, in its lonely days,
Shall fatten upon the past:
For the stateliest building man can raise
Is the Ivy's food at last.
Creeping on, where time has been,
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Charles Dickens [1812-1870]

YELLOW JESSAMINE

In tangled wreaths, in clustered gleaming stars,
In floating, curling sprays,
The golden flower comes shining through the woods
These February days;
Forth go all hearts, all hands, from out the town,
To bring her gayly in,
This wild, sweet Princess of far Florida -
The yellow jessamine.

The live-oaks smile to see her lovely face
Peep from the thickets; shy,
She hides behind the leaves her golden buds
Till, bolder grown, on high
She curls a tendril, throws a spray, then flings
Herself aloft in glee,
And, bursting into thousand blossoms, swings
In wreaths from tree to tree.

The dwarf-palmetto on his knees adores
This Princess of the air;
The lone pine-barren broods afar and sighs,
"Ah! come, lest I despair;"
The myrtle-thickets and ill-tempered thorns
Quiver and thrill within,
As through their leaves they feel the dainty touch
Of yellow jessamine.

The garden-roses wonder as they see
The wreaths of golden bloom,
Brought in from the far woods with eager haste
To deck the poorest room,
The rich man's house, alike; the loaded hands
Give sprays to all they meet,
Till, gay with flowers, the people come and go,
And all the air is sweet.

The Southern land, well weary of its green
Which may not fall nor fade,
Bestirs itself to greet the lovely flower
With leaves of fresher shade;
The pine has tassels, and the orange-trees
Their fragrant work begin:
The spring has come - has come to Florida,
With yellow jessamine.

Constance Fenimore Woolson [1840-1894]

KNAP WEED

By copse and hedgerow, waste and wall,
He thrusts his cushions red;
O'er burdock rank, o'er thistles tall,
He rears his hardy head:
Within, without, the strong leaves press,
He screens the mossy stone,
Lord of a narrow wilderness,
Self-centred and alone.

He numbers no observant friends,
He soothes no childish woes,
Yet nature nurtures him, and tends
As duly as the rose;
He drinks the blessed dew of heaven,
The wind is in his ears,
To guard his growth the planets seven
Swing in their airy spheres.

The spirits of the fields and woods
Throb in his sturdy veins:
He drinks the secret, stealing floods,
And swills the volleying rains:
And when the bird's note showers and breaks
The wood's green heart within,
He stirs his plummy brow and wakes
To draw the sunlight in.

Mute sheep that pull the grasses soft
Crop close and pass him by,
Until he stands alone, aloft,
In surly majesty.
No fly so keen, no bee so bold,
To pierce that knotted zone;
He frowns as though he guarded gold,
And yet he garners none.

And so when autumn winds blow late,
And whirl the chilly wave,
He bows before the common fate,
And drops beside his grave.
None ever owed him thanks or said
"A gift of gracious heaven."
Down in the mire he droops his head;
Forgotten, not forgiven.

Smile on, brave weed! let none inquire
What made or bade thee rise:
Toss thy tough fingers high and higher
To flout the drenching skies.
Let others toil for others' good,
And miss or mar their own;
Thou hast brave health and fortitude
To live and die alone!

Arthur Christopher Benson [1862-1925]

MOLY

The root is hard to loose
From hold of earth by mortals; but God's power
Can all things do. 'Tis black, but bears a flower
As white as milk.
- Chapman's Homer

Traveler, pluck a stem of moly,
If thou touch at Circe's isle, -
Hermes' moly, growing solely
To undo enchanter's wile!
When she proffers thee her chalice, -
Wine and spices mixed with malice, -
When she smites thee with her staff,
To transform thee, do thou laugh!
Safe thou art if thou but bear
The least leaf of moly rare.

Close it grows beside her portal,
Springing from a stock immortal, -
Yes! and often has the Witch
Sought to tear it from its niche;
But to thwart her cruel will
The wise God renews it still.
Though it grows in soil perverse,
Heaven hath been its jealous nurse,
And a flower of snowy mark
Springs from root and sheathing dark;
Kingly safeguard, only herb
That can brutish passion curb!
Some do think its name should be
Shield-Heart, White Integrity.
Traveler, pluck a stem of moly,
If thou touch at Circe's isle, -
Hermes' moly, growing solely
To undo enchanter's wile!

Edith M. Thomas [1854-1925]

THE MORNING-GLORY

Was it worth while to paint so fair
Thy every leaf - to vein with faultless art
Each petal, taking the boon light and air
Of summer so to heart?

To bring thy beauty unto perfect flower,
Then, like a passing fragrance or a smile,
Vanish away, beyond recovery's power -
Was it, frail bloom, worth while?

Thy silence answers: "Life was mine!
And I, who pass without regret or grief,
Have cared the more to make my moment fine,
Because it was so brief.

"In its first radiance I have seen
The sun! - why tarry then till comes the night?
I go my way, content that I have been
Part of the morning light!"

Florence Earle Coates [1850-1927]

THE MOUNTAIN HEART'S-EASE

By scattered rocks and turbid waters shifting,
By furrowed glade and dell,
To feverish men thy calm, sweet face uplifting,
Thou stayest them to tell

The delicate thought that cannot find expression,
For ruder speech too fair,
That, like thy petals, trembles in possession,
And scatters on the air.

The miner pauses in his rugged labor,
And, leaning on his spade,
Laughingly calls unto his comrade-neighbor
To see thy charms displayed.

But in his eyes a mist unwonted rises,
And for a moment clear
Some sweet home face his foolish thought surprises
And passes in a tear, -

Some boyish vision of his Eastern village,
Of uneventful toil,
Where golden harvests followed quiet tillage
Above a peaceful soil.

One moment only, for the pick, uplifting,
Through root and fibre cleaves,
And on the muddy current slowly drifting
Are swept thy bruised leaves.

And yet, O poet, in thy homely fashion,
Thy work thou dost fulfil,
For on the turbid current of his passion
Thy face is shining still!

Bret Harte [1839-1902]

THE PRIMROSE

Ask me why I send you here
This sweet Infanta of the year?
Ask me why I send to you
This Primrose, thus bepearled with dew?
I will whisper to your ears: -
The sweets of love are mixed with tears.

Ask me why this flower does show
So yellow-green, and sickly too?
Ask me why the stalk is weak
And bending, yet it doth not break?
I will answer: - These discover
What fainting hopes are in a lover.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

TO PRIMROSES FILLED WITH MORNING DEW

Why do ye weep, sweet babes? Can tears
Speak grief in you,
Who were but born
Just as the modest morn
Teemed her refreshing dew?
Alas, you have not known that shower
That mars a flower,
Nor felt the unkind

Breath of a blasting wind,
Nor are ye worn with years,
Or warped, as we,
Who think it strange to see
Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
To speak by tears, before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimpering younglings, and make known
The reason why
Ye droop and weep;
Is it for want of sleep,
Or childish lullaby?
Or that ye have not seen as yet
The violet?
Or brought a kiss
From that Sweet-heart, to this?
- No, no, this sorrow shown
By your tears shed,
Would have this lecture read,
That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceived with grief are, and with tears brought forth.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE

Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire!
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
Was nursed in whirling storms
And cradled in the winds;

Thee, when young Spring first questioned Winter's sway,
And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
Thee on this bank he threw
To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale,
Unnoticed and alone,
Thy tender elegance.

So Virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity; in some lone walk
Of life she rears her head,
Obscure and unobserved;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear
Serene the ills of life.

Henry Kirke White [1785-1806]

THE RHODORA

On Being Asked Whence Is The Flower

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

THE ROSE

A rose, as fair as ever saw the North,
Grew in a little garden all alone;
A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,
Nor fairer garden yet was never known:
The maidens danced about it morn and noon,
And learned bards of it their ditties made;
The nimble fairies by the pale-faced moon
Watered the root and kissed her pretty shade.
But well-a-day! - the gardener careless grew;
The maids and fairies both were kept away,
And in a drought the caterpillars threw
Themselves upon the bud and every spray.
God shield the stock! If heaven send no supplies,
The fairest blossom of the garden dies.

William Browne [1591-1643]

WILD ROSES

On long, serene midsummer days
Of ripening fruit and yellow grain,
How sweetly, by dim woodland ways,
In tangled hedge or leafy lane,
Fair wild-rose thickets, you unfold
Those pale pink stars with hearts of gold!

Your sleek patrician sisters dwell
On lawns where gleams the shrub's trim bosk,
In terraced gardens, tended well,
Near pebbled walk and quaint kiosk.
In costliest urns their colors rest;
They beam on beauty's fragrant breast!

But you in lowly calm abide,
Scarce heeded save by breeze or bee;

You know what splendor, pomp and pride
Full oft your brilliant sisters see;
What sorrow too, and bitter fears;
What mad farewells and hopeless tears.

How some are kept in old, dear books,
That once in bridal wreaths were worn;
How some are kissed, with tender looks,
And later tossed aside with scorn;
How some their taintless petals lay
On icy foreheads, pale as they!

So, while these truths you vaguely guess,
A-bloom in many a lonesome spot,
Shy roadside roses, may you bless
The fate that rules your modest lot,
Like rustic maids that meekly stand
Below the ladies of their land!

Edgar Fawcett [1847-1904]

THE ROSE OF MAY

Ah! there's the lily, marble pale,
The bonny broom, the cistus frail;
The rich sweet pea, the iris blue,
The larkspur with its peacock hue;
All these are fair, yet hold I will
That the Rose of May is fairer still.

'Tis grand 'neath palace walls to grow,
To blaze where lords and ladies go;
To hang o'er marble founts, and shine
In modern gardens, trim and fine;
But the Rose of May is only seen
Where the great of other days have been.

The house is mouldering stone by stone,
The garden-walks are overgrown;
The flowers are low, the weeds are high,
The fountain-stream is choked and dry,
The dial-stone with moss is green,
Where'er the Rose of May is seen.

The Rose of May its pride displayed
Along the old stone balustrade;
And ancient ladies, quaintly dight,
In its pink blossoms took delight;
And on the steps would make a stand
To scent its fragrance - fan in hand.

Long have been dead those ladies gay;
Their very heirs have passed away;
And their old portraits, prim and tall,
Are mouldering in the mouldering hall;
The terrace and the balustrade
Lie broken, weedy and decayed.

But blithe and tall the Rose of May
Shoots upward through the ruin gray;
With scented flower, and leaf pale green,
Such rose as it hath never been,
Left, like a noble deed, to grace
The memory of an ancient race.

Mary Howitt [1799-1888]

A ROSE

Blown in the morning, thou shalt fade ere noon.
What boots a life which in such haste forsakes thee?
Thou'rt wondrous frolic, being to die so soon,
And passing proud a little color makes thee.
If thee thy brittle beauty so deceives,
Know then the thing that swells thee is thy bane;
For the same beauty cloth, in bloody leaves,
The sentence of thy early death contain.
Some clown's coarse lungs will poison thy sweet flower,
If by the careless plough thou shalt be torn;
And many Herods lie in wait each hour
To murder thee as soon as thou art born -
Nay, force thy bud to blow - their tyrant breath
Anticipating life, to hasten death!

Richard Fanshawe [1608-1666]

THE SHAMROCK

When April rains make flowers bloom
And Johnny-jump-ups come to light,
And clouds of color and perfume
Float from the orchards pink and white,
I see my shamrock in the rain,
An emerald spray with raindrops set,
Like jewels on Spring's coronet,
So fair, and yet it breathes of pain.

The shamrock on an older shore
Sprang from a rich and sacred soil
Where saint and hero lived of yore,
And where their sons in sorrow toil;
And here, transplanted, it to me
Seems weeping for the soil it left:
The diamonds that all others see
Are tears drawn from its heart bereft.

When April rain makes flowers grow,
And sparkles on their tiny buds
That in June nights will over-blow
And fill the world with scented floods,
The lonely shamrock in our land -
So fine among the clover leaves -
For the old springtime often grieves, -

I feel its tears upon my hand.

Maurice Francis Egan [1852-1924]

TO VIOLETS

Welcome, maids of honor,
You do bring
In the Spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
Fresh and fair;
Yet you are
More sweet than any.

You're the maiden posies,
And, so graced,
To be placed
'Fore damask roses.

Yet, though thus respected,
By and by
Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

THE VIOLET

O faint, delicious, spring-time violet!
Thine odor, like a key,
Turns noiselessly in memory's wards to let
A thought of sorrow free.

The breath of distant fields upon my brow
Blows through that open door
The sound of wind-borne bells, more sweet and low,
And sadder than of yore.

It comes afar, from that beloved place,
And that beloved hour,
When life hung ripening in love's golden grace,
Like grapes above a bower.

A spring goes singing through its reedy grass;
The lark sings o'er my head,
Drowned in the sky - O, pass, ye visions, pass!
I would that I were dead! -

Why hast thou opened that forbidden door,
From which I ever flee?
O vanished Joy! O Love, that art no more,
Let my vexed spirit be!

O violet! thy odor through my brain

Hath searched, and stung to grief
This sunny day, as if a curse did stain
Thy velvet leaf.

William Wetmore Story [1819-1895]

TO A WOOD-VIOLET

In this secluded shrine,
O miracle of grace,
No mortal eye but mine
Hath looked upon thy face.

No shadow but mine own
Hath screened thee from the sight
Of Heaven, whose love alone
Hath led me to thy light.

Whereof - as shade to shade
Is wedded in the sun -
A moment's glance hath made
Our souls forever one.

John Banister Tabb [1845-1909]

THE VIOLET AND THE ROSE

The violet in the wood, that's sweet to-day,
Is longer sweet than roses of red June;
Set me sweet violets along my way,
And bid the red rose flower, but not too soon.
Ah violet, ah rose, why not the two?
Why bloom not all fair flowers the whole year through?
Why not the two, young violet, ripe rose?
Why dies one sweetness when another blows?

Augusta Webster [1837-1894]

TO A WIND-FLOWER

Teach me the secret of thy loveliness,
That, being made wise, I may aspire to be
As beautiful in thought, and so express
Immortal truths to earth's mortality;
Though to my soul ability be less
Than 'tis to thee, O sweet anemone.

Teach me the secret of thy innocence,
That in simplicity I may grow wise,
Asking from Art no other recompense
Than the approval of her own just eyes;
So may I rise to some fair eminence,
Though less than thine, O cousin of the skies.

Teach me these things, through whose high knowledge, I, -

When Death hath poured oblivion through my veins,
And brought me home, as all are brought, to lie
In that vast house, common to serfs and thanes, -
I shall not die, I shall not utterly die,
For beauty born of beauty - that remains.

Madison Cawein [1865-1914]

TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past
But you may stay yet here awhile
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night?
'Twas pity Nature brought you forth
Merely to show your worth
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave:
And after they have shown their pride
Like you awhile, they glide
Into the grave.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

"TIS THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER"

'Tis the last rose of summer,
Left blooming alone;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone;
No flower of her kindred,
No rose-bud is nigh,
To reflect back her blushes,
Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one!
To pine on the stem;
Since the lovely are sleeping,
Go, sleep thou with them.
Thus kindly I scatter
Thy leaves o'er the bed
Where thy mates of the garden
Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow,
When friendships decay,
And from Love's shining circle

The gems drop away.
When true hearts lie withered,
And fond ones are flown,
O who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?

Thomas Moore [1779-1852]

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook, in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side.
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief:
Yet not unmeet it was that one like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

William Cullen Bryant [1794-1878]

GOD'S CREATURES

ONCE ON A TIME

Once on a time I used to dream
Strange spirits moved about my way,
And I might catch a vagrant gleam,
A glint of pixy or of fay;
Their lives were mingled with my own,
So far they roamed, so near they drew;
And when I from a child had grown,
I woke - and found my dream was true.

For one is clad in coat of fur,
And one is decked with feathers gay;
Another, wiser, will prefer
A sober suit of Quaker gray:
This one's your servant from his birth,
And that a Princess you must please,
And this one loves to wake your mirth,
And that one likes to share your ease.

O gracious creatures, tiny souls!
You seem so near, so far away,
Yet while the cloudland round us rolls,
We love you better every day.

Margaret Benson [18 -

TO A MOUSE

On Turning Up Her Nest With The Plow, November, 1785

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

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

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

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,

O' faggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell an' keen!

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

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

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain: -
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us naught but grief an' pain,
For promised joy!

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, though I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

THE GRASSHOPPER

Happy insect, what can be
In happiness compared to thee?
Fed with nourishment divine,
The dewy morning's gentle wine!
Nature waits upon thee still,
And thy verdant cup does fill;
'Tis filled wherever thou dost tread,
Nature's self's thy Ganymede.
Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,
Happier than the happiest king!
All the fields which thou dost see,
All the plants belong to thee;
All the summer hours produce,
Fertile made with early juice.
Man for thee does sow and plow,
Farmer he, and landlord thou!
Thou dost innocently enjoy;
Nor does thy luxury destroy.
The shepherd gladly heareth thee,
More harmonious than he.
Thee country hinds with gladness hear,

Prophet of the ripened year!
Thee Phoebus loves, and does inspire
Phoebus is himself thy sire.
To thee, of all things upon earth,
Life is no longer than thy mirth.
Happy insect! happy thou,
Dost neither age nor winter know;
But when thou'st drunk, and danced, and sung
Thy fill, the flowery leaves among,
(Voluptuous and wise withal,
Epicurean animal!)
Sated with thy summer feast,
Thou retir'st to endless rest.

After Anacreon, by Abraham Cowley [1618-1667]

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead:
That is the Grasshopper's - he takes the lead
In summer luxury, - he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half-lost,
The Grasshopper's among the grassy hills.

John Keats [1795-1821]

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June;
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;
O sweet and tiny cousins, that belong
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth
To sing in thoughtful ears their natural song -
In-doors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.

Leigh Hunt [1784-1859]

THE CRICKET

Little inmate, full of mirth,
Chirping on my kitchen hearth,
Wheresoe'er be thine abode
Always harbinger of good,
Pay me for thy warm retreat
With a song more soft and sweet;
In return thou shalt receive
Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be expressed,
Inoffensive, welcome guest!
While the rat is on the scout,
And the mouse with curious snout,
With what vermin else infest
Every dish, and spoil the best;
Frisking thus before the fire,
Thou hast all thy heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be
Formed as if akin to thee,
Thou surpassest, happier far,
Happiest grasshoppers that are;
Theirs is but a summer's song,
Thine endures the winter long,
Unimpaired, and shrill, and clear,
Melody throughout the year.

Neither night nor dawn of day
Puts a period to thy play:
Sing then - and extend thy span
Far beyond the date of man;
Wretched man, whose years are spent
In repining discontent,
Lives not, aged though he be,
Half a span, compared with thee.

From the Latin of Vincent Bourne,
by William Cowper [1731-1800]

TO A CRICKET

Voice of summer, keen and shrill,
Chirping round my winter fire,
Of thy song I never tire,
Weary others as they will,
For thy song with summer's filled -
Filled with sunshine, filled with June;
Firelight echo of that noon
Heard in fields when all is stilled
In the golden light of May,
Bringing scents of new-mown hay,
Bees, and birds, and flowers away,
Prithee, haunt my fireside still,
Voice of summer, keen and shrill.

William Cox Bennett [1820-1895]

TO AN INSECT

I love to hear thine earnest voice,
Wherever thou art hid,
Thou testy little dogmatist,
Thou pretty Katydid!
Thou mindest me of gentlefolks, -
Old gentlefolks are they, -
Thou say'st an undisputed thing
In such a solemn way.

Thou art a female, Katydid!
I know it by the trill
That quivers through thy piercing notes,
So petulant and shrill;
I think there is a knot of you
Beneath the hollow tree, -
A knot of spinster Katydids, -
Do Katydids drink tea?

Oh, tell me where did Katy live,
And what did Katy do?
And was she very fair and young,
And yet so wicked, too?
Did Katy love a naughty man,
Or kiss more cheeks than one?
I warrant Katy did no more
Than many a Kate has done.

Dear me! I'll tell you all about
My fuss with little Jane,
And Ann, with whom I used to walk
So often down the lane,
And all that tore their locks of black,
Or wet their eyes of blue, -
Pray tell me, sweetest Katydid,
What did poor Katy do?

Ah no! the living oak shall crash,
That stood for ages still,
The rock shall rend its mossy base
And thunder down the hill,
Before the little Katydid
Shall add one word, to tell
The mystic story of the maid
Whose name she knows so well.

Peace to the ever-murmuring race!
And when the latest one
Shall fold in death her feeble wings
Beneath the autumn sun,
Then shall she raise her fainting voice,
And lift her drooping lid,
And then the child of future years
Shall hear what Katy did.

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

THE SNAIL

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,
The snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
As if he grew there, house and all
Together.

Within that house secure he hides,
When danger imminent betides,
Of storm, or other harm besides
Of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,
His self-collecting power is such,
He shrinks into his house with much
Displeasure.

Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,
Except himself, has chattels none,
Well satisfied to be his own
Whole treasure.

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,
Nor partner of his banquet needs,
And if he meets one, only feeds
The faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind
(He and his house are so combined),
If, finding it, he fails to find
Its master.

From the Latin of Vincent Bourne,
by William Cowper [1731-1800]

THE HOUSEKEEPER

The frugal snail, with forecast of repose,
Carries his house with him where'er he goes;
Peeps out, - and if there comes a shower of rain,
Retreats to his small domicile amain.
Touch but a tip of him, a horn, - 'tis well, -
He curls up in his sanctuary shell.
He's his own landlord, his own tenant; stay
Long as he will, he dreads no Quarter Day.
Himself he boards and lodges; both invites
And feasts himself; sleeps with himself o' nights.
He spares the upholsterer trouble to procure
Chattels; himself is his own furniture,
And his sole riches. Whereso'er he roam, -
Knock when you will, - he's sure to be at home.

From the Latin of Vincent Bourne,
by Charles Lamb [1775-1834]

THE HUMBLE-BEE

Burly, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats through seas to seek;
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid-zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion!
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon;
Epicurean of June;
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum, -
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silters the horizon wall,
And with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With a color of romance,
And infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,
Thou, in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and birdlike pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodils,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern, and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's tongue
And brier-roses, dwelt among;
All beside was unknown waste,

All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

TO A BUTTERFLY

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless! not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Has found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we are young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

ODE TO A BUTTERFLY

Thou spark of life that waviest wings of gold,
Thou songless wanderer mid the songful birds,
With Nature's secrets in thy tints unrolled
Through gorgeous cipher, past the reach of words,
Yet dear to every child
In glad pursuit beguiled,
Living his unspoiled days mid flowers and flocks and herds!

Thou winged blossom, liberated thing,
What secret tie binds thee to other flowers,
Still held within the garden's fostering?
Will they too soar with the completed hours,

Take flight, and be like thee
Irrevocably free,
Hovering at will o'er their parental bowers?

Or is thy luster drawn from heavenly hues, -
A sumptuous drifting fragment of the sky,
Caught when the sunset its last glance imbues
With sudden splendor, and the tree-tops high
Grasp that swift blazonry,
Then lend those tints to thee,
On thee to float a few short hours, and die?

Birds have their nests; they rear their eager young,
And flit on errands all the livelong day;
Each fieldmouse keeps the homestead whence it sprung;
But thou art Nature's freeman, - free to stray
Unfettered through the wood,
Seeking thine airy food,
The sweetness spiced on every blossomed spray.

The garden one wide banquet spreads for thee,
O daintiest reveller of the joyous earth!
One drop of honey gives satiety;
A second draught would drug thee past all mirth.
Thy feast no orgy shows;
Thy calm eyes never close,
Thou soberest sprite to which the sun gives birth.

And yet the soul of man upon thy wings
Forever soars in aspiration; thou
His emblem of the new career that springs
When death's arrest bids all his spirit bow.
He seeks his hope in thee
Of immortality.
Symbol of life, me with such faith endow!

Thomas Wentworth Higginson [1823-1911]

THE BUTTERFLY

I hold you at last in my hand,
Exquisite child of the air.
Can I ever understand
How you grew to be so fair?

You came to my linden tree
To taste its delicious sweet,
I sitting here in the shadow and shine
Playing around its feet.

Now I hold you fast in my hand,
You marvelous butterfly,
Till you help me to understand
The eternal mystery.

From that creeping thing in the dust
To this shining bliss in the blue!

God give me courage to trust
I can break my chrysalis too!

Alice Freeman Palmer [1855-1902]

FIREFLIES

I saw, one sultry night above a swamp,
The darkness throbbing with their golden pomp!
And long my dazzled sight did they entrance
With the weird chaos of their dizzy dance!
Quicker than yellow leaves, when gales despoil,
Quivered the brilliance of their mute turmoil,
Within whose light was intricately blent
Perpetual rise, perpetual descent.
As though their scintillant flickerings had met
In the vague meshes of some airy net!
And now mysteriously I seemed to guess,
While watching their tumultuous loveliness,
What fervor of deep passion strangely thrives
In the warm richness of these tropic lives,
Whose wings can never tremble but they show
These hearts of living fire that beat below!

Edgar Fawcett [1847-1904]

THE BLOOD HORSE

Gamarra is a dainty steed,
Strong, black, and of a noble breed,
Full of fire, and full of bone,
With all his line of fathers known;
Fine his nose, his nostrils thin,
But blown abroad by the pride within!
His mane is like a river flowing,
And his eyes like embers glowing
In the darkness of the night,
And his pace as swift as light.

Look, - how 'round his straining throat
Grace and shifting beauty float!
Sinewy strength is in his reins,
And the red blood gallops through his veins;
Richer, redder, never ran
Through the boasting heart of man.
He can trace his lineage higher
Than the Bourbon dare aspire, -
Douglas, Guzman, or the Guelph,
Or O'Brien's blood itself!

He, who hath no peer, was born,
Here, upon a red March morn;
But his famous fathers dead
Were Arabs all, and Arab bred,
And the last of that great line
Trod like one of a race divine!

And yet, - he was but friend to one
Who fed him at the set of sun,
By some lone fountain fringed with green:
With him, a roving Bedouin,
He lived, (none else would he obey
Through all the hot Arabian day),
And died untamed upon the sands
Where Balkh amidst the desert stands.

Bryan Waller Procter [1787-1874]

BIRDS

Sure maybe ye've heard the storm-thrush
Whistlin' bould in March,
Before there's a primrose peepin' out,
Or a wee red cone on the larch;
Whistlin' the sun to come out o' the cloud,
An' the wind to come over the sea,
But for all he can whistle so clear an' loud,
He's never the bird for me.

Sure maybe ye've seen the song-thrush
After an April rain
Slip from in-undher the drippin' leaves,
Wishful to sing again;
An' low wi' love when he's near the nest,
An' loud from the top o' the tree,
But for all he can flutter the heart in your breast,
He's never the bird for me.

Sure maybe ye've heard the cushadoo
Callin' his mate in May,
When one sweet thought is the whole of his life,
An' he tells it the one sweet way.
But my heart is sore at the cushadoo
Filled wid his own soft glee,
Over an' over his "me an' you!"
He's never the bird for me.

Sure maybe ye've heard the red-breast
Singin' his lone on a thorn,
Mindin' himself o' the dear days lost,
Brave wid his heart forlorn.
The time is in dark November,
An' no spring hopes has he:
"Remember," he sings, "remember!"
Ay, thon's the wee bird for me.

Moir O'Neill [18 -

BIRDS

Birds are singing round my window,
Tunes the sweetest ever heard,
And I hang my cage there daily,

But I never catch a bird.

So with thoughts my brain is peopled,
And they sing there all day long:
But they will not fold their pinions
In the little cage of Song!

Richard Henry Stoddard [1825-1903]

SEA-BIRDS

O lonesome sea-gull, floating far
Over the ocean's icy waste,
Aimless and wide thy wanderings are,
Forever vainly seeking rest: -
Where is thy mate, and where thy nest?

'Twixt wintry sea and wintry sky,
Cleaving the keen air with thy breast,
Thou sailest slowly, solemnly;
No fetter on thy wing is pressed: -
Where is thy mate, and where thy nest?

O restless, homeless human soul,
Following for aye thy nameless quest,
The gulls float, and the billows roll;
Thou watchest still, and questionest: -
Where is thy mate, and where thy nest?

Elizabeth Akers [1832-1911]

THE LITTLE BEACH-BIRD

Thou little bird, thou dweller by the sea,
Why takest thou its melancholy voice,
And with that boding cry
Why o'er the waves dost fly?
O, rather, bird, with me
Through the fair land rejoice!

Thy flitting form comes ghostly dim and pale,
As driven by a beating storm at sea;
Thy cry is weak and scared,
As if thy mates had shared
The doom of us. Thy wail, -
What doth it bring to me?

Thou call'st along the sand, and haunt'st the surge,
Restless, and sad; as if, in strange accord
With the motion and the roar
Of waves that drive to shore,
One spirit did ye urge -
The Mystery - the Word.

Of thousands, thou, both sepulchre and pall,
Old Ocean! A requiem o'er the dead,

From out thy gloomy cells,
A tale of mourning tells, -
Tells of man's woe and fall,
His sinless glory fled.

Then turn thee, little bird, and take thy flight
Where the complaining sea shall sadness bring
Thy spirit nevermore.
Come, quit with me the shore,
For gladness and the light,
Where birds of summer sing.

Richard Henry Dana [1787-1879]

THE BLACKBIRD

How sweet the harmonies of afternoon:
The Blackbird sings along the sunny breeze
His ancient song of leaves, and summer boon;
Rich breath of hayfields streams through whispering trees;
And birds of morning trim their bustling wings,
And listen fondly - while the Blackbird sings.

How soft the lovelight of the West reposes
On this green valley's cheery solitude,
On the trim cottage with its screen of roses,
On the gray belfry with its ivy hood,
And murmuring mill-race, and the wheel that flings
Its bubbling freshness - while the Blackbird sings.

The very dial on the village church
Seems as 'twere dreaming in a dozy rest;
The scribbled benches underneath the porch
Bask in the kindly welcome of the West;
But the broad casements of the old Three Kings
Blaze like a furnace - while the Blackbird sings.

And there beneath the immemorial elm
Three rosy revellers round a table sit,
And through gray clouds give laws unto the realm,
Curse good and great, but worship their own wit.
And roar of fights, and fairs, and junketings,
Corn, colts, and curs - the while the Blackbird sings.

Before her home, in her accustomed seat,
The tidy Grandam spins beneath the shade
Of the old honeysuckle, at her feet
The dreaming pug, and purring tabby laid;
To her low chair a little maiden clings,
And spells in silence - while the Blackbird sings.

Sometimes the shadow of a lazy cloud
Breathes o'er the hamlet with its gardens green.
While the far fields with sunlight overflowed
Like golden shores of Fairyland are seen;
Again, the sunshine on the shadow springs,
And fires the thicket where the Blackbird sings.

The woods, the lawn, the peaked Manorhouse,
With its peach-covered walls, and rookery loud,
The trim, quaint garden alleys, screened with boughs.
The lion-headed gates, so grim and proud,
The mossy fountain with its murmurings,
Lie in warm sunshine - while the Blackbird sings.

The ring of silver voices, and the sheen
Of festal garments - and my Lady streams
With her gay court across the garden green;
Some laugh, and dance, some whisper their love-dreams;
And one calls for a little page; he strings
Her lute beside her - while the Blackbird sings.

A little while - and lo! the charm is heard,
A youth, whose life has been all Summer, steals
Forth from the noisy guests around the board,
Creeps by her softly; at her footstool kneels;
And, when she pauses, murmurs tender things
Into her fond ear - while the Blackbird sings.

The smoke-wreaths from the chimneys curl up higher,
And dizzy things of eve begin to float
Upon the light; the breeze begins to tire;
Half way to sunset with a drowsy note
The ancient clock from out the valley swings;
The Grandam nods - and still the Blackbird sings.

Far shouts and laughter from the farmstead peal,
Where the great stack is piling in the sun;
Through narrow gates o'erladen wagons reel,
And barking curs into the tumult run;
While the inconstant wind bears off, and brings
The merry tempest - and the Blackbird sings.

On the high wold the last look of the sun
Burns, like a beacon, over dale and stream;
The shouts have ceased, the laughter and the fun;
The Grandam sleeps, and peaceful be her dream;
Only a hammer on an anvil rings;
The day is dying - still the Blackbird sings.

Now the good Vicar passes from his gate
Serene, with long white hair; and in his eye
Burns the clear spirit that hath conquered Fate,
And felt the wings of immortality;
His heart is thronged with great imaginings,
And tender mercies - while the Blackbird sings.

Down by the brook he bends his steps, and through
A lowly wicket; and at last he stands
Awful beside the bed of one who grew
From boyhood with him - who, with lifted hands
And eyes, seems listening to far welcomings,
And sweeter music than the Blackbird sings.

Two golden stars, like tokens from the Blest,

Strike on his dim orbs from the setting sun;
His sinking hands seem pointing to the West;
He smiles as though he said - "Thy will be done":
His eyes, they see not those illuminings;
His ears, they hear not what the Blackbird sings.

Frederick Tennyson [1807-1898]

THE BLACKBIRD

When smoke stood up from Ludlow
And mist blew off from Teme,
And blithe afield to ploughing
Against the morning beam
I strode beside my team,

The blackbird in the coppice
Looked out to see me stride,
And hearkened as I whistled
The trampling team beside,
And fluted and replied:

"Lie down, lie down, young yeoman;
What use to rise and rise?
Rise man a thousand mornings
Yet down at last he lies,
And then the man is wise."

I heard the tune he sang me,
And spied his yellow bill;
I picked a stone and aimed it
And threw it with a will:
Then the bird was still.

Then my soul within me
Took up the blackbird's strain,
And still beside the horses
Along the dewy lane
It sang the song again:

"Lie down, lie down, young yeoman;
The sun moves always west;
The road one treads to labor
Will lead one home to rest,
And that will be the best."

Alfred Edward Housman [1859-1936]

THE BLACKBIRD

The nightingale has a lyre of gold;
The lark's is a clarion call,
And the blackbird plays but a box-wood 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 too have listened till he sang
Our hearts and lips together.

William Ernest Henley [1849-1903]

THE BLACKBIRD

Ov all the birds upon the wing
Between the zunny showers o' spring,-
Vor all the lark, a-swingen high,
Mid zing below a cloudless sky,
An' sparrows, clust'ren roun' the bough,
Mid chatter to the men at plough, -
The blackbird, whisslen in among
The boughs, do zing the gayest zong.

Vor we do hear the blackbird zing
His sweetest ditties in the spring,
When nippen win's noo mwore do blow
Vrom northern skies, wi' sleet or snow,
But dreve light doust along between
The leane-zide hedges, thick an' green;
An' zoo the blackbird in among
The boughs do zing the gayest zong.

'Tis blithe, wi' newly-opened eyes,
To zee the mornen's ruddy skies;
Or, out a-haulen frith or lops
Vrom new-pleshed hedge or new-velled copse,
To rest at noon in primrwose beds
Below the white-barked woak-trees' heads;
But there's noo time, the whole day long,
Lik' evenen wi' the blackbird's zong.

Vor when my work is all a-done
Avore the zetten o' the zun,
Then blushen Jeane do walk along
The hedge to meet me in the drong,
An' stay till all is dim an' dark
Bezides the ashen tree's white bark;
An' all bezides the blackbird's shrill
An' runnen evenen-whistle's still.

An' there in bwoyhood I did rove
Wi' pryen eyes along the drove
To vind the nest the blackbird meade
O' grass-stalks in the high bough's sheade;
Or climb aloft, wi' clingen knees,
Vor crows' aggs up in swayen trees,
While frightened blackbirds down below
Did chatter o' their little foe.
An' zoo there's noo pleace lik' the drong,
Where I do hear the blackbird's zong.

William Barnes [1801-1886]

ROBERT OF LINCOLN

Merrily swinging on brier and weed
Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain-side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Snug and safe is that nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dressed,
Wearing a bright black wedding-coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest.
Hear him call in his merry note:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Look, what a nice new coat is mine,
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
Broods in the grass while her husband sings:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Brood, kind creature; you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
One weak chirp is her only note.
Braggart and prince of braggarts is he,
Pouring boasts from his little throat:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Never was I afraid of man;
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can!
Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight!
There as the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Nice good wife, that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about.
Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
Six wide mouths are open for food;
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
Gathering seeds for the hungry brood.
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,

Spink, spank, spink;
This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made
Sober with work, and silent with care;
Off is his holiday garment laid.
Half forgotten that merry air:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Nobody knows but my mate and I
Where our nest and our nestlings lie.
Chee, chee, chee.

Summer wanes; the children are grown;
Fun and frolic no more he knows;
Robert of Lincoln's a humdrum crone;
Off he flies, and we sing as he goes:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
When you can pipe that merry old strain,
Robert of Lincoln, come back again.
Chee, chee, chee.

William Cullen Bryant [1794-1878]

THE O'LINCON FAMILY

A flock of merry singing-birds were sporting in the grove;
Some were warbling cheerily, and some were making love:
There were Bobolincon, Wadolincon, Winterseeble, Conquedle, -
A livelier set was never led by tabor, pipe, or fiddle, -
Crying, "Phew, shew, Waldolincon, see, see, Bobolincon,
Down among the tickle-tops, hiding in the buttercups!
I know a saucy chap, I see his shining cap
Bobbing in the clover there - see, see, see!"

Up flies Bobolincon, perching on an apple-tree,
Startled by his rival's song, quickened by his raillery,
Soon he spies the rogue afloat, curveting in the air,
And merrily he turns about, and warns him to beware!
"'Tis you that would a-wooing go, down among the rushes O!
But wait a week, till flowers are cheery, - wait a week, and,
ere you marry,
Be sure of a house wherein to tarry!
Wadolink, Whiskodink, Tom Denny, wait, wait, wait!"

Every one's a funny fellow; every one's a little mellow;
Follow, follow, follow, follow, o'er the hill and in the hollow!
Merrily, merrily, there they hie; now they rise and now they fly;
They cross and turn, and in and out, and down in the middle
and wheel about, -
With a "Phew, shew, Wadolincon! listen to me, Bobolincon! -
Happy's the wooing that's speedily doing, that's speedily doing,
That's merry and over with the bloom of the clover!
Bobolincon, Wadolincon, Winterseeble, follow, follow, follow me!"

Wilson Flagg [1805-1884]

THE BOBOLINK

Bobolink! that in the meadow,
Or beneath the orchard's shadow,
Keepest up a constant rattle
Joyous as my children's prattle,
Welcome to the north again!
Welcome to mine ear thy strain,
Welcome to mine eye the sight
Of thy buff, thy black and white.

Brighter plumes may greet the sun
By the banks of Amazon;
Sweeter tones may weave the spell
Of enchanting Philomel;
But the tropic bird would fail,
And the English nightingale,
If we should compare their worth
With thine endless, gushing mirth.

When the ides of May are past,
June and Summer nearing fast,
While from depths of blue above
Comes the mighty breath of love.
Calling out each bud and flower
With resistless, secret power,
Waking hope and fond desire,
Kindling the erotic fire,
Filling youths' and maidens' dreams
With mysterious, pleasing themes;
Then, amid the sunlight clear
Floating in the fragrant air,
Thou dost fill each heart with pleasure
By thy glad ecstatic measure.

A single note, so sweet and low,
Like a full heart's overflow,
Forms the prelude; but the strain
Gives no such tone again,
For the wild and saucy song
Leaps and skips the notes among,
With such quick and sportive play,
Ne'er was madder, merrier lay.

Gayest songster of the Spring!
Thy melodies before me bring
Visions of some dream-built land,
Where, by constant zephyrs fanned,
I might walk the livelong day,
Embosomed in perpetual May.
Nor care nor fear thy bosom knows;
For thee a tempest never blows;
But when our northern Summer's o'er,
By Delaware's or Schuylkil's shore

The wild rice lifts its airy head,
And royal feasts for thee are spread.
And when the Winter threatens there,
Thy tireless wings yet own no fear.
But bear thee to more southern coasts,
Far beyond the reach of frosts.

Bobolink! still may thy gladness
Take from me all taint of sadness;
Fill my soul with trust unshaken
In that Being who has taken
Care for every living thing,
In Summer, Winter, Fall, and Spring.

Thomas Hill [1818-1891]

MY CATBIRD A Capriccio

Nightingale I never heard,
Nor skylark, poet's bird;
But there is an aether-winger
So surpasses every singer,
(Though unknown to lyric fame,)
That at morning, or at nooning,
When I hear his pipe a-tuning,
Down I fling Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, -
What are all their songs of birds worth?
All their soaring
Souls' outpouring?
When my *Mimus Carolinensis*,
(That's his Latin name,)
When my warbler wild commences
Song's hilarious rhapsody,
Just to please himself and me!
Primo Cantante!
Scherzo! Andante!
Piano, pianissimo!
Presto, prestissimo!
Hark! are there nine birds or ninety and nine?
And now a miraculous gurgling gushes
Like nectar from Hebe's Olympian bottle,
The laughter of tune from a rapturous throttle!
Such melody must be a hermit-thrush's!
But that other caroler, nearer,
Outrivaling rivalry with clearer
Sweetness incredibly fine!
Is it oriole, redbird, or bluebird,
Or some strange, un-Auduboned new bird?
All one, sir, both this bird and that bird,
The whole flight are all the same catbird!
The whole visible and invisible choir you see
On one lithe twig of yon green tree.
Flitting, feathery Blondel!
Listen to his rondel!
To his lay romantical!
To his sacred canticle!

Hear him lilting,
See him tilting
His saucy head and tail, and fluttering
While uttering
All the difficult operas under the sun
Just for fun;
Or in tipsy revelry,
Or at love devilry,
Or, disdainingly his divine gift and art,
Like an inimitable poet
Who captivates the world's heart
And don't know it.
Hear him lilt!
See him tilt!
Then suddenly he stops,
Peers about, flirts, hops,
As if looking where he might gather up
The wasted ecstasy just spilt
From the quivering cup
Of his bliss overrun.
Then, as in mockery of all
The tuneful spells that e'er did fall
From vocal pipe, or evermore shall rise,
He snarls, and mews, and flies.

William Henry Venable [1836-1920]

THE HERALD CRANE

Oh! say you so, bold sailor
In the sun-lit deeps of sky!
Dost thou so soon the seed-time tell
In thy imperial cry,
As circling in yon shoreless sea
Thine unseen form goes drifting by?

I cannot trace in the noon-day glare
Thy regal flight, O crane!
From the leaping might of the fiery light
Mine eyes recoil in pain,
But on mine ear, thine echoing cry
Falls like a bugle strain.

The mellow soil glows beneath my feet,
Where lies the buried grain;
The warm light floods the length and breadth
Of the vast, dim, shimmering plain,
Throbbing with heat and the nameless thrill
Of the birth-time's restless pain.

On weary wing, plebeian geese
Push on their arrowy line
Straight into the north, or snowy brant
In dazzling sunshine, gloom and shine;
But thou, O crane, save for thy sovereign cry,
At thy majestic height
On proud, extended wings sweep'st on

In lonely, easeful flight.

Then cry, thou martial-throated herald!
Cry to the sun, and sweep
And swing along thy mateless, tireless course
Above the clouds that sleep
Afloat on lazy air - cry on! Send down
Thy trumpet note - it seems
The voice of hope and dauntless will,
And breaks the spell of dreams.

Hamlin Garland [1860-

THE CROW

With rakish eye and plenished crop,
Oblivious of the farmer's gun,
Upon the naked ash-tree top
The Crow sits basking in the sun.

An old ungodly rogue, I wot!
For, perched in black against the blue,
His feathers, torn with beak and shot,
Let woeful glints of April through.

The year's new grass, and, golden-eyed,
The daisies sparkle underneath,
And chestnut-trees on either side
Have opened every ruddy sheath.

But doubtful still of frost and snow,
The ash alone stands stark and bare,
And on its topmost twig the Crow
Takes the glad morning's sun and air.

William Canton [1845-

TO THE CUCKOO

Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove!
Thou messenger of Spring!
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome ring.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear:
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The school-boy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,

Starts, the new voice of Spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fli'st thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No Winter in thy year!

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.

John Logan [1748-1788]

THE CUCKOO

We heard it calling, clear and low,
That tender April morn; we stood
And listened in the quiet wood,
We heard it, ay, long years ago.

It came, and with a strange, sweet cry,
A friend, but from a far-off land;
We stood and listened, hand in hand,
And heart to heart, my Love and I.

In dreamland then we found our joy,
And so it seemed as 'twere the Bird
That Helen in old times had heard
At noon beneath the oaks of Troy.

O time far off, and yet so near!
It came to her in that hushed grove,
It warbled while the wooing throve,
It sang the song she loved to hear.

And now I hear its voice again,
And still its message is of peace,
It sings of love that will not cease -
For me it never sings in vain.

Frederick Locker-Lampson [1821-1895]

TO THE CUCKOO

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways,
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

THE EAGLE A Fragment

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

THE HAWKBIT

How sweetly on the autumn scene,
When haws are red amid the green,
The hawkbit shines with face of cheer,
The favorite of the faltering year!

When days grow short and nights grow cold,
How fairly gleams its eye of gold
On pastured field and grassy hill,
Along the roadside and the rill!

It seems the spirit of a flower,
This offspring of the autumn hour,
Wandering back to earth to bring
Some kindly afterthought of spring.

A dandelion's ghost might so
Amid Elysian meadows blow,
Become more fragile and more fine
Breathing the atmosphere divine.

Charles G. D. Roberts [1860-

THE HERON

O melancholy bird, a winter's day
Thou standest by the margin of the pool,
And, taught by God, dost thy whole being school
To Patience, which all evil can allay.
God has appointed thee the Fish thy prey;
And given thyself a lesson to the Fool
Unthrifty, to submit to moral rule,
And his unthinking course by thee to weigh.
There need not schools, nor the Professor's chair,
Though these be good, true wisdom to impart;
He, who has not enough for these to spare
Of time, or gold, may yet amend his heart,
And teach his soul, by brooks and rivers fair:
Nature is always wise in every part.

Edward Hovell-Thurlow [1781-1829]

THE JACKDAW

There is a bird, who by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note,
Might be supposed a crow;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where bishop-like he finds a perch,
And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns, to indicate
From what point blows the weather;
Look up - your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds - that pleases him,
He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
And thence securely sees

The bustle and the raree-show,
That occupy mankind below,
Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
If he should chance to fall.
No: not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all its medley rout,
Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs, and its businesses
Is no concern at all of his,
And says - what says he? - "Caw."

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men;
And, sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine,
And such a head between 'em.

From the Latin of Vincent Bourne,
by William Cowper [1731-1800]

THE GREEN LINNET

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 flowers and birds 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 and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array
Presiding Spirit here to-day
Dost lead the revels of the May,
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and 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 and body flings
Shadows and 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 and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign
While fluttering in the bushes.

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR-BIRD

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renewed on thy prodigious pinions,
(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee,)
Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee,
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)

Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
With re-appearing day as now so happy and serene,
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also re-appearest.

Thou born to match the gale, (thou art all wings,)
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating,
At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
In them, in thy experiences, hadst thou my soul,
What joys! what joys were thine!

Walt Whitman [1819-1892]

THE MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT

When May bedecks the naked trees
With tassels and embroideries,
And many blue-eyed violets beam
Along the edges of the stream,
I hear a voice that seems to say,
Now near at hand, now far away,

"Witchery - witchery - witchery."

An incantation so serene,
So innocent, befits the scene:
There's magic in that small bird's note -
See, there he flits - the Yellow-throat;
A living sunbeam, tipped with wings,
A spark of light that shines and sings
"Witchery - witchery - witchery."

You prophet with a pleasant name,
If out of Mary-land you came,
You know the way that thither goes
Where Mary's lovely garden grows:
Fly swiftly back to her, I pray,
And try, to call her down this way,
"Witchery - witchery - witchery!"

Tell her to leave her cockle-shells,
And all her little silver bells
That blossom into melody,
And all her maids less fair than she.
She does not need these pretty things,
For everywhere she comes, she brings
"Witchery - witchery - witchery!"

The woods are greening overhead,
And flowers adorn each mossy bed;
The waters babble as they run -
One thing is lacking, only one:
If Mary were but here to-day,
I would believe your charming lay,
"Witchery - witchery - witchery!"

Along the shady road I look -
Who's coming now across the brook?
A woodland maid, all robed in white -
The leaves dance round her with delight,
The stream laughs out beneath her feet -
Sing, merry bird, the charm's complete,
"Witchery - witchery - witchery!"

Henry Van Dyke [1852-1933]

LAMENT OF A MOCKING-BIRD

Silence instead of thy sweet song, my bird,
Which through the darkness of my winter days
Warbling of summer sunshine still was heard;
Mute is thy song, and vacant is thy place.

The spring comes back again, the fields rejoice,
Carols of gladness ring from every tree;
But I shall hear thy wild triumphant voice
No more: my summer song has died with thee.

What didst thou sing of, O my summer bird?

The broad, bright, brimming river, whose swift sweep
And whirling eddies by the home are heard,
Rushing, resistless, to the calling deep.

What didst thou sing of, thou melodious sprite?
Pine forests, with smooth russet carpets spread,
Where e'en at noonday dimly falls the light,
Through gloomy blue-green branches overhead.

What didst thou sing of, O thou jubilant soul?
Ever-fresh flowers and never-leafless trees,
Bending great ivory cups to the control
Of the soft swaying, orange scented breeze.

What didst thou sing of, thou embodied glee?
The wide wild marshes with their clashing reeds
And topaz-tinted channels, where the sea
Daily its tides of briny freshness leads.

What didst thou sing of, O thou winged voice?
Dark, bronze-leaved oaks, with silver mosses crowned,
Where thy free kindred live, love, and rejoice,
With wreaths of golden jasmine curtained round.

These didst thou sing of, spirit of delight!
From thy own radiant sky, thou quivering spark!
These thy sweet southern dreams of warmth and light,
Through the grim northern winter drear and dark.

Frances Anne Kemble [1809-1893]

"O NIGHTINGALE! THOU SURELY ART"

O nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart": -
These notes of thine - they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze:
He did not cease, but cooed - and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the Song - the Song for me!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

PHILOMEL

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring;
Everything did banish moan
Save the Nightingale alone:
She, poor bird, as all forlorn
Leaned her breast up-till a thorn,
And there sung the doleful'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie! now would she cry;
Tereu, Tereu! by and by;
That to hear her so complain
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs so lively shown
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah! thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,
None takes pity on thy pain:
Senseless trees they cannot hear thee,
Ruthless beasts they will not cheer thee:
King Pandion he is dead,
All thy friends are lapped in lead;
All thy fellow birds do sing
Careless of thy sorrowing:
Even so, poor bird, like thee,
None alive will pity me.

Richard Barnfield [1574-1627]

PHILOMELA

Hark! ah, the nightingale -
The tawny-throated!
Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark! - what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain
That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-world pain -
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy racked heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse

With hot cheeks and seared eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia -
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again - thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

Matthew Arnold [1822-1888]

ON A NIGHTINGALE IN APRIL

The yellow moon is a dancing phantom
Down secret ways of the flowing shade;
And the waveless stream has a murmuring whisper
Where the alders wave.

Not a breath, not a sigh, save the slow stream's whisper:
Only the moon is a dancing blade
That leads a host of the Crescent warriors
To a phantom raid.

Out of the Lands of Faerie a summons,
A long, strange cry that thrills through the glade: -
The gray-green glooms of the elm are stirring,
Newly afraid.

Last heard, white music, under the olives
Where once Theocritus sang and played -
Thy Thracian song is the old new wonder,
O moon-white maid!

William Sharp [1855-1905]

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

Dear chorister, who from those shadows sends,
Ere that the blushing morn dare show her light,
Such sad lamenting strains, that night attends,
Become all ear, stars stay to hear thy plight:
If one whose grief even reach of thought transcends,
Who ne'er, not in a dream, did taste delight,
May thee importune who like care pretends,
And seems to joy in woe, in woe's despite;
Tell me (so may thou fortune milder try,
And long, long sing) for what thou thus complains,
Since, winter gone, the sun in dappled sky
Now smiles on meadows, mountains, woods, and plains?
The bird, as if my questions did her move,
With trembling wings sobbed forth, I love! I love!"

William Drummond [1585-1649]

THE NIGHTINGALE

To-night retired, the queen of heaven
With young Endymion stays;
And now to Hesper it is given
Awhile to rule the vacant sky,
Till she shall to her lamp supply
A stream of brighter rays. . . .

Propitious send thy golden ray,
Thou purest light above:
Let no false flame seduce to stray
Where gulf or steep lie hid for harm;
But lead where music's healing charm
May soothe afflicted love.

To them, by many a grateful song
In happier seasons vowed,
These lawns, Olympia's haunt, belong:
Oft by yon silver stream we walked,
Or fixed, while Philomela talked,
Beneath yon corses stood.

Nor seldom, where the beechen boughs
That roofless tower invade,
We came, while her enchanting Muse
The radiant moon above us held:
Till, by a clamorous owl compelled,
She fled the solemn shade.

But hark! I hear her liquid tone!
Now, Hesper, guide my feet
Down the red marl with moss o'ergrown,
Through yon wild thicket next the plain,
Whose hawthorns choke the winding lane
Which leads to her retreat.

See the green space: on either hand
Enlarged it spreads around:
See, in the midst she takes her stand,
Where one old oak his awful shade
Extends o'er half the level mead,
Enclosed in woods profound.

Hark! how through many a melting note
She now prolongs her lays:
How sweetly down the void they float!
The breeze their magic path attends;
The stars shine out; the forest bends;
The wakeful heifers gaze.

Whoe'er thou art whom chance may bring
To this sequestered spot,
If then the plaintive Siren sing,

O softly tread beneath her bower
And think of Heaven's disposing power,
Of man's uncertain lot.

O think, o'er all this mortal stage
What mournful scenes arise:
What ruin waits on kingly rage;
How often virtue dwells with woe;
How many griefs from knowledge flow;
How swiftly pleasure flies!

O sacred bird! let me at eve,
Thus wandering all alone,
Thy tender counsel oft receive,
Bear witness to thy pensive airs,
And pity Nature's common cares,
Till I forget my own.

Mark Akenside [1721-1770]

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O nightingale that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

John Milton [1608-1674]

PHILOMELA

The Nightingale, as soon as April bringeth
Unto her rested sense a perfect waking,
While late-bare Earth, proud of new clothing, springeth,
Sings out her woes, a thorn her song-book making;
And mournfully bewailing,
Her throat in tunes expresseth
What grief her breast oppresseth,
For Tereus' force on her chaste will prevailing.

O Philomela fair, O take some gladness
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness!
Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;
Thy thorn without, my thorn my heart invadeth.

Alas! she hath no other cause of anguish

But Tereus' love, on her by strong hand wroken;
Wherein she suffering, all her spirits languish,
Full womanlike, complains her will was broken,
But I, who, daily craving,
Cannot have to content me,
Have more cause to lament me,
Since wanting is more woe than too much having.

O Philomela fair, O take some gladness
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness!
Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;
Thy thorn without, my thorn my heart invadeth.

Philip Sidney [1554-1586]

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness, -
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret,
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
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 and winding mossy ways

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets 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 mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain -
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music: - Do I wake or sleep?

John Keats [1795-1821]

SONG

'Tis sweet to hear the merry lark,
That bids a blithe good-morrow;
But sweeter to hark, in the twinkling dark,
To the soothing song of sorrow.
Oh nightingale! What doth she ail?

And is she sad or jolly?
For ne'er on earth was sound of mirth
So like to melancholy.

The merry lark, he soars on high,
No worldly thought o'ertakes him;
He sings aloud to the clear blue sky,
And the daylight that awakes him.
As sweet a lay, as loud, as gay,
The nightingale is trilling;
With feeling bliss, no less than his,
Her little heart is thrilling.

Yet ever and anon, a sigh
Peers through her lavish mirth;
For the lark's bold song is of the sky,
And hers is of the earth.
By night and day, she tunes her lay,
To drive away all sorrow;
For bliss, alas! to-night must pass,
And woe may come to-morrow.

Hartley Coleridge [1796-1840]

BIRD SONG

The robin sings of willow-buds,
Of snowflakes on the green;
The bluebird sings of Mayflowers,
The crackling leaves between;
The veery has a thousand tales
To tell to girl and boy;
But the oriole, the oriole,
Sings, "Joy! joy! joy!"

The pewee calls his little mate,
Sweet Phoebe, gone astray,
The warbler sings,
"What fun, what fun,
To tilt upon the spray!"
The cuckoo has no song, but clucks,
Like any wooden toy;
But the oriole, the oriole,
Sings, "Joy! joy! joy!"

The grosbeak sings the rose's birth,
And paints her on his breast;
The sparrow sings of speckled eggs,
Soft brooded in the nest.
The wood-thrush sings of peace, "Sweet peace,
Sweet peace," without alloy;
But the oriole, the oriole,
Sings "Joy! joy! joy!"

Laura E. Richards [1850-

THE SONG THE ORIOLE SINGS

There is a bird that comes and sings
In a professor's garden-trees;
Upon the English oak he swings,
And tilts and tosses in the breeze.

I know his name, I know his note,
That so with rapture takes my soul;
Like flame the gold beneath his throat,
His glossy cope is black as coal.

O oriole, it is the song
You sang me from the cottonwood,
Too young to feel that I was young,
Too glad to guess if life were good.

And while I hark, before my door,
Adown the dusty Concord Road,
The blue Miami flows once more
As by the cottonwood it flowed.

And on the bank that rises steep,
And pours a thousand tiny rills,
From death and absence laugh and leap
My school-mates to their flutter-mills.

The blackbirds jangle in the tops
Of hoary-antlered sycamores;
The timorous killdeer starts and stops
Among the drift-wood on the shores.

Below, the bridge - a noonday fear
Of dust and shadow shot with sun -
Stretches its gloom from pier to pier,
Far unto alien coasts unknown.

And on these alien coasts, above,
Where silver ripples break the stream's
Long blue, from some roof-sheltering grove
A hidden parrot scolds and screams.

Ah, nothing, nothing! Commonest things:
A touch, a glimpse, a sound, a breath -
It is a song the oriole sings -
And all the rest belongs to death.

But oriole, my oriole,
Were some bright seraph sent from bliss
With songs of heaven to win my soul
From simple memories such as this,

What could he tell to tempt my ear
From you? What high thing could there be,
So tenderly and sweetly dear
As my lost boyhood is to me?

William Dean Howells [1837-1920]

TO AN ORIOLE

How falls it, oriole, thou hast come to fly
In tropic splendor through our Northern sky?

At some glad moment was it nature's choice
To dower a scrap of sunset with a voice?

Or did some orange tulip, flaked with black,
In some forgotten garden, ages back,

Yearning toward Heaven until its wish was heard,
Desire unspeakably to be a bird?

Edgar Fawcett [1847-1904]

SONG: THE OWL

When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

SWEET SUFFOLK OWL

Sweet Suffolk owl, so trimly dight
With feathers, like a lady bright;
Thou sing'st alone, sitting by night,
"Te whit! Te whoo!"

Thy note that forth so freely rolls
With shrill command the mouse controls;
And sings a dirge for dying souls.
"Te whit! Te whoo!"

Thomas Vautor [fl. 1616]

THE PEWEE

The listening Dryads hushed the woods;

The boughs were thick, and thin and few
The golden ribbons fluttering through;
Their sun-embroidered, leafy hoods
The lindens lifted to the blue:
Only a little forest-brook
The farthest hem of silence shook:
When in the hollow shades I heard, -
Was it a spirit, or a bird?
Or, strayed from Eden, desolate,
Some Peri calling to her mate,
Whom nevermore her mate would cheer?
Pe-ri! pe-ri! peer!"

Through rocky clefts the brooklet fell
With plashy pour, that scarce was sound,
But only quiet less profound,
A stillness fresh and audible:
A yellow leaflet to the ground
Whirled noiselessly: with wing of gloss
A hovering sunbeam brushed the moss,
And, wavering brightly over it,
Sat like a butterfly alit:
The owlet in his open door
Stared roundly: while the breezes bore
The plaint to far-off places drear, -
"Pe-ree! pe-ree! peer!"

To trace it in its green retreat
I sought among the boughs in vain;
And followed still the wandering strain,
So melancholy and so sweet
The dim-eyed violets yearned with pain.
'Twas now a sorrow in the air,
Some nymph's immortalized despair
Haunting the woods and waterfalls;
And now, at long, sad intervals,
Sitting unseen in dusky shade,
His plaintive pipe some fairy played,
With long-drawn cadence thin and clear, -
"Pe-wee! pe-wee! peer!"

Long-drawn and clear its closes were, -
As if the hand of Music through
The somber robe of Silence drew
A thread of golden gossamer:
So pure a flute the fairy blew.
Like beggared princes of the wood,
In silver rags the birches stood;
The hemlocks, lordly counselors,
Were dumb; the sturdy servitors,
In beechen jackets patched and gray,
Seemed waiting spellbound all the day
That low, entrancing note to hear, -
"Pe-wee! pe-wee! peer!"

I quit the search, and sat me down
Beside the brook, irresolute,
And watched a little bird in suit

Of sober olive, soft and brown,
Perched in the maple-branches, mute:
With greenish gold its vest was fringed,
Its tiny cap was ebon-tinged,
With ivory pale its wings were barred,
And its dark eyes were tender-starred.
"Dear bird," I said, "what is thy name?"
And thrice the mournful answer came,
So faint and far, and yet so near, -
"Pe-wee! pe-wee! peer!"

For so I found my forest bird, -
The pewee of the loneliest woods,
Sole singer in these solitudes,
Which never robin's whistle stirred,
Where never bluebird's plume intrudes.
Quick darting through the dewy morn,
The redstart trilled his twittering horn,
And vanished in thick boughs: at even,
Like liquid pearls fresh showered from heaven,
The high notes of the lone wood-thrush
Fall on the forest's holy hush:
But thou all day complainest here, -
"Pe-wee! pe-wee! peer!"

Hast thou, too, in thy little breast,
Strange longings for a happier lot, -
For love, for life, thou know'st not what, -
A yearning, and a vague unrest,
For something still which thou hast not? -
Thou soul of some benighted child
That perished, crying in the wild!
Or lost, forlorn, and wandering maid,
By love allured, by love betrayed,
Whose spirit with her latest sigh
Arose, a little winged cry,
Above her chill and mossy bier!
"Dear me! dear me! dear!"

Ah, no such piercing sorrow mars
The pewee's life of cheerful ease!
He sings, or leaves his song to seize
An insect sporting in the bars
Of mild bright light that gild the trees.
A very poet he! For him
All pleasant places still and dim:
His heart, a spark of heavenly fire,
Burns with undying, sweet desire:
And so he sings; and so his song,
Though heard not by the hurrying throng,
Is solace to the pensive ear:
Pewee! pewee! peer!

John Townsend Trowbridge [1827-1916]

ROBIN REDBREAST

Sweet Robin, I have heard them say
That thou wert there upon the day
The Christ was crowned in cruel scorn
And bore away one bleeding thorn, -
That so the blush upon thy breast,
In shameful sorrow, was impressed;
And thence thy genial sympathy
With our redeemed humanity.

Sweet Robin, would that I might be
Bathed in my Saviour's blood, like thee;
Bear in my breast, whate'er the loss,
The bleeding blazon of the cross;
Live ever, with thy loving mind,
In fellowship with human-kind;
And take my pattern still from thee,
In gentleness and constancy.

George Washington Doane [1799-1859]

ROBIN REDBREAST

Good-by, good-by to Summer!
For Summer's nearly done; -
The garden smiling faintly,
Cool breezes in the sun;
Our thrushes now are silent,
Our swallows flown away, -
But Robin's here in coat of brown,
And scarlet breast-knot gay.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
Robin sings so sweetly
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
The leaves come down in hosts;
The trees are Indian princes,
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;
The scanty pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough;
It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,
'Twill soon be Winter now.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And what will this poor Robin do?
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,
The wheat-stack for the mouse,
When trembling night-winds whistle
And moan all round the house.
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow, -
Alas! in Winter dead and dark,
Where can poor Robin go?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,

O Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer!

William Allingham [1824-1889]

THE SANDPIPER

Across the narrow beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I,
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit, -
One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
Scud black and swift across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
Stand out the white lighthouses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach, -
One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along,
Uttering his sweet and mournful cry.
He starts not at my fitful song,
Or flash of fluttering drapery.
He has no thought of any wrong;
He scans me with a fearless eye:
Staunch friends are we, well tried and strong,
The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night
When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood fire will burn so bright!
To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky:
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

Celia Thaxter [1835-1894]

THE SEA-MEW

How joyously the young sea-mew
Lay dreaming on the waters blue,
Whereon our little bark had thrown
A little shade, the only one, -
But shadows ever man pursue.

Familiar with the waves and free
As if their own white foam were he,

His heart upon the heart of ocean
Lay learning all its mystic motion,
And throbbing to the throbbing sea.

And such a brightness in his eye,
As if the ocean and the sky
Within him had lit up and nursed
A soul God gave him not at first
To comprehend their majesty.

We were not cruel, yet did sunder
His white wing from the blue waves under,
And bound it, while his fearless eyes
Shone up to ours in calm surprise,
As deeming us some ocean wonder!

We bore our ocean bird unto
A grassy place, where he might view
The flowers that curtsy to the bees,
The waving of the tall green trees,
The falling of the silver dew.

But flowers of earth were pale to him
Who had seen the rainbow fishes swim;
And when earth's dew around him lay
He thought of ocean's winged spray,
And his eye waxed sad and dim.

The green trees round him only made
A prison with their darksome shade;
And dropped his wing, and mourned he
For his own boundless glittering sea -
Albeit he knew not they could fade.

Then One her gladsome face did bring,
Her gentle voice's murmuring,
In ocean's stead his heart to move
And teach him what was human love:
He thought it a strange, mournful thing.

He lay down in his grief to die
(First looking to the sea-like sky
That hath no waves!), because, alas!
Our human touch did on him pass,
And, with our touch, our agony.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning [1806-1861]

TO A SKYLARK

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Fairy,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-Place in the sky.

Joyous as morning
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest.
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveler as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

TO A SKYLARK

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler! - that love-prompted strain
- 'Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond -
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine:
Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam -
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

THE SKYLARK

Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place -
O to abide in the desert with thee!

Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud,
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!

Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place -
O to abide in the desert with thee!

James Hogg [1770-1835]

THE SKYLARK

How the blithe Lark runs up the golden stair
That leans through cloudy gates from Heaven to Earth,
And all alone in the empyreal air
Fills it with jubilant sweet songs of mirth;
How far he seems, how far
With the light upon his wings,
Is it a bird, or star
That shines, and sings?

What matter if the days be dark and frore,
That sunbeam tells of other days to be,
And singing in the light that floods him o'er
In joy he overtakes Futurity;
Under cloud-arches vast
He peeps, and sees behind
Great Summer coming fast
Adown the wind!

And now he dives into a rainbow's rivers,
In streams of gold and purple he is drowned,
Shrilly the arrows of his song he shivers,
As though the stormy drops were turned to sound;
And now he issues through,
He scales a cloudy tower,

Faintly, like falling dew,
His fast notes shower.

Let every wind be hushed, that I may hear
The wondrous things he tells the World below,
Things that we dream of he is watching near,
Hopes that we never dreamed he would bestow;
Alas! the storm hath rolled
Back the gold gates again,
Or surely he had told
All Heaven to men!

So the victorious Poet sings alone,
And fills with light his solitary home,
And through that glory sees new worlds foreshown,
And hears high songs, and triumphs yet to come;
He waves the air of Time
With thrills of golden chords,
And makes the world to climb
On linked words.

What if his hair be gray, his eyes be dim,
If wealth forsake him, and if friends be cold,
Wonder unbars her thousand gates to him,
Truth never fails, nor Beauty waxes old;
More than he tells his eyes
Behold, his spirit hears,
Of grief, and joy, and sighs
'Twixt joy and tears.

Blest is the man who with the sound of song
Can charm away the heartache, and forget
The frost of Penury, and the stings of Wrong,
And drown the fatal whisper of Regret!
Darker are the abodes
Of Kings, though his be poor,
While Fancies, like the Gods,
Pass through his door.

Singing thou scalest Heaven upon thy wings,
Thou liftest a glad heart into the skies;
He maketh his own sunrise, while he sings,
And turns the dusty Earth to Paradise;
I see thee sail along
Far up the sunny streams,
Unseen, I hear his song,
I see his dreams.

Frederick Tennyson [1807-1898]

TO A SKYLARK

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 and higher,
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,

Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt -
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness

That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

THE STORMY PETREL

A thousand miles from land are we,
Tossing about on the roaring sea, -
From billow to bounding billow cast,
Like fleecy snow on the stormy blast.
The sails are scattered abroad like weeds;
The strong masts shake like quivering reeds;
The mighty cables and iron chains,
The hull, which all earthly strength disdains, -
They strain and they crack; and hearts like stone
Their natural, hard, proud strength disown.

Up and down! - up and down!
From the base of the wave to the billow's crown,
And amidst the flashing and feathery foam
The stormy petrel finds a home, -
A home, if such a place may be
For her who lives on the wide, wide sea,
On the craggy ice, in the frozen air,
And only seeketh her rocky lair
To warm her young, and to teach them to spring
At once o'er the waves on their stormy wing!

O'er the deep! - o'er the deep!
Where the whale and the shark and the swordfish sleep, -
Outflying the blast and the driving rain,
The petrel telleth her tale - in vain;
For the mariner curseth the warning bird
Which bringeth him news of the storm unheard!
Ah! thus does the prophet, of good or ill,
Meet hate from the creatures he serveth still;
Yet he ne'er falter, - so, petrel, spring
Once more o'er the waves on thy stormy wing!

Bryan Waller Procter [1787-1874]

THE FIRST SWALLOW

The gorse is yellow on the heath,
The banks with speedwell flowers are gay,
The oaks are budding, and, beneath,
The hawthorn soon will bear the wreath,
The silver wreath, of May.

The welcome guest of settled Spring,
The swallow, too, has come at last;
Just at sunset, when thrushes sing,
I saw her dash with rapid wing,

And hailed her as she passed.

Come, summer visitant, attach
To my reed roof your nest of clay,
And let my ear your music catch,
Low twittering underneath the thatch
At the gray dawn of day.

Charlotte Smith [1749-1806]

TO A SWALLOW BUILDING UNDER OUR EAVES

Thou too hast traveled, little fluttering thing, -
Hast seen the world, and now thy weary wing
Thou too must rest.
But much, my little bird, could'st thou but tell,
I'd give to know why here thou lik'st so well
To build thy nest.

For thou hast passed fair places in thy flight;
A world lay all beneath thee where to light;
And, strange thy taste,
Of all the varied scenes that met thine eye,
Of all the spots for building 'neath the sky,
To choose this waste!

Did fortune try thee? - was thy little purse
Perchance run low, and thou, afraid of worse,
Felt here secure?
Ah, no! thou need'st not gold, thou happy one!
Thou know'st it not. Of all God's creatures, man
Alone is poor.

What was it, then? - some mystic turn of thought,
Caught under German eaves, and hither brought,
Marring thine eye
For the world's loveliness, till thou art grown
A sober thing that dost but mope and moan,
Not knowing why?

Nay, if thy mind be sound, I need not ask,
Since here I see thee working at thy task
With wing and beak.
A well-laid scheme doth that small head contain,
At which thou work'st, brave bird, with might and main,
Nor more need'st seek.

In truth, I rather take it thou hast got
By instinct wise much sense about thy lot,
And hast small care
Whether an Eden or a desert be
Thy home, so thou remain'st alive, and free
To skim the air.

God speed thee, pretty bird! May thy small nest
With little ones all in good time be blest.
I love thee much;

For well thou managest that life of thine,
While I - oh, ask not what I do with mine!
Would I were such!

Jane Welsh Carlyle [1801-1866]

CHIMNEY SWALLOWS

I slept in an old homestead by the sea:
And in their chimney nest,
At night the swallows told home-lore to me,
As to a friendly guest.

A liquid twitter, low, confiding, glad,
From many glossy throats,
Was all the voice; and yet its accents had
A poem's golden notes.

Quaint legends of the fireside and the shore,
And sounds of festal cheer,
And tones of those whose tasks of love are o'er,
Were breathed into mine ear;

And wondrous lyrics, felt but never sung,
The heart's melodious bloom;
And histories, whose perfumes long have clung
About each hallowed room.

I heard the dream of lovers, as they found
At last their hour of bliss,
And fear and pain and long suspense were drowned
In one heart-healing kiss.

I heard the lullaby of babes, that grew
To sons and daughters fair;
And childhood's angels, singing as they flew,
And sobs of secret prayer.

I heard the voyagers who seemed to sail
Into the sapphire sky,
And sad, weird voices in the autumn gale,
As the swift ships went by;

And sighs suppressed and converse soft and low
About the sufferer's bed,
And what is uttered when the stricken know
That the dear one is dead;

And steps of those who, in the Sabbath light,
Muse with transfigured face;
And hot lips pressing, through the long, dark night,
The pillow's empty place;

And fervent greetings of old friends, whose path
In youth had gone apart,
But to each other brought life's aftermath,
With uncorroded heart.

The music of the seasons touched the strain,
Bird-joy and laugh of flowers,
The orchard's bounty and the yellow grain,
Snow storm and sunny showers;

And secrets of the soul that doubts and yearns
And gropes in regions dim,
Till, meeting Christ with raptured eye, discerns
Its perfect life in Him.

So, thinking of the Master and his tears,
And how the birds are kept,
I sank in arms that folded me from fears,
And like an infant, slept.

Horatio Nelson Powers [1826-1890]

ITYLUS

Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,
How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet?
For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget and death remember,
Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.

Hast thou the heart? is it all passed over?
Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring:
But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember
And over my head the waves have met.
But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow
Could I forget or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flower-like face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow,
The voice of the child's blood crying yet,
Who hath remembered me? who hath forgotten?
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

Algernon Charles Swinburne [1837-1909]

THE THROSTLE

"Summer is coming, summer is coming,
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,"
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
"New, new, new, new!" Is it then so new
That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young again,"
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"
O warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

OVERFLOW

Hush!
With sudden gush
As from a fountain, sings in yonder bush
The Hermit Thrush.

Hark!
Did ever Lark
With swifter scintillations fling the spark
That fires the dark?

Again,
Like April rain
Of mist and sunshine mingled, moves the strain
O'er hill and plain.

Strong
As love, O Song,
In flame or torrent sweep through Life along,
O'er grief and wrong.

John Banister Tabb [1845-1909]

JOY-MONTH

Oh, hark to the brown thrush! hear how he sings!
How he pours the dear pain of his gladness!
What a gush! and from out what golden springs!
What a rage of how sweet madness!

And golden the buttercup blooms by the way,
A song of the joyous ground;
While the melody rained from yonder spray
Is a blossom in fields of sound.

How glisten the eyes of the happy leaves!
How whispers each blade, "I am blest!"
Rosy Heaven his lips to flowered earth gives,
With the costliest bliss of his breast.

Pour, pour of the wine of thy heart, O Nature!
By cups of field and of sky,
By the brimming soul of every creature! -
Joy-mad, dear Mother, am I.

Tongues, tongues for my joy, for my joy! more tongues! -
Oh, thanks to the thrush on the tree,
To the sky, and to all earth's blooms and songs!
They utter the heart in me.

David Atwood Wasson [1823-1887]

MY THRUSH

All through the sultry hours of June,
From morning blithe to golden noon,
And till the star of evening climbs
The gray-blue East, a world too soon,
There sings a Thrush amid the limes.

God's poet, hid in foliage green,
Sings endless songs, himself unseen;
Right seldom come his silent times.
Linger, ye summer hours serene!
Sing on, dear Thrush, amid the limes!

Nor from these confines wander out,
Where the old gun, bucolic lout,
Commits all day his murderous crimes:
Though cherries ripe are sweet, no doubt,
Sweeter thy song amid the limes.

May I not dream God sends thee there,
Thou mellow angel of the air,
Even to rebuke my earthlier rhymes
With music's soul, all praise and prayer?
Is that thy lesson in the limes?

Closer to God art thou than I:
His minstrel thou, whose brown wings fly
Through silent ether's summer climes.
Ah, never may thy music die!
Sing on, dear Thrush, amid the limes!

Mortimer Collins [1827-1876]

"BLOW SOFTLY, THRUSH"

Blow softly, thrush, upon the hush
That makes the least leaf loud,
Blow, wild of heart, remote, apart
From all the vocal crowd,
Apart, remote, a spirit note
That dances meltingly afloat,
Blow faintly, thrush!
And build the green-hid waterfall
I hated for its beauty, and all
The unloved vernal rapture and flush,
The old forgotten lonely time,
Delicate thrush!
Spring's at the prime, the world's in chime,
And my love is listening nearly;
O lightly blow the ancient woe,
Flute of the wood, blow clearly!
Blow, she is here, and the world all dear,
Melting flute of the hush,
Old sorrow estranged, enriched, sea-changed,
Breathe it, veery thrush!

Joseph Russell Taylor [1868-1933]

THE BLACK VULTURE

Aloof within the day's enormous dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home -
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.
And least of all he holds the human swarm -
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

George Sterling [1869-1926]

WILD GEESE

How oft against the sunset sky or moon
I watched that moving zigzag of spread wings
In unforgotten Autumns gone too soon,
In unforgotten Springs!
Creatures of desolation, far they fly
Above all lands bound by the curling foam;
In misty lens, wild moors and trackless sky
These wild things have their home.
They know the tundra of Siberian coasts.
And tropic marshes by the Indian seas;
They know the clouds and night and starry hosts
From Crux to Pleiades.
Dark flying rune against the western glow -
It tells the sweep and loneliness of things,
Symbol of Autumns vanished long ago.
Symbol of coming Springs!

Frederick Peterson [1859-

TO A WATERFOWL

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink

Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast, -
The desert and illimitable air, -
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

William Cullen Bryant [1794-1878]

THE WOOD-DOVE'S NOTE

Meadows with yellow cowslips all aglow,
Glory of sunshine on the uplands bare,
And faint and far, with sweet elusive flow,
The Wood-dove's plaintive call,
"O where! where! where!"

Straight with old Omar in the almond grove
From whitening boughs I breathe the odors rare
And hear the princess mourning for her love
With sad unwearied plaint,
"O where! where! where!"

New madrigals in each soft pulsing throat -
New life upleaping to the brooding air -
Still the heart answers to that questing note,
"Soul of the vanished years,
O where! where! where!"

Emily Huntington Miller [1833-1913]

THE SEA

SONG FOR ALL SEAS, ALL SHIPS

I

To-day a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,
Of unnamed heroes in the ships - of waves spreading and spreading
far as the eye can reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations, Fitful,
like a surge.

Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor
death dismay,
Picked sparingly without noise by thee, old ocean, chosen by thee,
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

(Ever the heroes on water or on land, by ones or twos appearing,
Ever the stock preserved and never lost, though rare, enough for
seed preserved.)

II

Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of nations!
Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man one
flag above all the rest,
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,
Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and mates,
And all that went down doing their duty,
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young or old,
A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

Walt Whitman [1819-1892]

STANZAS

From "The Triumph of Time"

I will go back to the great sweet mother, -
Mother and lover of men, the Sea.
I will go down to her, I and none other,
Close with her, kiss her, and mix her with me;
Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast;
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine,
Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;
Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,
Filled full with life to the eyes and hair.
As a rose is fulfilled to the rose-leaf tips
With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,
Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
Alive and aware of thy waves and thee;
Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
Clothed with the green, and crowned with the foam,
A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,
A vein in the heart of the streams of the Sea.

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,
Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say;
Thou hast taken, and shalt not render again;
Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they.
But death is the worst that comes of thee;
Thou art fed with our dead, O Mother, O Sea,
But when hast thou fed on our hearts? or when
Having given us love, hast thou taken away?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,
Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.
The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,
Shall they not vanish away and apart?
But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;
Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;
Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
From the first thou wert; in the end thou art.

Algernon Charles Swinburne [1837-1909]

THE SEA
From "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal

From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean, roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin, his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy fields
Are not a spoil for him, - thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: - there let him lay.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee and arbiter of war, -
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee; -
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: - not so thou;
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play,
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed, - in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving; - boundless, endless, and sublime, -
The image of Eternity, - the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From a boy
I wantoned with thy breakers, - they to me

Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror, 'twas a pleasing fear;
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane, - as I do here.

George Gordon Byron [1788-1824]

ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
Oh ye! who have your eye-balls vexed and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody, -
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

John Keats [1795-1821]

"WITH SHIPS THE SEA WAS SPRINKLED"

With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This ship was naught to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a lover's look;
This ship to all the rest did I prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where she comes the winds must stir:
On went she, - and due north her journey took.

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

A SONG OF DESIRE

Thou dreamer with the million moods,
Of restless heart like me,
Lay thy white hands against my breast
And cool its pain, O Sea!

O wanderer of the unseen paths,
Restless of heart as I,

Blow hither, from thy caves of blue,
Wind of the healing sky!

O treader of the fiery way,
With passionate heart like mine,
Hold to my lips thy healthful cup
Brimmed with its blood-red wine!

O countless watchers of the night,
Of sleepless heart like me,
Pour your white beauty in my soul,
Till I grow calm as ye!

O sea, O sun, O wind and stars,
(O hungry heart that longs!)
Feed my starved lips with life, with love,
And touch my tongue with songs!

Frederic Lawrence Knowles [1869-1905]

THE PINES AND THE SEA

Beyond the low marsh-meadows and the beach,
Seen through the hoary trunks of windy pines,
The long blue level of the ocean shines.
The distant surf, with hoarse, complaining speech,
Out from its sandy barrier seems to reach;
And while the sun behind the woods declines,
The moaning sea with sighing boughs combines,
And waves and pines make answer, each to each.
O melancholy soul, whom far and near,
In life, faith, hope, the same sad undertone
Pursues from thought to thought! thou needs must hear
An old refrain, too much, too long thine own:
'Tis thy mortality infects thine ear;
The mournful strain was in thyself alone.

Christopher Pearse Cranch [1813-1892]

SEA FEVER

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face, and a gray dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and 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 and the blown spume, and the seagulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gipsy life,
To the gull's way and 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 and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

John Masefield [1878-

HASTINGS MILL

As I went down by Hastings Mill I lingered in my going
To smell the smell of piled-up deals and feel the salt wind blowing,
To hear the cables fret and creak and the ropes stir and sigh
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) as in days gone by.

As I went down by Hastings Mill I saw a ship there lying,
About her tawny yards the little clouds of sunset flying;
And half I took her for the ghost of one I used to know
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) many years ago.

As I went down by Hastings Mill I saw while I stood dreaming
The flicker of her riding light along the ripples streaming,
The bollards where we made her fast and the berth where she did lie
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) in the days gone by.

As I went down by Hastings Mill I heard a fellow singing,
Chipping off the deep sea rust above the tide a-swinging,
And well I knew the queer old tune and well the song he sung
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) when the world was young.

And past the rowdy Union Wharf, and by the still tide sleeping,
To a randy dandy deep sea tune my heart in time was keeping,
To the thin far sound of a shadowy watch a-hauling,
And the voice of one I knew across the high tide calling
(Shipmate, my shipmate!) and the late dusk falling!

Cecily Fox-Smith [1882-

"A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA"

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sail,
And bends the gallant mast;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While, like the eagle free,
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind!
I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high;
And white waves heaving high, my boys,
The good ship tight and free -
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon horned moon,
And lightning in yon cloud;
And hark the music, mariners!

The wind is piping loud;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
The lightning flashes free -
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

Allan Cunningham [1784-1842]

THE SEA

The sea! the sea! the open sea!
The blue, the fresh, the ever free!
Without a mark, without a bound,
It runneth the earth's wide regions round;
It plays with the clouds; it mocks the skies;
Or like a cradled creature lies.

I'm on the sea! I'm on the sea!
I am where I would ever be;
With the blue above, and the blue below,
And silence wheresoe'er I go;
If a storm should come and awake the deep,
What matter? I shall ride and sleep.

I love, O, how I love to ride
On the fierce, foaming, bursting tide,
When every mad wave drowns the moon
Or whistles aloft his tempest tune,
And tells how goeth the world below,
And why the sou'west blasts do blow.

I never was on the dull, tame shore,
But I loved the great sea more and more.
And backwards flew to her billowy breast,
Like a bird that seeketh its mother's nest;
And a mother she was, and is, to me;
For I was born on the open sea!

The waves were white, and red the morn,
In the noisy hour when I was born;
And the whale it whistled, the porpoise rolled,
And the dolphins bared their backs of gold;
And never was heard such an outcry wild
As welcomed to life the ocean-child!

I've lived since then, in calm and strife,
Full fifty summers, a sailor's life,
With wealth to spend and a power to range,
But never have sought nor sighed for change;
And Death, whenever he comes to me,
Shall come on the wild, unbounded sea!

Bryan Waller Procter [1787-1874]

SAILOR'S SONG

From "Death's Jest-Book"

To sea, to sea! The calm is o'er;
The wanton water leaps in sport,
And rattles down the pebbly shore;
The dolphin wheels, the sea-cows snort,
And unseen mermaids' pearly song
Comes bubbling up, the weeds among.
Fling broad the sail, dip deep the oar;
To sea, to sea! the calm is o'er.

To sea, to sea! our wide-winged bark
Shall billowy cleave its sunny way,
And with its shadow, fleet and dark,
Break the caved Tritons' azure day,
Like mighty eagle soaring light
O'er antelopes on Alpine height.
The anchor heaves, the ship swings free,
The sails swell full. To sea, to sea!

Thomas Lovell Beddoes [1803-1849]

"A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE"

A life on the ocean wave,
A home on the rolling deep,
Where the scattered waters rave,
And the winds their revels keep!
Like an eagle caged, I pine
On this dull, unchanging shore:
Oh! give me the flashing brine,
The spray and the tempest's roar!

Once more on the deck I stand
Of my own swift-gliding craft:
Set sail! farewell to the land!
The gale follows fair abaft.
We shoot through the sparkling foam
Like an ocean-bird set free; -
Like the ocean-bird, our home
We'll find far out on the sea.

The land is no longer in view,
The clouds have begun to frown;
But with a stout vessel and crew,
We'll say, Let the storm come down!
And the song of our hearts shall be,
While the winds and the waters rave,
A home on the rolling sea!
A life on the ocean wave!

Epes Sargent [1813-1880]

TACKING SHIP OFF SHORE

The weather-leech of the topsail shivers,
The bowlines strain, and the lee-shrouds slacken,

The braces are taut, the lithe boom quivers,
And the waves with the coming squall-cloud blacken.

Open one point on the weather-bow,
Is the lighthouse tall on Fire Island Head.
There's a shade of doubt on the captain's brow,
And the pilot watches the heaving lead.

I stand at the wheel, and with eager eye
To sea and to sky and to shore I gaze,
Till the muttered order of "Full and by!"
Is suddenly changed for "Full for stays!"

The ship bends lower before the breeze,
As her broadside fair to the blast she lays;
And she swifter springs to the rising seas,
As the pilot calls, "Stand by for stays!"

It is silence all, as each in his place,
With the gathered coil in his hardened hands,
By tack and bowline, by sheet and brace,
Waiting the watchword impatient stands.

And the light on Fire Island Head draws near,
As, trumpet-winged, the pilot's shout
From his post on the bowsprit's heel I hear,
With the welcome call of "Ready! About!"

No time to spare! It is touch and go;
And the captain growls, "Down helm! hard down!"
As my weight on the whirling spokes I throw,
While heaven grows black with the storm-cloud's frown.

High o'er the knight-heads flies the spray,
As we meet the shock of the plunging sea;
And my shoulder stiff to the wheel I lay,
As I answer, "Ay, ay, sir! Ha-a-rd a-lee!"

With the swerving leap of a startled steed
The ship flies fast in the eye of the wind,
The dangerous shoals on the lee recede,
And the headland white we have left behind.

The topsails flutter, the jibs collapse,
And belly and tug at the groaning cleats;
The spanker slats, and the mainsail flaps;
And thunders the order, "Tacks and sheets!"

Mid the rattle of blocks and the tramp of the crew,
Hisses the rain of the rushing squall:
The sails are aback from clew to clew,
And now is the moment for "Mainsail, haul!"

And the heavy yards, like a baby's toy,
By fifty strong arms are swiftly swung:
She holds her way, and I look with joy
For the first white spray o'er the bulwarks flung.

"Let go, and haul!" 'Tis the last command,
And the head-sails fill to the blast once more:
Astern and to leeward lies the land,
With its breakers white on the shingly shore.

What matters the reef, or the rain, or the squall?
I steady the helm for the open sea;
The first mate clamors, "Belay, there, all!"
And the captain's breath once more comes free.

And so off shore let the good ship fly;
Little care I how the gusts may blow,
In my fo'castle bunk, in a jacket dry.
Eight bells have struck, and my watch is below.

Walter Mitchell [1826-1908]

IN OUR BOAT

Stars trembling o'er us and sunset before us,
Mountains in shadow and forests asleep;
Down the dim river we float on forever,
Speak not, ah, breathe not - there's peace on the deep.

Come not, pale sorrow, flee till to-morrow;
Rest softly falling o'er eyelids that weep;
While down the river we float on forever,
Speak not, ah, breathe not - there's peace on the deep.

As the waves cover the depths we glide over,
So let the past in forgetfulness sleep,
While down the river we float on forever,
Speak not, ah, breathe not - there's peace on the deep.

Heaven shine above us, bless all that love us;
All whom we love in thy tenderness keep!
While down the river we float on forever,
Speak not, ah, breathe not - there's peace on the deep.

Dinah Maria Mulock Craik [1826-1887]

POOR JACK

Go, patter to lubbers and swabs, do ye see,
'Bout danger, and fear, and the like;
A water-tight boat and good sea-room for me,
And it ain't to a little I'll strike.
Though the tempest topgallant-masts smack smooth should smite,
And shiver each splinter of wood, -
Clear the deck, stow the yards, and house everything tight,
And under reefed foresail we'll scud:
Avast! nor don't think me a milksop so soft
To be taken for trifles aback;
For they say there's a Providence sits up aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack!

I heard our good chaplain palaver one day
About souls, heaven, mercy, and such;
And, my timbers! what lingo he'd coil and belay;
Why, 'twas just all as one as High Dutch;
For he said how a sparrow can't founder, d'ye see,
Without orders that come down below;
And a many fine things that proved clearly to me
That Providence takes us in tow:
"For," says he, "do you mind me, let storms e'er so oft
Take the topsails of sailors aback,
There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack!"

I said to our Poll, - for, d'ye see, she would cry,
When last we weighed anchor for sea, -
"What argufies sniveling and piping your eye?
Why, what a blamed fool you must be!
Can't you see, the world's wide, and there's room for us all,
Both for seamen and lubbers ashore?
And if to old Davy I should go, friend Poll,
You never will hear of me more.
What then? All's a hazard: come, don't be so soft:
Perhaps I may laughing come back;
For, d'ye see, there's a cherub sits smiling aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack!"

D'ye mind me, a sailor should be every inch
All as one as a piece of the ship,
And with her brave the world, without offering to flinch
From the moment the anchor's a-trip.
As for me, in all weathers, all times, sides, and ends,
Naught's a trouble from duty that springs,
For my heart is my Poll's, and my rhino's my friend's,
And as for my will, 'tis the king's.
Even when my time comes, ne'er believe me so soft
As for grief to be taken aback;
For the same little cherub that sits up aloft
Will look out a good berth for poor Jack!

Charles Dibdin [1745-1814]

"ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP"

Rocked in the cradle of the deep
I lay me down in peace to sleep;
Secure I rest upon the wave,
For Thou, O Lord! hast power to save.
I know Thou wilt not slight my call,
For Thou dost mark the sparrow's fall;
And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

When in the dead of night I lie
And gaze upon the trackless sky,
The star-bespangled heavenly scroll,
The boundless waters as they roll, -
I feel Thy wondrous power to save

From perils of the stormy wave:
Rocked in the cradle of the deep,
I calmly rest and soundly sleep.

And such the trust that still were mine,
Though stormy winds swept o'er the brine,
Or though the tempest's fiery breath
Roused me from sleep to wreck and death.
In ocean cave, still safe with Thee
The germ of immortality!
And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

Emma Hart Willard [1787-1870]

OUTWARD

Wither away, O Sailor! say?
Under the night, under the day,
Yearning sail and flying spray
Out of the black into the blue,
Where are the great Winds bearing you?

Never port shall lift for me
Into the sky, out of the sea!
Into the blue or into the black,
Onward, outward, never back!
Something mighty and weird and dim
Calls me under the ocean rim!

Sailor under sun and moon,
'Tis the ocean's fatal rune.
Under yon far rim of sky
Twice ten thousand others lie.
Love is sweet and home is fair,
And your mother calls you there.

Onward, outward I must go
Where the mighty currents flow.
Home is anywhere for me
On this purple-tented sea.
Star and Wind and Sun my brothers,
Ocean one of many mothers.
Onward under sun and star
Where the weird adventures are!
Never port shall lift for me -
I am Wind and Sky and Sea!

John G. Neihardt [1881-

A PASSER-BY

Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?

Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales oppressed,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
Already arrived, am inhaling the odorous air:
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare:
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped grandest
Peak, that is over the feathery palms, more fair
Than thou, so upright, so stately and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.
But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

Robert Bridges [1844-1930]

OFF RIVIERE DU LOUP

O ship incoming from the sea
With all your cloudy tower of sail,
Dashing the water to the lee,
And leaning grandly to the gale,

The sunset pageant in the west
Has filled your canvas curves with rose,
And jeweled every toppling crest
That crashes into silver snows!

You know the joy of coming home,
After long leagues to France or Spain
You feel the clear Canadian foam
And the gulf water heave again.

Between these somber purple hills
That cool the sunset's molten bars,
You will go on as the wind wills,
Beneath the river's roof of stars.

You will toss onward toward the lights
That spangle over the lonely pier,
By hamlets glimmering on the heights,
By level islands black and clear.

You will go on beyond the tide,
Through brimming plains of olive sedge,
Through paler shadows light and wide,
The rapids piled along the ledge.

At evening off some reedy bay
You will swing slowly on your chain,
And catch the scent of dewy hay,
Soft blowing from the pleasant plain.

Duncan Campbell Scott [1862-

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;
The wind was a nor'-wester, blowing squally off the sea;
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made brought the North Head close aboard;
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'longshore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessed Christmas morn,
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,
Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessed Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard the captain call.
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate, Jackson, cried.
"It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward, just as though she understood.
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,

We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.

Robert Louis Stevenson [1850-1894]

THE PORT O' HEART'S DESIRE

Down around the quay they lie, the ships that sail to sea,
On shore the brown-cheeked sailormen they pass the jest with me,
But soon their ships will sail away with winds that never tire,
And there's one that will be sailing to the Port o' Heart's Desire.

The Port o' Heart's Desire, and it's, oh, that port for me,
And that's the ship that I love best of all that sail the sea;
Its hold is filled with memories, its prow it points away
To the Port o' Heart's Desire, where I roamed a boy at play.

Ships that sail for gold there be, and ships that sail for fame,
And some were filled with jewels bright when from Cathay they came,
But give me still yon white sail in the sunset's mystic fire,
That the running tides will carry to the Port o' Heart's Desire.

It's you may have the gold and fame, and all the jewels, too,
And all the ships, if they were mine, I'd gladly give to you,
I'd give them all right gladly, with their gold and fame entire,
If you would set me down within the Port o' Heart's Desire.

Oh, speed you, white-winged ship of mine, oh, speed you to the sea,
Some other day, some other tide, come back again for me;
Come back with all the memories, the joys and e'en the pain,
And take me to the golden hills of boyhood once again.

John S. McGroarty [1862-

ON THE QUAY

I've never traveled for more'n a day,
I never was one to roam,
But I likes to sit on the busy quay,
Watchin' the ships that says to me -
"Always somebody goin' away,
Somebody gettin' home."

I likes to think that the world's so wide -
'Tis grand to be livin' there,
Takin' a part in its goin's on. . . .
Ah, now ye're laughin' at poor old John,
Talkin' o' works o' the world wi' pride
As if he was doin' his share!

But laugh if ye will! When ye're old as me
Ye'll find 'tis a rare good plan

To look at the world - an' love it too! -
Though never a job are ye fit to do. . . .
Oh! 'tish't all sorrow an' pain to see
The work o' another man.

'Tis good when the heart grows big at last,
Too big for trouble to fill -
Wi' room for the things that was only stuff
When workin' an' winnin' seemed more'n enough -
Room for the world, the world so vast,
Wi' its peoples an' all their skill.

That's what I'm thinkin' on all the days
I'm loafin' an' smokin' here,
An' the ships do make me think the most
(Of readin' in books 'tis little I'd boast), -
But the ships, they carries me long, long ways,
An' draws far places near.

I sees the things that a sailor brings,
I hears the stories he tells. . . .
'Tis surely a wonderful world, indeed!
'Tis more'n the peoples can ever need!
An' I praises the Lord - to myself I sings -
For the world in which I dwells.

An' I loves the ships more every day
Though I never was one to roam.
Oh! the ships is comfortin' sights to see,
An' they means a lot when they says to me -
"Always somebody goin' away,
Somebody gettin' home."

John Joy Bell [1871-1934]

THE FORGING OF THE ANCHOR

Come, see the Dolphin's anchor forged! 'tis at a white heat now -
The bellows ceased, the flames decreased; though, on the forge's brow,
The little flames still fitfully play through the sable mound,
And fitfully you still may see the grim smiths ranking round;
All clad in leathern panoply, their broad hands only bare,
Some rest upon their sledges here, some work the windlass there.

The windlass strains the tackle-chains - the black mold heaves below;
And red and deep, a hundred veins burst out at every throe.
It rises, roars, rends all outright - O Vulcan, what a glow!
'Tis blinding white, 'tis blasting bright - the high sun shines not so!
The high sun sees not, on the earth, such fiery fearful show!
The roof-ribs swarth, the candent hearth, the ruddy lurid row

Of smiths that stand, an ardent band, like men before the foe!
As, quivering through his fleece of flame, the sailing monster slow
Sinks on the anvil - all about, the faces fiery grow:
"Hurrah!" they shout, "leap out, leap out!" bang, bang! the sledges go;
Hurrah! the jetted lightnings are hissing high and low;
A hailing fount of fire is struck at every squashing blow;

The leathern mail rebounds the hail; the rattling cinders strow
The ground around; at every bound the sweltering fountains flow;
And, thick and loud, the swinking crowd at every stroke pant "ho!"

Leap out, leap out, my masters! leap out, and lay on load!
Let's forge a goodly anchor - a bower thick and broad;
For a heart of oak is hanging on every blow, I bode;
And I see the good ship riding, all in a perilous road, -
The low reef roaring on her lee; the roll of ocean poured
From stem to stern, sea after sea; the mainmast by the board;
The bulwarks down; the rudder gone; the boats stove at the chains;
But courage still, brave mariners - the bower yet remains!
And not an inch to flinch he deigns - save when ye pitch sky high;
Then moves his head, as though he said, "Fear nothing - here am I!"

Swing in your strokes in order; let foot and hand keep time;
Your blows make music sweeter far than any steeple's chime.
But while ye swing your sledges, sing, and let the burthen be -
The anchor is the anvil king, and royal craftsmen we!
Strike in, strike in! - the sparks begin to dull their rustling red;
Our hammers ring with sharper din - our work will soon be sped;
Our anchor soon must change his bed of fiery rich array
For a hammock at the roaring bows, or an oozy couch of clay;
Our anchor soon must change the lay of merry craftsmen here
For the yeo-heave-o, and the heave-away, and the sighing seamen's cheer -
When, weighing slow, at eve they go, far, far from love and home;
And sobbing sweethearts, in a row, wail o'er the ocean- foam.

In livid and obdurate gloom, he darkens down at last;
A shapely one he is, and strong, as e'er from cat was cast.
O trusted and trustworthy guard! if thou hadst life like me,
What pleasure would thy toils reward beneath the deep-green sea!
O deep sea-diver, who might then behold such sights as thou? -
The hoary monster's palaces! - Methinks what joy 'twere now
To go plumb-plunging down, amid the assembly of the whales,
And feel the churned sea round me boil beneath their scourging tails!
Then deep in tangle-woods to fight the fierce sea-unicorn,
And send him foiled and bellowing back, for all his ivory horn;
To leave the subtle sworder-fish of bony blade forlorn;
And for the ghastly-grinning shark, to laugh his jaws to scorn:
To leap down on the kraken's back, where 'mid Norwegian isles
He lies, a lubber anchorage for sudden shallowed miles -
Till, snorting like an under-sea volcano, off he rolls;
Meanwhile to swing, a-buffeting the far astonished shoals
Of his back-browsing ocean-calves; or, haply, in a cove
Shell-strown, and consecrate of old to some Undine's love,
To find the long-haired mermaidens; or, hard by icy lands,
To wrestle with the sea-serpent, upon cerulean sands.

O broad-armed fisher of the deep! whose sports can equal thine?
The Dolphin weighs a thousand tons, that tugs thy cable- line;
And night by night 'tis thy delight, thy glory day by day,
Through sable sea and breaker white the giant game to play.
But, shamer of our little sports! forgive the name I gave:
A fisher's joy is to destroy - thine office is to save.
O lodger in the sea-kings' halls! couldst thou but understand
Whose be the white bones by thy side - or who that dripping band,
Slow swaying in the heaving wave, that round about thee bend,

With sounds like breakers in a dream blessing their ancient friend -
Oh, couldst thou know what heroes glide with larger steps round thee,
Thine iron side would swell with pride - thou'dst leap within the sea!

Give honor to their memories who left the pleasant strand
To shed their blood so freely for the love of fatherland -
Who left their chance of quiet age and grassy churchyard grave
So freely, for a restless bed amid the tossing wave!
Oh, though our anchor may not be all I have fondly sung,
Honor him for their memory whose bones he goes among!

Samuel Ferguson [1810-1886]

DRIFTING

My soul to-day
Is far away,
Sailing the Vesuvian Bay;
My winged boat,
A bird afloat,
Swings round the purple peaks remote: -

Round purple peaks
It sails, and seeks
Blue inlets and their crystal creeks,
Where high rocks throw,
Through deeps below,
A duplicated golden glow.

Far, vague, and dim,
The mountains swim;
While on Vesuvius' misty brim,
With outstretched hands,
The gray smoke stands
O'erlooking the volcanic lands.

Here Ischia smiles
O'er liquid miles;
And yonder, bluest of the isles,
Calm Capri waits,
Her sapphire gates
Beguiling to her bright estates.

I heed not, if
My rippling skiff
Float swift or slow from cliff to cliff;
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise.

Under the walls
Where swells and falls
The Bay's deep breast at intervals,
At peace I lie,
Blown softly by,
A cloud upon this liquid sky.

The day, so mild,
Is Heaven's own child,
With Earth and Ocean reconciled;
The airs I feel
Around me steal
Are murmuring to the murmuring keel.

Over the rail
My hand I trail
Within the shadow of the sail,
A joy intense,
The cooling sense
Glides down my drowsy indolence.

With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Where Summer sings and never dies, -
O'erweiled with vines
She glows and shines
Among her future oil and wines.

Her children, hid
The cliffs amid,
Are gamboling with the gamboling kid;
Or down the walls,
With tipsy calls,
Laugh on the rocks like waterfalls.

The fisher's child,
With tresses wild,
Unto the smooth, bright sand beguiled,
With glowing lips
Sings as she skips,
Or gazes at the far-off ships.

Yon deep bark goes
Where traffic blows,
From lands of sun to lands of snows; -
This happier one,
Its course is run
From lands of snow to lands of sun.

O happy ship,
To rise and dip,
With the blue crystal at your lip!
O happy crew,
My heart with you
Sails, and sails, and sings anew!

No more, no more
The worldly shore
Upbraids me with its loud uproar!
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise!

Thomas Buchanan Read [1822-1872]

"HOW'S MY BOY?"

"Ho, sailor of the sea!
How's my boy - my boy?"
"What's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what good ship sailed he?"

"My boy John -
He that went to sea -
What care I for the ship, sailor?
My boy's my boy to me.

"You come back from sea
And not know my John?
I might as well have asked some landsman
Yonder down in the town.
There's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

"How's my boy - my boy?
And unless you let me know,
I'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue jacket or no,
Brass button or no, sailor,
Anchor and crown or no!
Sure his ship was the Jolly Briton." -
"Speak low, woman, speak low!"

"And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I'd sing him o'er the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?"
"That good ship went down."

"How's my boy - my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor,
I never was aboard her.
Be she afloat, or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound,
Her owners can afford her!
I say, how's my John?"
"Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her."

"How's my boy - my boy?
What care I for the men, sailor?
I'm not their mother -
How's my boy - my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How's my boy - my boy?"

Sydney Dobell [1824-1874]

THE LONG WRITE SEAM

As I came round the harbor 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 harbor 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.

Jean Ingelow [1820-1897]

STORM SONG

The clouds are scudding across the moon;
A misty light is on the sea;
The wind in the shrouds has a wintry tune,
And the foam is flying free.

Brothers, a night of terror and gloom
Speaks in the cloud and gathering roar;
Thank God, He has given us broad sea-room,
A thousand miles from shore.

Down with the hatches on those who sleep!
The wild and whistling deck have we;
Good watch, my brothers, to-night we'll keep,
While the tempest is on the sea!

Though the rigging shriek in his terrible grip,
And the naked spars be snapped away,
Lashed to the helm, we'll drive our ship
In the teeth of the whelming spray!

Hark! how the surges o'erleap the deck!
Hark! how the pitiless tempest raves!
Ah, daylight will look upon many a wreck
Drifting over the desert waves.

Yet, courage, brothers! we trust the wave,
With God above us, our guiding chart.
So, whether to harbor or ocean-grave,
Be it still with a cheery heart!

Bayard Taylor [1825-1878]

THE MARINER'S DREAM

In slumbers of midnight the sailor-boy lay;
His hammock swung loose at the sport of the wind;
But watch-worn and weary, his cares flew away,
And visions of happiness danced o'er his mind.

He dreamed of his home, of his dear native bowers,
And pleasures that waited on life's merry morn;
While Memory stood sideways, half covered with flowers,
And restored every rose, but secreted its thorn.

Then Fancy her magical pinions spread wide,
And bade the young dreamer in ecstasy rise;
Now far, far behind him the green waters glide,
And the cot of his forefathers blesses his eyes.

The jessamine clambers in flowers o'er the thatch,
And the swallow sings sweet from her nest in the wall;
All trembling with transport he raises the latch,
And the voices of loved ones reply to his call.

A father bends o'er him with looks of delight;
His cheek is impearled with a mother's warm tear;
And the lips of the boy in a love-kiss unite
With the lips of the maid whom his bosom holds dear.

The heart of the sleeper beats high in his breast;
Joy quickens his pulses, his hardships seem o'er;
And a murmur of happiness steals through his rest, -
"O God! thou hast blessed me, - I ask for no more."

Ah! whence is that flame which now bursts on his eye?
Ah! what is that sound which now larums his ear?
'Tis the lightning's red glare, painting hell on the sky!
'Tis the crash of the thunder, the groan of the sphere!

He springs from his hammock, he flies to the deck;
Amazement confronts him with images dire;
Wild winds and mad waves drive the vessel a wreck;
The masts fly in splinters; the shrouds are on fire.

Like mountains the billows tremendously swell;
In vain the lost wretch calls on mercy to save;
Unseen hands of spirits are ringing his knell,

And the death-angel flaps his broad wing o'er the wave!

O sailor-boy, woe to thy dream of delight!
In darkness dissolves the gay frost-work of bliss.
Where now is the picture that Fancy touched bright, -
Thy parents' fond pressure, and love's honeyed kiss?

O sailor-boy! sailor-boy! never again
Shall home, love, or kindred thy wishes repay;
Unblessed and unhonored, down deep in the main,
Full many a fathom, thy frame shall decay.

No tomb shall e'er plead to remembrance for thee,
Or redeem form or fame from the merciless surge;
But the white foam of waves shall thy winding-sheet be,
And winds, in the midnight of winter, thy dirge!

On a bed of green sea-flowers thy limbs shall be laid, -
Around thy white bones the red coral shall grow;
Of thy fair yellow locks threads of amber be made,
And every part suit to thy mansion below.

Days, months, years, and ages shall circle away,
And still the vast waters above thee shall roll;
Earth loses thy pattern forever and aye, -
O sailor-boy! sailor-boy! peace to thy soul!

William Dimond [1780?-1837?]

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she could be;
Her sails from Heaven received no motion,
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock,
The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The holy Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the rock was hid by the surges' swell,
The mariners heard the warning bell;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blessed the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in heaven was shining gay,
All things were joyful on that day;
The sea-birds screamed as they wheeled around,
And there was joyance in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen,

A darker speck on the ocean green;
Sir Ralph, the Rover, walked his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring,
It made him whistle, it made him sing;
His heart was mirthful to excess;
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float;
Quoth he, "My men, put out the boat;
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lowered, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sank the Bell with a gurgling sound;
The bubbles rose, and burst around.
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the Rock
Will not bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph, the Rover, sailed away,
He scoured the seas for many a day;
And now, grown rich with plundered store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky
They cannot see the Sun on high;
The wind hath blown a gale all day;
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand;
So dark it is they see no land.
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?
For yonder, methinks, should be the shore."
"Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish we could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound; the swell is strong;
Though the wind hath fallen, they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock, -
"O Christ! it is the Inchcape Rock."

Sir Ralph, the Rover, tore his hair;
He cursed himself in his despair.
The waves rush in on every side;
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But, even in his dying fear,
One dreadful sound he seemed to hear, -
A sound as if, with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

Robert Southey [1774-1843]

THE SEA

Through the night, through the night,
In the saddest unrest,
Wrapped in white, all in white,
With her babe on her breast,
Walks the mother so pale,
Staring out on the gale,
Through the night!

Through the night, through the night,
Where the sea lifts the wreck,
Land in sight, close in sight,
On the surf-flooded deck,
Stands the father so brave,
Driving on to his grave
Through the night!

Richard Henry Stoddard [1825-1903]

THE SANDS OF DEE

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee!"
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair -
A tress of golden hair,
A drowned maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee!

Charles Kingsley [1819-1875]

THE THREE FISHERS

Three fishers went sailing away to the West,
Away to the West as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbor bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown.
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come home to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep;
And good-by to the bar and its moaning.

Charles Kingsley [1819-1875]

BALLAD

In the summer even,
While yet the dew was hoar,
I went plucking purple pansies,
Till my love should come to shore.
The fishing-lights their dances
Were keeping out at sea,
And come, I sung, my true love!
Come hasten home to me!

But the sea, it fell a-moaning,
And the white gulls rocked thereon;
And the young moon dropped from heaven,
And the lights hid one by one.
All silently their glances
Slipped down the cruel sea,
And wait! cried the night and wind and storm, -
Wait, till I come to thee!

Harriet Prescott Spofford [1835-1921]

THE NORTHERN STAR A Tynemouth Ship

The Northern Star
Sailed over the bar
Bound to the Baltic Sea;

In the morning gray
She stretched away: -
'Twas a weary day to me!

For many an hour
In sleet and shower
By the lighthouse rock I stray;
And watch till dark
For the winged bark
Of him that is far away.

The castle's bound
I wander round,
Amidst the grassy graves:
But all I hear
Is the north wind drear,
And all I see are the waves.

The Northern Star
Is set afar!
Set in the Baltic Sea:
And the waves have spread
The sandy bed
That holds my Love from me.

Unknown

THE FISHER'S WIDOW

The boats go out and the boats come in
Under the wintry sky;
And the rain and foam are white in the wind,
And the white gulls cry.

She sees the sea when the wind is wild
Swept by a windy rain;
And her heart's a-weary of sea and land
As the long days wane.

She sees the torn sails fly in the foam,
Broad on the sky-line gray;
And the boats go out and the boats come in,
But there's one away.

Arthur Symons [1865-

CALLER HERRIN'

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
They're bonny fish and halesome farin';
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

When ye were sleepin' on your pillows,
Dreamed ye aught o' our puir fellows,
Darkling as they faced the billows,

A' to fill the woven willows?
Buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth!

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
They're no brought here without brave darin';
Buy my caller herrin',
Hauled through wind and rain.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
Oh, ye may ca' them vulgar farin';
Wives and mithers, maist despairin',
Ca' them lives o' men.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

When the creel o' herrin' passes,
Ladies, clad in silks and laces,
Gather in their braw pelisses,
Cast their heads, and screw their faces.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

Caller herrin's no got lightly: -
Ye can trip the spring fu' tightlie;
Spite o' tauntin', flauntin', flingin',
Gow has set you a' a-singin'
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?"

Neebor wives! now tent my tellin':
When the bonny fish ye're sellin',
At ae word be, in ye're dealin'!
Truth will stand, when a' thing's failin',
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

Carolina Nairne [1766-1845]

HANNAH BINDING SHOES

Poor lone Hannah,
Sitting at the window, binding shoes:
Faded, wrinkled,
Sitting, stitching, in a mournful muse.
Bright-eyed beauty once was she,
When the bloom was on the tree; -
Spring and winter,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Not a neighbor
Passing, nod or answer will refuse
To her whisper,
"Is there from the fishers any news?"
Oh, her heart's adrift with one

On an endless voyage gone; -
Night and morning,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Fair young Hannah,
Ben, the sunburnt fisher, gaily wooes;
Hale and clever,
For a willing heart and hand he sues.
May-day skies are all aglow,
And the waves are laughing so!
For her wedding
Hannah leaves her window and her shoes.

May is passing;
'Mid the apple-boughs a pigeon cooes:
Hannah shudders,
For the mild south-wester mischief brews.
Round the rocks of Marblehead,
Outward bound, a schooner sped;
Silent, lonesome,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

'Tis November:
Now no tear her wasted cheek bedews,
From Newfoundland
Not a sail returning will she lose,
Whispering hoarsely: "Fishermen,
Have you, have you heard of Ben?"
Old with watching,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Twenty winters
Bleak and drear the ragged shore she views.
Twenty seasons: -
Never one has brought her any news.
Still her dim eyes silently
Chase the white sails o'er the sea; -
Hopeless, faithful,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Lucy Larcom [1824-1893]

THE SAILOR A Romaic Ballad

Thou that hast a daughter
For one to woo and wed,
Give her to a husband
With snow upon his head;
Oh, give her to an old man,
Though little joy it be,
Before the best young sailor
That sails upon the sea!

How luckless is the sailor
When sick and like to die;
He sees no tender mother,

No sweetheart standing by.
Only the captain speaks to him, -
Stand up, stand up, young man,
And steer the ship to haven,
As none beside thee can.

Thou says't to me, "Stand, stand up";
I say to thee, take hold,
Lift me a little from the deck,
My hands and feet are cold.
And let my head, I pray thee,
With handkerchiefs be bound;
There, take my love's gold handkerchief,
And tie it tightly round.

Now bring the chart, the doleful chart;
See, where these mountains meet -
The clouds are thick around their head,
The mists around their feet:
Cast anchor here; 'tis deep and safe
Within the rocky cleft;
The little anchor on the right,
The great one on the left.

And now to thee, O captain,
Most earnestly I pray,
That they may never bury me
In church or cloister gray; -
But on the windy sea-beach,
At the ending of the land,
All on the surly sea-beach,
Deep down into the sand.

For there will come the sailors,
Their voices I shall hear,
And at casting of the anchor
The yo-ho loud and clear;
And at hauling of the anchor
The yo-ho and the cheer, -
Farewell, my love, for to thy bay
I never more may steer!

William Allingham [1824-1889]

THE BURIAL OF THE DANE

Blue gulf all around us,
Blue sky overhead -
Muster all on the quarter,
We must bury the dead!

It is but a Danish sailor,
Rugged of front and form;
A common son of the forecastle,
Grizzled with sun and storm.

His name, and the strand he hailed from

We know, and there's nothing more!
But perhaps his mother is waiting
In the lonely Island of Fohr.

Still, as he lay there dying,
Reason drifting awreck,
"'Tis my watch." he would mutter,
"I must go upon deck!"

Aye, on deck, by the foremast!
But watch and lookout are done;
The Union Jack laid o'er him,
How quiet he lies in the sun!

Slow the ponderous engine,
Stay the hurrying shaft;
Let the roll of the ocean
Cradle our giant craft;
Gather around the grating,
Carry your messmate aft!

Stand in order, and listen
To the holiest page of prayer!
Let every foot be quiet,
Every head be bare -
The soft trade-wind is lifting
A hundred locks of hair.

Our captain reads the service,
(A little spray on his cheeks)
The grand old words of burial,
And the trust a true heart seeks: -
"We therefore commit his body
To the deep" - and, as he speaks,

Launched from the weather railing,
Swift as the eye can mark,
The ghastly, shotted hammock
Plunges, away from the shark,
Down, a thousand fathoms,
Down into the dark!

A thousand summers and winters
The stormy Gulf shall roll
High o'er his canvas coffin;
But, silence to doubt and dole: -
There's a quiet harbor somewhere
For the poor aweary soul.

Free the fettered engine,
Speed the tireless shaft,
Loose to gallant and topsail,
The breeze is fair abaft!

Blue sea all around us,
Blue sky bright o'erhead -
Every man to his duty,
We have buried our dead!

Henry Howard Brownell [1820-1872]

TOM BOWLING

Here, a sheer hulk, lies poor Tom Bowling,
The darling of our crew;
No more he'll hear the tempest howling,
For death has broached him to.
His form was of the manliest beauty,
His heart was kind and soft;
Faithful, below, he did his duty;
But now he's gone aloft.

Tom never from his word departed,
His virtues were so rare;
His friends were many and true-hearted,
His Poll was kind and fair:
And then he'd sing, so blithe and jolly,
Ah, many's the time and oft!
But mirth is turned to melancholy,
For Tom is gone aloft.

Yet shall poor Tom find pleasant weather,
When He, who all commands,
Shall give, to call Life's crew together,
The word to "pipe all hands."
Thus Death, who Kings and Tars despatches,
In vain Tom's life has doffed;
For, though his body's under hatches,
His soul is gone aloft.

Charles Dibdin [1745-1814]

MESSMATES

Ha gave us all a good-by cheerily
At the first dawn of day;
We dropped him down the side full drearily
When the light died away.
It's a dead dark watch that he's a-keeping there,
And a long, long night that lags a-creeping there,
Where the Trades and the tides roll over him
And the great ships go by.

He's there alone with green seas rocking him
For a thousand miles around;
He's there alone with dumb things mocking him,
And we're homeward bound.
It's a long, lone watch that he's a-keeping there,
And a dead cold night that lags a-creeping there,
While the months and the years roll over him
And the great ships go by.

I wonder if the tramps come near enough,
As they thrash to and fro,

And the battleships' bells ring clear enough
To be heard down below;
If through all the lone watch that he's a-keeping there,
And the long, cold night that lags a-creeping there,
The voices of the sailor-men shall comfort him
When the great ships go by.

Henry Newbolt [1862-

THE LAST BUCCANEER

Oh, England is a pleasant place for them that's rich and high,
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I;
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall see again
As the pleasant Isle of Aves, beside the Spanish main.

There were forty craft in Aves that were both swift and stout,
All furnished well with small arms and cannons round about;
And a thousand men in Aves made laws so fair and free
To choose their valiant captains and obey them loyally.

Thence we sailed against the Spaniard with his hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung with cruel tortures from Indian folk of old;
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as hard as stone,
Who flog men and keelhaul them, and starve them to the bone.

Oh, the palms grew high in Aves, and fruits that shone like gold,
And the colibris and parrots they were gorgeous to behold;
And the negro maids to Aves from bondage fast did flee,
To welcome gallant sailors, a-sweeping in from sea.

Oh, sweet it was in Aves to hear the landward breeze,
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you, while you listened to the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never touched the shore.

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine things must be;
So the King's ships sailed on Aves, and quite put down were we.
All day we fought like bulldogs, but they burst the booms at night;
And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from the fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass beside,
Till for all I tried to cheer her, the poor young thing she died;
But as I lay a-gasping, a Bristol sail came by,
And brought me home to England here, to beg until I die.

And now I'm old and going - I'm sure I can't tell where;
One comfort is, this world's so hard, I can't be worse off there:
If I might but be a sea-dove, I'd fly across the main,
To the pleasant Isle of Aves, to look at it once again.

Charles Kingsley [1819-1875]

THE LAST BUCCANEER

The winds were yelling, the waves were swelling,

The sky was black and drear,
When the crew with eyes of flame brought the ship without a name
Alongside the last Buccaneer.

"Whence flies your sloop full sail before so fierce a gale,
When all others drive bare on the seas?
Say, come ye from the shore of the holy Salvador,
Or the gulf of the rich Caribbees?"

"From a shore no search hath found, from a gull no line can sound,
Without rudder or needle we steer;
Above, below our bark dies the sea-fowl and the shark,
As we fly by the last Buccaneer.

"To-night there shall be heard on the rocks of Cape de Verde
A loud crash and a louder roar;
And to-morrow shall the deep with a heavy moaning sweep
The corpses and wreck to the shore."

The stately ship of Clyde securely now may ride
In the breath of the citron shades;
And Severn's towering mast securely now hies fast,
Through the seas of the balmy Trades.

From St. Jago's wealthy port, from Havannah's royal fort,
The seaman goes forth without fear;
For since that stormy night not a mortal hath had sight
Of the flag of the last Buccaneer.

Thomas Babington Macaulay [1800-1859]

THE LEADSMAN'S SONG

For England, when with favoring gale,
Our gallant ship up Channel steered,
And scudding, under easy sail,
The high blue western lands appeared,
To heave the lead the seaman sprang,
And to the pilot cheerly sang,
"By the deep - Nine."

And bearing up to gain the port,
Some well-known object kept in view,
An abbey tower, a ruined fort,
A beacon to the vessel true;
While oft the lead the seaman flung,
And to the pilot cheerly sung,
"By the mark - Seven."

And as the much-loved shore we near,
With transport we behold the roof
Where dwelt a friend or partner dear,
Of faith and love and matchless proof.
The lead once more the seaman flung,
And to the watchful pilot sung,
"Quarter less - Five."

Now to her berth the ship draws nigh,
With slackened sail she feels the tide,
Stand clear the cable is the cry,
The anchor's gone, we safely ride.
The watch is set, and through the night,
We hear the seaman with delight
Proclaim - "All's well."

Charles Dibdin [1745-1814]

HOMEWARD BOUND

Head the ship for England!
Shake out every sail!
Blithe leap the billows,
Merry sings the gale.
Captain, work the reckoning;
How many knots a day? -
Round the world and home again,
That's the sailor's way!

We've traded with the Yankees,
Brazilians and Chinese;
We've laughed with dusky beauties
In shade of tall palm-trees;
Across the line and Gulf-Stream -
Round by Table Bay -
Everywhere and home again,
That's the sailor's way!

Nightly stands the North Star
Higher on our bow;
Straight we run for England;
Our thoughts are in it now.
Jolly times with friends ashore,
When we've drawn our pay! -
All about and home again,
That's the sailor's way!

Tom will to his parents,
Jack will to his dear,
Joe to wife and children,
Bob to pipes and beer;
Dicky to the dancing-room,
To hear the fiddles play; -
Round the world and home again,
That's the sailor's way!

William Allingham [1824-1889]

THE SIMPLE LIFE

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always, night and day,
I hear lake-water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

William Butler Yeats [1865-

A WISH

Mine be a cot beside the hill;
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook, that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.

The swallow, oft, beneath my thatch
Shall twitter from her clay-built nest;
Oft shall the pilgrim lift the latch,
And share my meal, a welcome guest.

Around my ivied porch shall spring
Each fragrant flower that drinks the dew;
And Lucy, at her wheel, shall sing
In russet-gown and apron blue.

The village-church among the trees,
Where first our marriage-vows were given,
With merry peals shall swell the breeze
And point with taper spire to Heaven.

Samuel Rogers [1763-1855]

ODE ON SOLITUDE

Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter, fire.

Blest, who can unconcernedly find
Hours, days, and years, slide soft away
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day;

Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mixed, sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

Alexander Pope [1688-1744]

"THRICE HAPPY HE"

Thrice happy he, who by some shady grove,
Far from the clamorous world, doth live his own;
Though solitary, who is not alone,
But doth converse with that eternal love.
O how more sweet is birds' harmonious moan,
Or the soft sobbings of the widowed dove,
Than those smooth whisperings near a prince's throne,
Which good make doubtful, do the evil approve!
Or how more sweet is Zephyr's wholesome breath,
And sighs perfumed which do the flowers unfold,
Than that applause vain honor doth bequeath!
How sweet are streams to poison drunk in gold!
The world is full of horrors, falsehoods, slights;
Woods' silent shades have only true delights.

William Drummond [1585-1649]

"UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE" From "As You Like It"

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 and 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 and rough weather.

William Shakespeare [1564-1616]

CORIDON'S SONG
In "The Complete Angler"

Oh, the sweet contentment
The countryman doth find.
High trolollie lollie loe,
High trolollie lee,
That quiet contemplation
Possesseth all my mind:
Then care away,
And wend along with me.

For courts are full of flattery,
As hath too oft been tried;
High trolollie lollie loe,
High trolollie lee,
The city full of wantonness,
And both are full of pride:

But oh, the honest countryman
Speaks truly from his heart,
High trolollie lollie loe,
High trolollie lee,
His pride is in his tillage,
His horses and his cart:

Our clothing is good sheepskins,
Gray russet for our wives,
High trolollie lollie loe,
High trolollie lee,
Tis warmth and not gay clothing
That doth prolong our lives:

The plowman, though he labor hard,
Yet on the holiday,
High trolollie lollie loe,
High trolollie lee,
No emperor so merrily
Does pass his time away:

To recompense our tillage
The heavens afford us showers;
High trolollie lollie loe,
High trolollie lee,
And for our sweet refreshments
The earth affords us bowers:

The cuckoo and the nightingale
Full merrily do sing,

High trolollie lollie loe,
High trolollie lee,
And with their pleasant roundelays
Bid welcome to the spring:

This is not half the happiness
The countryman enjoys;
High trolollie lollie loe,
High trolollie lee,
Though others think they have as much
Yet he that says so lies:
Then come away, turn
Countryman with me.

John Chalkhill [fl. 1648]

THE OLD SQUIRE

I like the hunting of the hare
Better than that of the fox;
I like the joyous morning air,
And the crowing of the cocks.

I like the calm of the early fields,
The ducks asleep by the lake,
The quiet hour which nature yields
Before mankind is awake.

I like the pheasants and feeding things
Of the unsuspecting morn;
I like the flap of the wood-pigeon's wings
As she rises from the corn.

I like the blackbird's shriek, and his rush
From the turnips as I pass by,
And the partridge hiding her head in a bush,
For her young ones cannot fly.

I like these things, and I like to ride,
When all the world is in bed,
To the top of the hill where the sky grows wide,
And where the sun grows red.

The beagles at my horse-heels trot
In silence after me;
There's Ruby, Roger, Diamond, Dot,
Old Slut and Margery, -

A score of names well used, and dear,
The names my childhood knew;
The horn with which I rouse their cheer,
Is the horn my father blew.

I like the hunting of the hare
Better than that of the fox;
The new world still is all less fair
Than the old world it mocks.

I covet not a wider range
Than these dear manors give;
I take my pleasures without change,
And as I lived I live.

I leave my neighbors to their thought;
My choice it is, and pride,
On my own lands to find my sport,
In my own fields to ride.

The hare herself no better loves
The field where she was bred,
Than I the habit of these groves,
My own inherited.

I know my quarries every one,
The meuse where she sits low;
The road she chose to-day was run
A hundred years ago.

The lags, the gills, the forest ways,
The hedgerows one and all,
These are the kingdoms of my chase,
And bounded by my wall;

Nor has the world a better thing,
Though one should search it round,
Than thus to live one's own sole king,
Upon one's own sole ground.

I like the hunting of the hare;
It brings me, day by day,
The memory of old days as fair,
With dead men passed away.

To these, as homeward still I ply
And pass the churchyard gate,
Where all are laid as I must lie
I stop and raise my hat.

I like the hunting of the hare;
New sports I hold in scorn.
I like to be as my fathers were,
In the days ere I was born.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt [1840-1922]

INSCRIPTION IN A HERMITAGE

Beneath this stony roof reclined,
I soothe to peace my pensive mind;
And while, to shade my lowly cave,
Embowering elms their umbrage wave;
And while the maple dish is mine -
The beechen cup, unstained with wine -
I scorn the gay licentious crowd,

Nor heed the toys that deck the proud.

Within my limits, lone and still,
The blackbird pipes in artless trill;
Fast by my couch, congenial guest,
The wren has wove her mossy nest;
From busy scenes and brighter skies,
To lurk with innocence, she flies,
Here hopes in safe repose to dwell,
Nor aught suspects the sylvan cell.

At morn I take my customed round,
To mark how buds yon shrubby mound,
And every opening primrose count,
That trimly paints my blooming mount;
Or o'er the sculptures, quaint and rude,
That grace my gloomy solitude,
I teach in winding wreaths to stray
Fantastic ivy's gadding spray.

At eve, within yon studious nook,
I ope my brass-embossed book,
Portrayed with many a holy deed
Of martyrs, crowned with heavenly meed;
Then, as my taper waxes dim,
Chant, ere I sleep, my measured hymn,
And at the close, the gleams behold
Of parting wings, be-dropt with gold.

While such pure joys my bliss create,
Who but would smile at guilty state?
Who but would wish his holy lot
In calm oblivion's humble grot?
Who but would cast his pomp away,
To take my staff, and amice gray;
And to the world's tumultuous stage
Prefer the blameless hermitage?

Thomas Warton [1728-1790]

THE RETIREMENT

Farewell, thou busy world, and may
We never meet again;
Here I can eat and sleep and pray,
And do more good in one short day
Than he who his whole age outwears
Upon the most conspicuous theaters,
Where naught but vanity and vice appears.

Good God! how sweet are all things here!
How beautiful the fields appear!
How cleanly do we feed and lie!
Lord! what good hours do we keep!
How quietly we sleep!
What peace, what unanimity!
How innocent from the lewd fashion

Is all our business, all our recreation!

O, how happy here's our leisure!
O, how innocent our pleasure!
O ye valleys! O ye mountains!
O ye groves, and crystal fountains!
How I love, at liberty,
By turns to come and visit ye!
Dear solitude, the soul's best friend,
That man acquainted with himself dost make,
And all his Maker's wonders to attend,
With thee I here converse at will,
And would be glad to do so still,
For it is thou alone that keep'st the soul awake.

How calm and quiet a delight
Is it, alone,
To read and meditate and write,
By none offended, and offending none!
To walk, ride, sit, or sleep at one's own ease;
And, pleasing a man's self, none other to displease.

O my beloved nymph, fair Dove,
Princess of rivers, how I love
Upon thy flowery banks to lie,
And view thy silver stream,
When gilded by a Summer's beam!
And in it all thy wanton fry
Playing at liberty,
And, with my angle, upon them
The all of treachery
I ever learned industriously to try!

Such streams Rome's yellow Tiber cannot show,
The Iberian Tagus, or Ligurian Po;
The Maese, the Danube, and the Rhine,
Are puddle-water, all, compared with thine;
And Loire's pure streams yet too polluted are
With thine, much purer, to compare;
The rapid Garonne and the winding Seine
Are both too mean,
Beloved Dove, with thee
To vie priority;
Nay, Tame and Isis, when conjoined, submit,
And lay their trophies at thy silver feet.

O my beloved rocks, that rise
To awe the earth and brave the skies!
From some aspiring mountain's crown
How dearly do I love,
Giddy with pleasure to look down;
And from the vales to view the noble heights above;
O my beloved caves! from dog-star's heat,
And all anxieties, my safe retreat;
What safety, privacy, what true delight,
In the artificial light
Your gloomy entrails make,
Have I taken, do I take!

How oft, when grief has made me fly,
To hide me from society
E'en of my dearest friends, have I,
In your recesses' friendly shade,
All my sorrows open laid,
And my most secret woes intrusted to your privacy!

Lord! would men let me alone,
What an over-happy one
Should I think myself to be -
Might I in this desert place,
(Which most men in discourse disgrace)
Live but undisturbed and free!
Here, in this despised recess,
Would I, maugre Winter's cold,
And the Summer's worst excess,
Try to live out to sixty full years old,
And, all the while,
Without an envious eye
On any thriving under Fortune's smile,
Contented live, and then contented die.

Charles Cotton [1630-1687]

THE COUNTRY FAITH

Here in the country's heart,
Where the grass is green,
Life is the same sweet life
As it e'er hath been.

Trust in a God still lives,
And the bell at morn
Floats with a thought of God
O'er the rising corn.

God comes down in the rain,
And the crop grows tall -
This is the country faith
And best of all!

Norman Gale [1862-

TRULY GREAT

My walls outside must have some flowers,
My walls within must have some books;
A house that's small; a garden large,
And in it leafy nooks:

A little gold that's sure each week;
That comes not from my living kind,
But from a dead man in his grave,
Who cannot change his mind:

A lovely wife, and gentle too;

Contented that no eyes but mine
Can see her many charms, nor voice
To call her beauty fine:

Where she would in that stone cage live,
A self made prisoner, with me;
While many a wild bird sang around,
On gate, on bush, on tree.

And she sometimes to answer them,
In her far sweeter voice than all;
Till birds, that loved to look on leaves,
Will doat on a stone wall.

With this small house, this garden large,
This little gold, this lovely mate,
With health in body, peace at heart -
Show me a man more great.

William H. Davies [1870-

EARLY MORNING AT BARGIS

Clear air and grassy lea,
Stream-song and cattle-bell -
Dear man, what fools are we
In prison-walls to dwell!

To live our days apart
From green things and wide skies,
And let the wistful heart
Be cut and crushed with lies!

Bright peaks! - And suddenly
Light floods the placid dell,
The grass-tops brush my knee:
A good crop it will be,
So all is well!
O man, what fools are we
In prison-walls to dwell!

Hermann Hagedorn [1882-

THE CUP

The cup I sing is a cup of gold
Many and many a century old,
Sculptured fair, and over-filled
With wine of a generous vintage, spilled
In crystal currents and foaming tides
All round its luminous, pictured sides.
Old Time enameled and embossed
This ancient cup at an infinite cost.
Its frame he wrought of metal that run
Red from the furnace of the sun.
Ages on ages slowly rolled

Before the glowing mass was cold,
And still he toiled at the antique mold, -
Turning it fast in his fashioning hand,
Tracing circle, layer, and band,
Carving figures quaint and strange,
Pursuing, through many a wondrous change,
The symmetry of a plan divine.
At last he poured the lustrous wine,
Crowned high the radiant wave with light,
And held aloft the goblet bright,
Half in shadow, and wreathed in mist
Of purple, amber, and amethyst.

This is the goblet from whose brink
All creatures that have life must drink:
Foemen and lovers, haughty lord,
And sallow beggar with lips abhorred.
The new-born infant, ere it gain
The mother's breast, this wine must drain.
The oak with its subtle juice is fed,
The rose drinks till her cheeks are red,
And the dimpled, dainty violet sips
The limpid stream with loving lips.
It holds the blood of sun and star,
And all pure essences that are:
No fruit so high on the heavenly vine,
Whose golden hanging clusters shine
On the far-off shadowy midnight hills,
But some sweet influence it distils
That slideth down the silvery rills.
Here Wisdom drowned her dangerous thought,
The early gods their secrets brought;
Beauty, in quivering lines of light,
Ripples before the ravished sight:
And the unseen mystic spheres combine
To charm the cup and drug the wine.

All day I drink of the wine, and deep
In its stainless waves my senses steep;
All night my peaceful soul lies drowned
In hollows of the cup profound;
Again each morn I clamber up
The emerald crater of the cup,
On massive knobs of jasper stand
And view the azure ring expand:
I watch the foam-wreaths toss and swim
In the wine that o'erruns the jeweled rim: -
Edges of chrysolite emerge,
Dawn-tinted, from the misty surge:
My thrilled, uncovered front I lave,
My eager senses kiss the wave,
And drain, with its viewless draught, the lore
That kindles the bosom's secret core,
And the fire that maddens the poet's brain
With wild sweet ardor and heavenly pain.

John Townsend Trowbridge [1827-1916]

A STRIP OF BLUE

I do not own an inch of land,
But all I see is mine, -
The orchards and the mowing-fields,
The lawns and gardens fine.
The winds my tax-collectors are,
They bring me tithes divine, -
Wild scents and subtle essences,
A tribute rare and free;
And, more magnificent than all,
My window keeps for me
A glimpse of blue immensity, -
A little strip of sea.

Richer am I than he who owns
Great fleets and argosies;
I have a share in every ship
Won by the inland breeze
To loiter on yon airy road
Above the apple-trees.
I freight them with my untold dreams;
Each bears my own picked crew;
And nobler cargoes wait for them
Than ever India knew, -
My ships that sail into the East
Across that outlet blue.

Sometimes they seem like living shapes,
The people of the sky, -
Guests in white raiment coming down
From Heaven, which is close by;
I call them by familiar names,
As one by one draws nigh,
So white, so light, so spirit-like,
From violet mists they bloom!
The aching wastes of the unknown
Are half reclaimed from gloom,
Since on life's hospitable sea
All souls find sailing-room.

The ocean grows a weariness
With nothing else in sight;
Its east and west, its north and south,
Spread out from morn to night;
We miss the warm, caressing shore,
Its brooding shade and light.
A part is greater than the whole;
By hints are mysteries told.
The fringes of eternity, -
God's sweeping garment-fold,
In that bright shred of glittering sea,
I reach out for, and hold.

The sails, like flakes of roseate pearl,
Float in upon the mist;
The waves are broken precious stones, -

Sapphire and amethyst,
Washed from celestial basement walls
By suns unsetting kissed.
Out through the utmost gates of space,
Past where the gray stars drift,
To the widening Infinite, my soul
Glides on, a vessel swift;
Yet loses not her anchorage
In yonder azure rift.

Here sit I, as a little child:
The threshold of God's door
Is that clear band of chrysoprase;
Now the vast temple floor,
The blinding glory of the dome
I bow my head before:
Thy universe, O God, is home,
In height or depth, to me;
Yet here upon thy footstool green
Content am I to be;
Glad, when is opened unto my need
Some sea-like glimpse of thee.

Lucy Larcom [1824-1893]

AN ODE TO MASTER ANTHONY STAFFORD
To Hasten Him Into The Country

Come, spur away!
I have no patience for a longer stay,
But must go down
And leave the chargeable noise of this great town:
I will the country see,
Where old simplicity,
Though hid in gray,
Doth look more gay
Than foppery in plush and scarlet clad.
Farewell, you city wits, that are
Almost at civil war -
'Tis time that I grow wise, when all the world grows mad.

More of my days
I will not spend to gain an idiot's praise;
Or to make sport
For some slight Puisne of the Inns of Court.
Then, worthy Stafford, say,
How shall we spend the day?
With what delights
Shorten the nights?
When from this tumult we are got secure,
Where mirth with all her freedom goes,
Yet shall no finger lose;
Where every word is thought, and every thought is pure?

There from the tree
We'll cherries pluck, and pick the strawberry;
And every day

Go see the wholesome country girls make hay,
Whose brown hath lovelier grace
Than any painted face
That I do know
Hyde Park can show:
Where I had rather gain a kiss than meet
(Though some of them in greater state
Might court my love with plate)
The beauties of the Cheap, and wives of Lombard Street.

But think upon
Some other pleasures: these to me are none.
Why do I prate
Of women, that are things against my fate!
I never mean to wed
That torture to my bed:
My Muse is she
My love shall be.
Let clowns get wealth and heirs: when I am gone
And that great bugbear, grisly Death,
Shall take this idle breath,
If I a poem leave, that poem is my son.

Of this no more!
We'll rather taste the bright Pomona's store.
No fruit shall 'scape
Our palates, from the damson to the grape.
Then, full, we'll seek a shade,
And hear what music's made;
How Philomel
Her tale doth tell,
And how the other birds do fill the choir;
The thrush and blackbird lend their throats,
Warbling melodious notes;
We will all sports enjoy which others but desire.

Ours is the sky,
Where at what fowl we please our hawk shall fly:
Nor will we spare
To hunt the crafty fox or timorous hare;
But let our hounds run loose
In any ground they'll choose;
The buck shall fall,
The stag, and all.
Our pleasures must from their own warrants be,
For to my Muse, if not to me,
I'm sure all game is free:
Heaven, earth, are all but parts of her great royalty.

And when we mean
To taste of Bacchus' blessings now and then,
And drink by stealth
A cup or two to noble Barkley's health,
I'll take my pipe and try
The Phrygian melody;
Which he that hears,
Lets through his ears
A madness to distemper all the brain:

Then I another pipe will take
And Done music make,
To civilize with graver notes our wits again.

Thomas Randolph [1605-1635]

"THE MIDGES DANCE ABOON THE BURN"

The midges dance aboon the burn;
The dews begin to fa';
The paitricks doun the rushy holm
Set up their e'ening ca'.
Now loud and clear the blackbird's sang
Rings through the briery shaw,
While, flitting gay, the swallows play
Around the castle wa'.

Beneath the golden gloamin' sky
The mavis mends her lay;
The redbreast pours his sweetest strains
To charm the lingering day;
While weary yeldrins seem to wail
Their little nestlings torn,
The merry wren, frae den to den,
Gaes jinking through the thorn.

The roses fauld their silken leaves,
The foxglove shuts its bell;
The honeysuckle and the birk
Spread fragrance through the dell. -
Let others crowd the giddy court
Of mirth and revelry,
The simple joys that Nature yields
Are dearer far to me.

Robert Tannahill [1774-1810]

THE PLOW

Above yon somber swell of land
Thou seest the dawn's grave orange hue,
With one pale streak like yellow sand,
And over that a vein of blue.

The air is cold above the woods;
All silent is the earth and sky,
Except with his own lonely moods
The blackbird holds a colloquy.

Over the broad hill creeps a beam,
Like hope that gilds a good man's brow;
And now ascends the nostril-steam
Of stalwart horses come to plow.

Ye rigid plowmen, bear in mind
Your labor is for future hours!

Advance - spare not - nor look behind -
Plow deep and straight with all your powers.

Richard Hengist Horne [1803-1884]

THE USEFUL PLOW

A country life is sweet!
In moderate cold and heat,
To walk in the air how pleasant and fair!
In every field of wheat,
The fairest of flowers adorning the bowers,
And every meadow's brow;
So that I say, no courtier may
Compare with them who clothe in gray,
And follow the useful plow.

They rise with the morning lark,
And labor till almost dark,
Then, folding their sheep, they hasten to sleep
While every pleasant park
Next morning is ringing with birds that are singing
On each green, tender bough.
With what content and merriment
Their days are spent, whose minds are bent
To follow the, useful plow.

Unknown

"TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT"

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven, - to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel, - and eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by,
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

John Keats [1795-1821]

THE QUIET LIFE

What pleasure have great princes
More dainty to their choice
Than herdsmen wild, who careless
In quiet life rejoice,
And fortune's fate not fearing

Sing sweet in summer morning?

Their dealings plain and rightful,
Are void of all deceit;
They never know how spiteful
It is to kneel and wait
On favorite, presumptuous,
Whose pride is vain and sumptuous.

All day their flocks each tendeth;
At night, they take their rest;
More quiet than who sendeth
His ship unto the East,
Where gold and pearl are plenty;
But getting, very dainty.

For lawyers and their pleading,
They 'steem it not a straw;
They think that honest meaning
Is of itself a law:
Whence conscience judgeth plainly,
They spend no money vainly.

O happy who thus liveth!
Not caring much for gold;
With clothing which sufficeth
To keep him from the cold.
Though poor and plain his diet
Yet merry it is, and quiet.

William Byrd [1538?-1623]

THE WISH

Well then, I now do plainly see
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree;
The very honey of all earthly joy
Does, of all meats, the soonest cloy;
And they, methinks, deserve my pity
Who for it can endure the stings,
The crowd, and buzz, and murmurings
Of this great hive, the city!

Ah, yet, ere I descend to the grave,
May I a small house and large garden have;
And a few friends, and many books, both true,
Both wise, and both delightful too!
And since Love ne'er will from me flee, -
A mistress moderately fair,
And good as guardian-angels are,
Only beloved, and loving me!

O fountains! when in you shall I
Myself eased of unpeaceful thoughts espy?
O fields! O woods! when, when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade?
Here's the spring-head of pleasure's flood!

Here's wealthy Nature's treasury,
Where all the riches lie, that she
Has coined and stamped for good.

Pride and ambition here
Only in far-fetched metaphors appear;
Here naught but winds can hurtful murmurs scatter,
And naught but echo flatter.
The gods, when they descended, hither
From heaven did always choose their way;
And therefore we may boldly say
That 'tis the way too thither.

How happy here should I
And one dear She live, and embracing die!
She who is all the world, and can exclude
In deserts solitude.
I should have then this only fear:
Lest men, when they my pleasures see,
Should hither throng to live like me,
And so make a city here.

Abraham Cowley [1618-1667]

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

"Why, William, on that old gray stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books? - that light bequeathed
To beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake
And thus I made reply:

"The eye - it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I dream that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum

Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"- Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old gray stone,
And dream my time away."

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

THE TABLES TURNED An Evening Scene On The Same Subject

Up! up! my friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening luster mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless -
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things: -
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

SIMPLE NATURE

Be it not mine to steal the cultured flower
From any garden of the rich and great,
Nor seek with care, through many a weary hour,
Some novel form of wonder to create.
Enough for me the leafy woods to rove,
And gather simple cups of morning dew,
Or, in the fields and meadows that I love,
Find beauty in their bells of every hue.
Thus round my cottage floats a fragrant air,
And though the rustic plot be humbly laid,
Yet, like the lilies gladly growing there,
I have not toiled, but take what God has made.
My Lord Ambition passed, and smiled in scorn;
I plucked a rose, and, lo! it had no thorn.

George John Romanes [1848-1894]

"I FEAR NO POWER A WOMAN WIELDS"

I fear no power a woman wields
While I can have the woods and fields,
With comradeship alone of gun,
Gray marsh-wastes and the burning sun.

For aye the heart's most poignant pain
Will wear away 'neath hail and rain,
And rush of winds through branches bare
With something still to do and dare, -

The lonely watch beside the shore,
The wild-fowl's cry, the sweep of oar,
The paths of virgin sky to scan
Untrod, and so uncursed by man.

Gramercy, for thy haunting face,
Thy charm of voice and lissome grace,
I fear no power a woman wields
While I can have the woods and fields.

Ernest McGaffey [1861-

A RUNNABLE STAG

When the pods went pop on the broom, green broom
And apples began to be golden-skinned,
We harbored a stag in the Priory coomb,
And we feathered his trail up-wind, up-wind,
We feathered his trail up-wind -
A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
A runnable stag, a kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
A stag, a runnable stag.

Then the huntsman's horn rang yap, yap, yap,

And "Forwards" we heard the harborer shout;
But 'twas only a brocket that broke a gap
In the beechen underwood, driven out,
From the underwood antlered out
By warrant and might of the stag, the stag,
The runnable stag, whose lordly mind
Was bent on sleep, though beamed and tined
He stood, a runnable stag.

So we tufted the covert till afternoon
With Tinkerman's Pup and Bell-of-the-North;
And hunters were sulky and hounds out of tune
Before we tufted the right stag forth,
Before we tufted him forth,
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
The royal and runnable stag.

It was Bell-of-the-North and Tinkerman's Pup
That stuck to the scent till the copse was drawn.
"Tally ho! tally ho!" and the hunt was up,
The tufters whipped and the pack laid on,
The resolute pack laid on,
And the stag of warrant away at last,
The runnable stag, the same, the same,
His hoofs on fire, his horns like flame,
A stag, a runnable stag.

"Let your gelding be: if you check or chide
He stumbles at once and you're out of the hunt;
For three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,
On hunters accustomed to bear the brunt,
Accustomed to bear the brunt,
Are after the runnable stag, the stag,
The runnable stag with his kingly crop
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
The right, the runnable stag."

By perilous paths in coomb and dell,
The heather, the rocks, and the river-bed,
The pace grew hot, for the scent lay well,
And a runnable stag goes right ahead,
The quarry went right ahead -
Ahead, ahead, and fast and far;
His antlered crest, his cloven hoof,
Brow, bay and tray and three aloof,
The stag, the runnable stag.

For a matter of twenty miles and more,
By the densest hedge and the highest wall,
Through herds of bullocks he baffled the lore
Of harborer, huntsman, hounds and all,
Of harborer, hounds and all -
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,
For twenty miles, and five and five,
He ran, and he never was caught alive,
This stag, this runnable stag.

When he turned at bay in the leafy gloom,
In the emerald gloom where the brook ran deep,
He heard in the distance the rollers boom,
And he saw in a vision of peaceful sleep,
In a wonderful vision of sleep,
A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
A runnable stag in a jewelled bed,
Under the sheltering ocean dead,
A stag, a runnable stag.

So a fateful hope lit up his eye,
And he opened his nostrils wide again,
And he tossed his branching antlers high
As he headed the hunt down the Charloch glen,
As he raced down the echoing glen -
For five miles more, the stag, the stag,
For twenty miles, and five and five,
Not to be caught now, dead or alive,
The stag, the runnable stag.

Three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,
Three hundred horses as gallant and free,
Beheld him escape on the evening tide,
Far out till he sank in the Severn Sea,
Till he sank in the depths of the sea -
The stag, the buoyant stag, the stag
That slept at last in a jewelled bed
Under the sheltering ocean spread,
The stag, the runnable stag.

John Davidson [1857-1909]

HUNTING-SONG From "King Arthur"

Oh, who would stay indoor, indoor,
When the horn is on the hill? (Bugle: Tarantara!
With the crisp air stinging, and the huntsmen singing,
And a ten-tined buck to kill!

Before the sun goes down, goes down,
We shall slay the buck of ten; (Bugle: Tarantara!
And the priest shall say benison, and we shall ha'e venison,
When we come home again.

Let him that loves his ease, his ease,
Keep close and house him fair; (Bugle: Tarantara!
He'll still be a stranger to the merry thrill of danger
And the joy of the open air.

But he that loves the hills, the hills,
Let him come out to-day! (Bugle: Tarantara!
For the horses are neighing, and the hounds are baying,
And the hunt's up, and away!

Richard Hovey [1864-1900]

"A-HUNTING WE WILL GO"
From "Don Quixote in England"

The dusky night rides down the sky,
And ushers in the morn;
The hounds all join in glorious cry,
The huntsman winds his horn.
And a-hunting we will go.

The wife around her husband throws
Her arms to make him stay;
"My dear, it rains, it hails, it blows;
You cannot hunt to-day."
Yet a-hunting we will go.

Away they fly to 'scape the rout,
Their steeds they soundly switch;
Some are thrown in, and some thrown out,
And some thrown in the ditch.
Yet a-hunting we will go.

Sly Reynard now like lightning flies,
And sweeps across the vale;
And when the hounds too near he spies,
He drops his bushy tail.
Then a-hunting we will go.

Fond Echo seems to like the sport,
And join the jovial cry;
The woods, the hills, the sound retort,
And music fills the sky,
When a-hunting we do go.

At last his strength to faintness worn,
Poor Reynard ceases flight;
Then hungry, homeward we return,
To feast away the night.
And a-drinking we do go.

Ye jovial hunters, in the morn
Prepare then for the chase;
Rise at the sounding of the horn
And health with sport embrace,
When a-hunting we do go.

Henry Fielding [1707-1754]

THE ANGLER'S INVITATION

Come when the leaf comes, angle with me,
Come when the bee hums over the lea,
Come with the wild flowers -
Come with the wild showers -
Come when the singing bird calleth for thee!

Then to the stream side, gladly we'll hie,
Where the gray trout glide silently by,
Or in some still place
Over the hill face
Hurrying onward, drop the light fly.

Then, when the dew falls, homeward we'll speed
To our own loved walls down on the mead,
There, by the bright hearth,
Holding our night mirth,
We'll drink to sweet friendship in need and in deed.

Thomas Tod Stoddart [1810-1880]

THE ANGLER'S WISH From "The Complete Angler"

I in these flowery mends would be,
These crystal streams should solace me;
To whose harmonious bubbling noise
I, with my angle, would rejoice,
Sit here, and see the turtle-dove
Court his chaste mate to acts of love;

Or, on that bank, feel the west-wind
Breathe health and plenty; please my mind,
To see sweet dewdrops kiss these flowers,
And then washed off by April showers;
Here, hear my Kenna sing a song:
There, see a blackbird feed her young,

Or a laverock build her nest;
Here, give my weary spirits rest,
And raise my low-pitched thoughts above
Earth, or what poor mortals love:
Thus, free from lawsuits, and the noise
Of princes' courts, I would rejoice;

Or, with my Bryan and a book,
Loiter long days near Shawford brook;
There sit by him, and eat my meat;
There see the sun both rise and set;
There bid good morning to next day;
There meditate my time away;
And angle on; and beg to have
A quiet passage to a welcome grave.

Izaak Walton [1593-1683]

THE ANGLER In "The Complete Angler"

O the gallant fisher's life,
It is the best of any!
'Tis full of pleasure, void of strife,
And 'tis beloved by many;

Other joys
Are but toys;
Only this
Lawful is;
For our skill
Breeds no ill,
But content and pleasure.

In a morning, up we rise,
Ere Aurora's peeping;
Drink a cup to wash our eyes,
Leave the sluggard sleeping;
Then we go
To and fro,
With our knacks
At our backs,
To such streams
As the Thames,
If we have the leisure.

When we please to walk abroad
For our recreation,
In the fields is our abode,
Full of delectation,
Where, in a brook,
With a hook, -
Or a lake, -
Fish we take;
There we sit,
For a bit,
Till we fish entangle.

We have gentles in a horn,
We have paste and worms too;
We can watch both night and morn,
Suffer rain and storms too;
None do here
Use to swear:
Oaths do fray
Fish away;
We sit still,
Watch our quill:
Fishers must not wrangle.

If the sun's excessive heat
Make our bodies swelter,
To an osier hedge we get,
For a friendly shelter;
Where, in a dike,
Perch or pike,
Roach or dace,
We do chase,
Bleak or gudgeon,
Without grudging;
We are still contented.

Or we sometimes pass an hour
Under a green willow,

That defends us from a shower,
Making earth our pillow;
Where we may
Think and pray,
Before death
Stops our breath;
Other joys
Are but toys,
And to be lamented.

John Chalkhill [fl. 1648]

WANDERLUST

TO JANE: THE INVITATION

Best and Brightest, come away!
Fairer far than this fair day,
Which, like thee, to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest hour of unborn Spring
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon morn
To hoar February born;
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
It kissed the forehead of the earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, Dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs -
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music, lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.

I leave this notice on my door

For each accustomed visitor: -
"I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields; -
Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
Sit by the fireside with Sorrow. -
You with the unpaid bill, Despair, -
You tiresome verse-reciter, Care, -
I will pay you in the grave, -
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation too, be off!
To-day is for itself enough;
Hope, in pity mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go;
Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good
Alter long pain - with all your love,
This you never told me of."

Radiant Sister of the Day
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
To the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green, and ivy dun,
Round stems that never kiss the sun.
Where the lawns and pastures be,
And the sandhills of the sea; -
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers, and violets,
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

"MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS"

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe, -
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valor, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;

Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe, -
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

"AFAR IN THE DESERT"

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side.
When the sorrows of life the soul o'ercast,
And, sick of the present, I cling to the past;
When the eye is suffused with regretful tears,
From the fond recollections of former years;
And shadows of things that have long since fled
Flit over the brain, like the ghosts of the dead:
Bright visions of glory that vanished too soon;
Day-dreams that departed ere manhood's noon;
Attachments by fate or falsehood reft;
Companions of early days lost or left -
And my native land - whose magical name
Thrills to the heart like electric flame;
The home of my childhood; the haunts of my prime;
All the passions and scenes of that rapturous time
When the feelings were young, and the world was new,
Like the fresh bowers of Eden unfolding to view;
All - all now forsaken - forgotten - foregone!
And I - a lone exile remembered of none -
My high aims abandoned, - my good acts undone -
Aweary of all that is under the sun -
With that sadness of heart which no stranger may scan,
I fly to the desert afar from man.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side,
When the wild turmoil of this wearisome life,
With its scenes of oppression, corruption, and strife -
The proud man's frown, and the base man's fear -
The scorner's laugh, and the sufferer's tear -
And malice, and meanness, and falsehood, and folly,
Dispose me to musing and dark melancholy;
When my bosom is full, and my thoughts are high,
And my soul is sick with the bondman's sigh -
Oh! then there is freedom, and joy, and pride,
Afar in the desert alone to ride!
There is rapture to vault on the champing steed,
And to bound away with the eagle's speed,
With the death-fraught firelock in my hand -
The only law of the Desert Land!

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side.

Away - away from the dwellings of men,
By the wild deer's haunt, by the buffalo's glen;
By valleys remote where the oribi plays,
Where the gnu, the gazelle, and the hartebeest graze,
And the kudu and eland unhunted recline
By the skirts of gray forest o'erhung with wild vine:
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood,
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will
In the fen where the wild ass is drinking his fill.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side.
O'er the brown karroo, where the bleating cry
Of the springbok's fawn sounds plaintively:
And the timorous quagga's shrill whistling neigh
Is heard by the fountain at twilight gray;
Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,
With wild hoof scouring the desolate plain;
And the fleet-footed ostrich over the waste
Speeds like a horseman who travels in haste,
Hieing away to the home of her rest,
Where she and her mate have scooped their nest,
Far hid from the pitiless plunderer's view
In the pathless depths of the parched karroo.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side.
Away - away - in the wilderness vast
Where the white man's foot hath never passed,
And the quivered Coranna or Bechuan
Hath rarely crossed with his roving clan:
A region of emptiness, howling and drear,
Which man hath abandoned from famine and fear;
Which the snake and the lizard inhabit alone,
With the twilight bat from the yawning stone;
Where grass, nor herb, nor shrub takes root,
Save poisonous thorns that pierce the foot;
And the bitter melon, for food and drink,
Is the pilgrim's fare by the salt-lake's brink;
A region of drought, where no river glides,
Nor rippling brook with osiered sides;
Where sedgy pool, nor bubbling fount,
Nor tree, nor cloud, nor misty mount,
Appears, to refresh the aching eye;
But the barren earth and the burning sky,
And the blank horizon, round and round,
Spread - void of living sight or sound.
And here, while the night-winds round me sigh,
And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,
As I sit apart by the desert stone,
Like Elijah at Horeb's cave, alone,
"A still small voice" comes through the wild,
Like a father consoling his fretful child,
Which banishes bitterness, wrath, and fear,
Saying - Man is distant, but God is near!

Thomas Pringle [1789-1834]

SPRING SONG IN THE CITY

Who remains in London,
In the streets with me,
Now that Spring is blowing
Warm winds from the sea;
Now that trees grow green and tall,
Now the sun shines mellow,
And with moist primroses all
English lanes are yellow?

Little barefoot maiden,
Selling violets blue,
Hast thou ever pictured
Where the sweetlings grew?
Oh, the warm wild woodland ways,
Deep in dewy grasses,
Where the wind-blown shadow strays,
Scented as it passes!

Peddler breathing deeply,
Toiling into town,
With the dusty highway
You are dusky brown;
Hast thou seen by daisied leas,
And by rivers flowing,
Lilac-ringlets which the breeze
Loosens lightly blowing?

Out of yonder wagon
Pleasant hay-scents float,
He who drives it carries
A daisy in his coat:
Oh, the English meadows, fair
Far beyond all praises!
Freckled orchids everywhere
Mid the snow of daisies!

Now in busy silence
Broods the nightingale,
Choosing his love's dwelling
In a dimpled dale;
Round the leafy bower they raise
Rose-trees wild are springing;
Underneath, through the green haze,
Bounds the brooklet singing.

And his love is silent
As a bird can be,
For the red buds only
Fill the red rose-tree;
Just as buds and blossoms blow
He'll begin his tune,
When all is green and roses glow
Underneath the moon.

Nowhere in the valleys
Will the wind be still,
Everything is waving,
Wagging at his will:
Blows the milkmaid's kirtle clean
With her hand pressed on it;
Lightly o'er the hedge so green
Blows the plowboy's bonnet.

Oh, to be a-roaming
In an English dell!
Every nook is wealthy,
All the world looks well,
Tinted soft the Heavens glow,
Over Earth and Ocean,
Waters flow, breezes blow,
All is light and motion!

Robert Buchanan [1841-1901]

IN CITY STREETS

Yonder in the heather there's a bed for sleeping,
Drink for one athirst, ripe blackberries to eat;
Yonder in the sun the merry hares go leaping,
And the pool is clear for travel-wearied feet.

Sorely throb my feet, a-tramping London highways,
(Ah! the springy moss upon a northern moor!)
Through the endless streets, the gloomy squares and byways,
Homeless in the City, poor among the poor!

London streets are gold - ah, give me leaves a-glinting
'Midst gray dykes and hedges in the autumn sun!
London water's wine, poured out for all unstinting -
God! For the little brooks that tumble as they run!

Oh, my heart is fain to hear the soft wind blowing,
Soughing through the fir-tops up on northern fells!
Oh, my eye's an ache to see the brown burns flowing
Through the peaty soil and tinkling heather-bells.

Ada Smith [18 -

THE VAGABOND (To an Air of Schubert)

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway nigh 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.

Robert Louis Stevenson [1850-1894]

IN THE HIGHLANDS

In the highlands, in the country places,
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
And the young fair maidens
Quiet eyes;
Where essential silence cheers and blesses
And for ever in the hill-recesses
Her more lovely music
Broods and dies. -

O to mount again where erst I haunted;
Where the old red hills are bird-enchanted,
And the low green meadows
Bright with sward;
And when even dies, the million-tinted,
And the night has come, and planets glinted,
Lo, the valley hollow
Lamp-bestarred!

O to dream, O to awake and wander
There, and with delight to take and render,
Through the trance of silence,
Quiet breath!
Lo! for there, among the flowers and grasses,
Only the mightier movement sounds and passes;
Only winds and rivers,
Life and Death.

Robert Louis Stevenson [1850-1894]

THE SONG MY PADDLE SINGS

West wind, blow from your prairie nest,
Blow from the mountains, blow from the west.
The sail is idle, the sailor too;
O wind of the west, we wait for you!
Blow, blow!
I have wooed you so,
But never a favor you bestow.
You rock your cradle the hills between,
But scorn to notice my white lateen.

I stow the sail and unship the mast:
I wooed you long, but my wooing's past;
My paddle will lull you into rest:
O drowsy wind of the drowsy west,
Sleep, sleep!
By your mountains steep,
Or down where the prairie grasses sweep,
Now fold in slumber your laggard wings,
For soft is the song my paddle sings.

Be strong, O paddle! be brave, canoe!
The reckless waves you must plunge into.
Reel, reel,
On your trembling keel,
But never a fear my craft will feel.

We've raced the rapids; we're far ahead:
The river slips through its silent bed.
Sway, sway,
As the bubbles spray
And fall in tinkling tunes away.

And up on the hills against the sky,
A fir tree rocking its lullaby
Swings, swings,
Its emerald wings,
Swelling the song that my paddle sings.

E. Pauline Johnson [1862-1913]

THE GIPSY TRAIL

The white moth to the closing vine,
The bee to the opened clover,
And the gipsy blood to the gipsy blood
Ever the wide world over.

Ever the wide world over, lass,
Ever the trail held true,
Over the world and under the world,
And back at the last to you.

Out of the dark of the gorgio camp,
Out of the grime and the gray
(Morning waits at the end of the world),
Gipsy, come away!

The wild boar to the sun-dried swamp,
The red crane to her reed,
And the Romany lass to the Romany lad
By the tie of a roving breed.

Morning waits at the end of the world
Where winds unhaltered play,
Nipping the flanks of their plunging ranks,
Till the white sea-horses neigh.

The pied snake to the rifted rock,
The buck to the stony plain,
And the Romany lass to the Romany lad,
And both to the road again.

Both to the road again, again!
Out on a clean sea-track -
Follow the cross of the gipsy trail
Over the world and back!

Follow the Romany patteran
North where the blue bergs sail,
And the bows are gray with the frozen spray,
And the masts are shod with mail.

Follow the Romany patteran
Sheer to the Austral Light,
Where the besom of God is the wild south wind,
Sweeping the sea-floors white.

Follow the Romany patteran
West to the sinking sun,
Till the junk-sails lift through the houseless drift,
And the east and the west are one.

Follow the Romany patteran
East where the silence broods
By a purple wave on an opal beach
In the hush of the Mahirn woods.

The wild hawk to the wind-swept sky,
The deer to the wholesome wold,
And the heart of a man to the heart of a maid,
As it was in the days of old.

The heart of a man to the heart of a maid -
Light of my tents, be fleet!
Morning waits at the end of the world,
And the world is all at our feet!

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

WANDERLUST

Beyond the East the sunrise, beyond the West the sea,
And East and West the wanderlust that will not let me be;
It works in me like madness, dear, to bid me say good-by!
For the seas call and the stars call, and oh, the call of the sky!

I know not where the white road runs, nor what the blue hills are,
But man can have the sun for friend, and for his guide a star;
And there's no end of voyaging when once the voice is heard,
For the river calls and the road calls, and oh, the call of a bird!

Yonder the long horizon lies, and there by night and day
The old ships draw to home again, the young ships sail away;
And come I may, but go I must, and if men ask you why,
You may put the blame on the stars and the sun and the white road
and the sky!

Gerald Gould [1885-1936]

THE FOOTPATH WAY

The winding road lies white and bare,
Heavy in dust that takes the glare;
The thirsty hedgerows and parched grass
Dream of a time when no road was.

Beyond, the fields are full in view,
Heavy in herbage and in dew;
The great-eyed kine browse thankfully;
Come, take the footpath way with me!

This stile, where country lovers tryst,
Where many a man and maid have kissed,
Invites us sweetly, and the wood
Beckons us to her solitude.

Leave men and lumbering wains behind,
And dusty roads, all blank and blind;
Come tread on velvet and on silk,
Damasked with daisies, white as milk.

Those dryads of the wood, that some
Call the wild hyacinths, now are come,
And hold their revels in a night
Of emerald flecked with candle-light.

The fountains of the meadows play,
This is the wild bee's holiday;
When summer-snows have sweetly dressed
The pasture like a wedding-guest,

By fields of beans that shall eclipse
The honey on the rose's lips,
With woodruff and the new hay's breath,
And wild thyme sweetest in her death,

Skirting the rich man's lawn and hall,
The footpath way is free to all;
For us his pinks and roses blow:
Fling him thanksgiving ere we go!

By orchards yet in rosy veils,
By hidden nests of nightingales,
Through lonesome valleys where all day
The rabbit people scurry and play,

The footpath sets her tender lure.
This is the country for the poor;
The high-road seeks the crowded sea;
Come, take the footpath way with me!

Katherine Tynan Hinkson [1861-1931]

A MAINE TRAIL

Come follow, heart upon your sleeve,
The trail, a-teasing by,
Past tasseled corn and fresh-mown hay,
Trim barns and farm-house shy,
Past hollyhocks and white well-sweep,
Through pastures bare and wild,
Oh come, let's fare to the heart-o'-the-wood
With the faith of a little child.

Strike in by the gnarled way through the swamp
Where late the laurel shone,
An intimate close where you meet yourself
And come unto your own,
By bouldered brook to the hidden spring
Where breath of ferns blows sweet
And swift birds break the silence as
Their shadows cross your feet.

Stout-hearted thrust through gold-green copse
To garner the woodland glee;
To weave a garment of warm delight,
Of sunspun ecstasy;
'Twill shield you all winter from frosty eyes,
'Twill shield your heart from cold;
Such greens! - how the Lord Himself loves green!
Such sun! - how He loves the gold!

Then on till flaming fireweed
Is quenched in forest deep;
Tread soft! The sumptuous paven moss
Is spread for Dryads sleep;
And list ten thousand thousand spruce
Lift up their voice to God -
We can a little understand,
Born of the self-same sod.

Oh come, the welcoming trees lead on,

Their guests are we to-day;
Shy violets smile, proud branches bow,
Gay mushrooms mark the way;
The silence is a courtesy,
The well-bred calm of kings;
Come haste! the hour sets its face
Unto great Happenings.

Gertrude Huntington McGiffert [18-

AFOOT

Comes the lure of green things growing,
Comes the call of waters flowing -
And the wayfarer desire
Moves and wakes and would be going.

Hark the migrant hosts of June
Marching nearer noon by noon!
Hark the gossip of the grasses
Bivouacked beneath the moon!

Long the quest and far the ending
When my wayfarer is wending -
When desire is once afoot,
Doom behind and dream attending!

In his ears the phantom chime
Of incommunicable rhyme,
He shall chase the fleeting camp-fires
Of the Bedouins of Time.

Farer by uncharted ways,
Dumb as death to plaint or praise,
Unreturning he shall journey,
Fellow to the nights and days;

Till upon the outer bar
Stilled the moaning currents are,
Till the flame achieves the zenith,
Till the moth attains the star,

Till through laughter and through tears
Fair the final peace appears,
And about the watered pastures
Sink to sleep the nomad years!

Charles G. D. Roberts [1860-

FROM ROMANY TO ROME

Upon the road to Romany
It's stay, friend, stay!
There's lots o' love and lots o' time
To linger on the way;
Poppies for the twilight,

Roses for the noon,
It's happy goes as lucky goes
To Romany in June.

But on the road to Rome - oh,
It's march, man, march!
The dust is on the chariot wheels,
The sere is on the larch,
Helmets and javelins
And bridles flecked with foam -
The flowers are dead, the world's ahead
Upon the road to Rome.

But on the road to Rome - ah,
It's fight, man, fight!
Footman and horseman
Treading left and right,
Camp-fires and watch-fires
Ruddying the gloam -
The fields are gray and worn away
Along the road to Rome.

Upon the road to Romany
It's sing, boys, sing!
Though rag and pack be on our back
We'll whistle to the King.
Wine is in the sunshine,
Madness in the moon,
And de'il may care the road we fare
To Romany in June.

Along the road to Rome, alas!
The glorious dust is whirled,
Strong hearts are fierce to see
The City of the World;
Yet footfall or bugle-call
Or thunder as ye will,
Upon the road to Romany
The birds are calling still!

Wallace Irwin [1875-

THE TOIL OF THE TRAIL

What have I gained by the toil of the trail?
I know and know well.
I have found once again the lore I had lost
In the loud city's hell.

I have broadened my hand to the cinch and the axe,
I have laid my flesh to the rain;
I was hunter and trailer and guide;
I have touched the most primitive wildness again.

I have threaded the wild with the stealth of the deer,
No eagle is freer than I;
No mountain can thwart me, no torrent appall,

I defy the stern sky.
So long as I live these joys will remain,
I have touched the most primitive wildness again.

Hamlin Garland [1860-

DO YOU FEAR THE WIND?

Do you fear the force of the wind,
The slash of the rain?
Go face them and fight them,
Be savage again.
Go hungry and cold like the wolf,
Go wade like the crane:
The palms of your hands will thicken,
The skin of your cheek will tan,
You'll grow ragged and weary and swarthy,
But you'll walk like a man!

Hamlin Garland [1860-

THE KING'S HIGHWAY "El Camino Real"

All in the golden weather, forth let us ride to-day,
You and I together, on the King's Highway,
The blue skies above us, and below the shining sea;
There's many a road to travel, but it's this road for me.

It's a long road and sunny, and the fairest in the world -
There are peaks that rise above it in their snowy mantles curled,
And it leads from the mountains through a hedge of chaparral,
Down to the waters where the sea gulls call.

It's a long road and sunny, it's a long road and old,
And the brown padres made it for the flocks of the fold;
They made it for the sandals of the sinner-folk that trod
From the fields in the open to the shelter-house of God.

They made it for the sandals of the sinner-folk of old;
Now the flocks they are scattered and death keeps the fold;
But you and I together we will take the road to-day,
With the breath in our nostrils, on the King's Highway.

We will take the road together through the morning's golden glow,
And we'll dream of those who trod it in the mellowed long ago;
We will stop at the Missions where the sleeping padres lay,
And we'll bend a knee above them for their souls' sake to pray.

We'll ride through the valleys where the blossom's on the tree,
Through the orchards and the meadows with the bird and the bee,
And we'll take the rising hills where the manzanitas grow,
Past the gray tails of waterfalls where blue violets blow.

Old Conquistadores, O brown priests and all,
Give us your ghosts for company when night begins to fall;

There's many a road to travel, but it's this road to-day,
With the breath of God about us on the King's Highway.

John S. McGroarty [1862-

THE FORBIDDEN LURE

"Leave all and follow - follow!"
Lure of the sun at dawn,
Lure of a wind-paced hollow,
Lure of the stars withdrawn;
Lure of the brave old singing
Brave perished minstrels knew;
Of dreams like sea-fog clinging
To boughs the night sifts through:

"Leave all and follow - follow!"
The sun goes up the day;
Flickering wing of swallow,
Blossoms that blow away, -
What would you, luring, luring,
When I must bide at home?
My heart will break her mooring
And die in reef-flung foam!

Oh, I must never listen,
Call not outside my door.
Green leaves, you must not glisten
Like water, any more.
Oh, Beauty, wandering Beauty,
Pass by; speak not. For see,
By bed and board stands Duty
To snatch my dreams from me!

Fannie Stearns Davis [1884-

THE WANDER-LOVERS

Down the world with Marna!
That's the life for me!
Wandering with the wandering wind,
Vagabond and unconfined!
Roving with the roving rain
Its unboundaried domain!
Kith and kin of wander-kind,
Children of the sea!

Petrels of the sea-drift!
Swallows of the lea!
Arabs of the whole wide girth
Of the wind-encircled earth!
In all climes we pitch our tents,
Cronies of the elements,
With the secret lords of birth
Intimate and free.

All the seaboard knows us
From Fundy to the Keys;
Every bend and every creek
Of abundant Chesapeake;
Ardise hills and Newport coves
And the far-off orange groves,
Where Floridian oceans break,
Tropic tiger seas.

Down the world with Marna,
Tarrying there and here!
Just as much at home in Spain
As in Tangier or Touraine!
Shakespeare's Avon knows us well,
And the crags of Neufchatel;
And the ancient Nile is fain
Of our coming near.

Down the world with Marna,
Daughter of the air!
Marna of the subtle grace,
And the vision in her face!
Moving in the measures trod
By the angels before God!
With her sky-blue eyes amaze
And her sea-blue hair!

Marna with the trees' life
In her veins a-stir!
Marna of the aspen heart
Where the sudden quivers start!
Quick-responsive, subtle, wild!
Artless as an artless child,
Spite of all her reach of art!
Oh, to roam with her!

Marna with the wind's will,
Daughter of the sea!
Marna of the quick disdain,
Starting at the dream of stain!
At a smile with love aglow,
At a frown a statued woe,
Standing pinnacled in pain
Till a kiss sets free!

Down the world with Marna,
Daughter of the fire!
Marna of the deathless hope,
Still alert to win new scope
Where the wings of life may spread
For a flight unhazarded!
Dreaming of the speech to cope
With the heart's desire!

Marna of the far quest
After the divine!
Striving ever for some goal
Past the blunder-god's control!

Dreaming of potential years
When no day shall dawn in fears!
That's the Marna of my soul,
Wander-bride of mine!

Richard Hovey [1864-1900]

THE SEA GIPSY

I am fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the Sea.

Richard Hovey [1864-1900]

A VAGABOND SONG

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood -
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gipsy blood astir;
We must rise and-follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

SPRING SONG

Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!
When thy flowery hand delivers
All the mountain-prisoned rivers,
And thy great heart beats and quivers
To revive the days that were,
Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!

Take my dust and all my dreaming,
Count my heart-beats one by one,
Send them where the winters perish;
Then some golden noon re cherish
And restore them in the sun,
Flower and scent and dust and dreaming,
With their heart-beats every one!

Set me in the urge and tide-drift
Of the streaming hosts a-wing!
Breast of scarlet, throat of yellow,
Raucous challenge, wooings mellow -
Every migrant is my fellow,
Making northward with the spring.
Loose me in the urge and tide-drift
Of the streaming hosts a-wing!

Shrilling pipe or fluting whistle,
In the valleys come again;
Fife of frog and call of tree-toad,
All my brothers, five or three-toed,
With their revel no more vetoed,
Making music in the rain;
Shrilling pipe or fluting whistle,
In the valleys come again.

Make me of thy seed to-morrow,
When the sap begins to stir!
Tawny light-foot, sleepy bruin,
Bright-eyes in the orchard ruin,
Gnarl the good life goes askew in,
Whiskey-jack, or tanager, -
Make me anything to-morrow,
When the sap begins to stir!

Make me even (How do I know?)
Like my friend the gargoyles there;
It may be the heart within him
Swells that doltish hands should pin him
Fixed forever in mid-air.
Make me even sport for swallows,
Like the soaring gargoyles there!

Give me the old clue to follow,
Through the labyrinth of night!
Clod of clay with heart of fire,
Things that burrow and aspire,
With the vanishing desire,
For the perishing delight, -
Only the old clue to follow,
Through the labyrinth of night!

Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!
Fashion me from swamp or meadow,
Garden plot or ferny shadow,
Hyacinth or humble burr!

Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!

Let me hear the far, low summons,
When the silver winds return;
Rills that run and streams that stammer,
Goldenwing with his loud hammer,
Icy brooks that brawl and clamor,
Where the Indian willows burn;
Let me hearken to the calling,
When the silver winds return,

Till recurring and recurring,
Long since wandered and come back,
Like a whim of Grieg's or Gounod's,
This same self, bird, bud, or Bluenose,
Some day I may capture (Who knows?)
Just the one last joy I lack,
Waking to the far new summons,
When the old spring winds come back.

For I have no choice of being,
When the sap begins to climb, -
Strong insistence, sweet intrusion,
Vasts and verges of illusion, -
So I win, to time's confusion,
The one perfect pearl of time,
Joy and joy and joy forever,
Till the sap forgets to climb!

Make me over in the morning
From the rag-bag of the world!
Scraps of dream and duds of daring,
Home-brought stuff from far sea-faring,
Faded colors once so flaring,
Shreds of banners long since furled!
Hues of ash and glints of glory,
In the rag-bag of the world!

Let me taste the old immortal
Indolence of life once more;
Not recalling nor foreseeing,
Let the great slow joys of being
Well my heart through as of yore!
Let me taste the old immortal
Indolence of life once more!

Give me the old drink for rapture,
The delirium to drain,
All my fellows drank in plenty
At the Three Score Inns and Twenty
From the mountains to the main!
Give me the old drink for rapture,
The delirium to drain!

Only make me over, April,
When the sap begins to stir!
Make me man or make me woman,

Make me oaf or ape or human,
Cup of flower or cone of fir;
Make me anything but neuter
When the sap begins to stir!

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

THE MENDICANTS

We are as mendicants who wait
Along the roadside in the sun.
Tatters of yesterday and shreds
Of morrow clothe us every one.

And some are dotards, who believe
And glory in the days of old;
While some are dreamers, harping still
Upon an unknown age of gold.

Hopeless or witless! Not one heeds,
As lavish Time comes down the way
And tosses in the suppliant hat
One great new-minted gold To-day.

Ungrateful heart and grudging thanks,
His beggar's wisdom only sees
Housing and bread and beer enough;
He knows no other things than these.

O foolish ones, put by your care!
Where wants are many, joys are few;
And at the wilding springs of peace,
God keeps an open house for you.

But that some Fortunatus' gift
Is lying there within his hand,
More costly than a pot of pearls,
His dullness does not understand.

And so his creature heart is filled;
His shrunken self goes starved away.
Let him wear brand-new garments still,
Who has a threadbare soul, I say.

But there be others, happier few,
The vagabondish sons of God,
Who know the by-ways and the flowers,
And care not how the world may plod.

They idle down the traffic lands,
And loiter through the woods with spring;
To them the glory of the earth
Is but to hear a bluebird sing.

They too receive each one his Day;
But their wise heart knows many things
Beyond the sating of desire,

Above the dignity of kings.

One I remember kept his coin,
And laughing flipped it in the air;
But when two strolling pipe-players
Came by, he tossed it to the pair.

Spendthrift of joy, his childish heart
Danced to their wild outlandish bars;
Then supperless he laid him down
That night, and slept beneath the stars.

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

THE JOYS OF THE ROAD

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these:
A crimson touch on the hard-wood trees;

A vagrant's morning wide and blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks, too;

A shadowy highway cool and 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 the 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;

The resonant far-listening morn,
And the hoarse whisper of the corn;

The crickets mourning their comrades lost,
In the night's retreat from the gathering frost;

(Or is it their slogan, plaintive and shrill,
As they beat on their corselets, valiant still?)

A hunger fit for the kings of the sea,
And a loaf of bread for Dickon and me;

A thirst like that of the Thirsty Sword,
And a jug of cider on the board;

An idle noon, a bubbling spring,
The sea in the pine-tops murmuring;

A scrap of gossip at the ferry;
A comrade neither glum nor merry,

Asking nothing, revealing naught,
But minting his words from a fund of thought.

A keeper of silence eloquent,
Needy, yet royally well content,

Of the mettled breed, yet abhorring strife,
And full of the mellow juice of life,

A taster of wine, with an eye for a maid
Never too bold, and never afraid,

Never heart-whole, never heart-sick,
(These are the things I worship in Dick)

No fidget and no reformer, just
A calm observer of ought and must,

A lover of books, but a reader of man,
No cynic and no charlatan,

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 and tide, by meadow and stream,
A will-o'-the-wind, a light-o'-dream,

Delusion afar, delight anear,
From morrow to morrow, from year to year,

A jack-o'-lantern, a fairy fire,
A dare, a bliss, and a desire!

The racy smell of the forest loam,
When the stealthy, sad-heart leaves go home;

(O leaves, O leaves, I am one with you,
Of the mould and the sun and the wind and the dew!)

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.

Bliss Carman [1861-1929]

THE SONG OF THE FOREST RANGER

Oh, to feel the fresh breeze blowing
From lone ridges yet untrod!
Oh, to see the far peak growing
Whiter as it climbs to God!

Where the silver streamlet rushes
I would follow - follow on
Till I heard the happy thrushes
Piping lyrics to the dawn.

I would hear the wild rejoicing
Of the wind-blown cedar tree,
Hear the sturdy hemlock voicing
Ancient epics of the sea.

Forest aisles would I be winding,
Out beyond the gates of Care;
And, in dim cathedrals, finding
Silence at the shrine of Prayer.

When the mystic night comes stealing
Through my vast, green room afar,
Never king had richer ceiling -
Beaded bough and yellow star!

Ah, to list the sacred preaching
Of the forest's faithful fir,
With his strong arms upward reaching -
Mighty, trustful worshipper!

Come and learn the joy of living!
Come and you will understand
How the sun his gold is giving
With a great, impartial hand!

How the patient pine is climbing,
Year by year to gain the sky;
How the rill makes sweetest rhyming,
Where the deepest shadows lie.

I am nearer the great Giver,
Where His handiwork is crude;
Friend am I of peak and river,
Comrade of old Solitude.

Not for me the city's riot!
Not for me the towers of Trade!

I would seek the house of Quiet,
That the Master Workman made!

Herbert Bashford [1871-1928]

A DROVER

To Meath of the pastures,
From wet hills by the sea,
Through Leitrim and Longford,
Go my cattle and me.

I hear in the darkness
Their slipping and breathing -
I name them the bye-ways
They're to pass without heeding;

Then, the wet, winding roads,
Brown bogs with black water;
And my thoughts on white ships
And the King o' Spain's daughter.

O! farmer, strong farmer!
You can spend at the fair;
But your face you must turn
To your crops and your care.

And soldiers - red soldiers!
You've seen many lands;
But you walk two by two,
And by captain's commands.

O! the smell of the beasts,
The wet wind in the morn;
And the proud and hard earth
Never broken for corn;

And the crowds at the fair,
The herds loosened and blind,
Loud words and dark faces
And the wild blood behind.

(O! strong men; with your best
I would strive breast to breast,
I could quiet your herds
With my words, with my words.)

I will bring you, my kine,
Where there's grass to the knee;
But you'll think of scant croppings
Harsh with salt of the sea.

Padraic Colum [1881-

BALLAD OF LOW-LIE-DOWN

John-a-Dreams and Harum-Scarum
Came a-riding into town:
At the Sign o' the Jug-and-Jorum
There they met with Low-lie-down.

Brave in shoes of Romany leather,
Bodice blue and gypsy gown,
And a cap of fur and feather,
In the inn sat Low-lie-down.

Harum-Scarum kissed her lightly;
Smiled into her eyes of brown:
Clasped her waist and held her tightly,
Laughing, "Love me, Low-lie-down!"

Then with many an oath and swagger,
As a man of great renown,
On the board he clapped his dagger,
Called for sack and sat him down.

So a while they laughed together;
Then he rose and with a frown
Sighed, "While still 'tis pheasant weather,
I must leave thee, Low-lie-down."

So away rode Harum-Scarum;
With a song rode out of town;
At the Sign o' the Jug-and-Jorum
Weeping tarried Low-lie-down.

Then this John-a-dreams, in tatters,
In his pocket ne'er a crown,
Touched her, saying, "Wench, what matters!
Dry your eyes and, come, sit down.

"Here's my hand: we'll roam together,
Far away from thorp and town.
Here's my heart, - for any weather, -
And my dreams, too, Low-lie-down.

"Some men call me dreamer, poet:
Some men call me fool and clown -
What I am but you shall know it,
Only you, sweet Low-lie-down."

For a little while she pondered:
Smiled: then said, "Let care go drown!"
Up and kissed him. . . . Forth they wandered,
John-a-dreams and Low-lie-down.

Madison Cawein [1865-1914]

THE GOOD INN
From "The Inn of the Silver Moon."

What care if the day
Be turned to gray,

What care if the night come soon!
We may choose the pace
Who bow for grace
At the Inn of the Silver Moon.

Ah, hurrying Sirs,
Drive deep your spurs,
For it's far to the steeped town -
Where the wallet's weight
Shall fix your state
And buy for ye smile or frown.
Through our tiles of green
Do the stars between
Laugh down from the skies of June,
And there's naught to pay
For a couch of hay
At the Inn of the Silver Moon.

You laboring lout,
Pull out, pull out,
With a hand to the creaking tire,
For it's many a mile
By path and stile
To the old wife crouched by the fire.
But the door is wide
In the hedgerow side,
And we ask not bowl nor spoon
Whose draught of must
Makes soft the crust
At the Inn of the Silver Moon.

Then, here's to the Inn
Of the empty bin,
To the Host of the trackless dune!
And here's to the friend
Of the journey's end
At the Inn of the Silver Moon.

Herman Knickerbocker Viele [1856-1908]

NIGHT FOR ADVENTURES

Sometimes when fragrant summer dusk comes in with scent of rose and musk
And scatters from their sable husk the stars like yellow grain,
Oh, then the ancient longing comes that lures me like a roll of drums
To follow where the cricket strums his banjo in the lane.

And when the August moon comes up and like a shallow, silver cup
Pours out upon the fields and roads her amber-colored beams,
A leafy whisper mounts and calls from out the forest's moss grown halls
To leave the city's somber walls and take the road of dreams.

A call that bids me rise and strip, and, naked all from toe to lip,
To wander where the dewdrops drip from off the silent trees,
And where the hairy spiders spin their nets of silver, fragile-thin,
And out to where the fields begin, like down upon the breeze.

Into a silver pool to plunge, and like a great trout wheel and lunge
Among the lily-bonnets and the stars reflected there;
With face upturned to lie afloat, with moonbeams rippling round my throat,
And from the slimy grasses plait a chaplet for my hair.

Then, leaping from my rustic bath, to take some winding meadow-path:
Across the fields of aftermath to run with flying feet,
And feel the dewdrop-weighted grass that bends beneath me as I pass,
Where solemn trees in shadowy mass beyond the highway meet.

And, plunging deep within the woods, among the leaf-hung solitudes
Where scarce one timid star intrudes into the breathless gloom,
Go leaping down some fern-hid way to scare the rabbits in their play,
And see the owl, a phantom gray, drift by on silent plume.

To fling me down at length and rest upon some damp and mossy nest,
And hear the choir of surpliced frogs strike up a bubbling tune;
And watch, above the dreaming trees, Orion and the Hyades
And all the stars, like golden bees, around the lily-moon.

Then who can say if I have gone a-gipsying from dusk till dawn
In company with fay and faun, where firefly-lanterns gleam?
And have I danced on cobwebs thin to Master Locust's mandolin -
Or I have spent the night in bed, and was it all a dream?

Victor Starbuck [1887-

SONG

From "The Way Of Perfect Love"

Something calls and whispers, along the city street,
Through shrill cries of children and soft stir of feet,
And makes my blood to quicken and makes my flesh to pine.
The mountains are calling; the winds wake the pine.

Past the quivering poplars that tell of water near
The long road is sleeping, the white road is clear.
Yet scent and touch can summon, afar from brook and tree,
The deep boom of surges, the gray waste of sea.

Sweet to dream and linger, in windless orchard close,
On bright brows of ladies to garland the rose,
But all the time are glowing, beyond this little world,
The still light of planets and the star-swarms whirled.

Georgiana Goddard King [1871-

THE VOORTREKKER

The gull shall whistle in his wake, the blind wave break in fire,
He shall fulfill God's utmost will unknowing His desire;
And he shall see old planets pass and alien stars arise,
And give the gale his seaworn sail in shadow of new skies.
Strong lust of gear shall drive him forth and hunger arm his hand
To win his food from the desert rude, his foothold from the sand.
His neighbors' smoke shall vex his eyes, their voices break his rest,

He shall go forth till South is North, sullen and dispossessed.
He shall desire loneliness, and his desire shall bring
Hard on his heels a thousand wheels, a People, and a King;
He shall come back in his own track, and by his scarce cooled camp;
There shall he meet the roaring street, the derrick, and the stamp;
There he shall blaze a nation's ways with hatchet and with brand,
Till on his last-won wilderness an Empire's outposts stand!

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

THE LONG TRAIL

There's a whisper down the field where the year has shot her yield,
And the ricks stand gray to the sun,
Singing: "Over then, come over, for the bee has quit the clover,
And your English summer's done."
You have heard the beat of the off-shore wind,
And the thresh of the deep-sea rain;
You have heard the song - how long? how long?
Pull out on the trail again!

Ha' done with the Tents of Shem, dear lass,
We've seen the seasons through,
And it's time to turn on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
Pull out, pull out, on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new!

It's North you may run to the rime-ringed sun,
Or South to the blind Horn's hate;
Or East all the way into Mississippi Bay,
Or West to the Golden Gate;
Where the blindest bluffs hold good, dear lass,
And the wildest tales are true,
And the men bulk big on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
And life runs large on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new.

The days are sick and cold, and the skies are gray and old,
And the twice-breathed airs blow damp;
And I'd sell my tired soul for the bucking beam-sea roll
Of a black Bilbao tramp;
With her load-line over her hatch, dear lass,
And a drunken Dago crew,
And her nose held down on the old trail, our own trail,
the out trail,
From Cadiz south on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new.

There be triple ways to take, of the eagle or the snake,
Or the way of a man with a maid;
But the sweetest way to me is a ship's upon the sea
In the heel of the North-East Trade.
Can you hear the crash on her bows, dear lass,
And the drum of the racing screw,
As she ships it green on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
As she lifts and 'scends on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new?

See the shaking funnels roar, with the Peter at the fore,
And the fenders grind and heave,
And the derricks clack and grate, as the tackle hooks the crate,

And the fall-rope whines through the sheave;
It's "Gang-plank up and in," dear lass,
It's "Hawsers warp her through!"
And it's "All clear aft" on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're backing down on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new.

O the mutter overside, when the port-fog holds us tied,
And the sirens hoot their dread!
When foot by foot we creep o'er the hueless viewless deep
To the sob of the questing lead!
It's down by the Lower Hope, dear lass,
With the Gunfleet Sands in view,
Till the Mouse swings green on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
And the Gull Light lifts on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new.

O the blazing tropic night, when the wake's a welt of light
That holds the hot sky tame,
And the steady fore-foot snores through the planet-powdered floors
Where the scared whale flukes in flame!
Her plates are flaked by the sun, dear lass,
And her ropes are taut with the dew,
For we're booming down on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're sagging south on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new.

Then home, get her home, where the drunken rollers comb,
And the shouting seas drive by,
And the engines stamp and ring, and the wet bows reel and swing,
And the Southern Cross rides high!
Yes, the old lost stars wheel back, dear lass,
That blaze in the velvet blue.
They're all old friends on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
They're God's own guides on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new.

Fly forward, O my heart, from the Foreland to the Start -
We're steaming all too slow,
And it's twenty thousand mile to our little lazy isle
Where the trumpet-orchids blow!
You have heard the call of the off-shore wind
And the voice of the deep-sea rain;
You have heard the song - how long - how long?
Pull out on the trail again!

The Lord knows what we may find, dear lass,
And the Deuce knows what we may do -
But we're back once more on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're down, hull down, on the Long Trail - the trail that is always new!

Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936]

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