

PURE·GOLD·A·CHOICE
OF·LYRICS·&·SONNETS
H·C·ONEILL

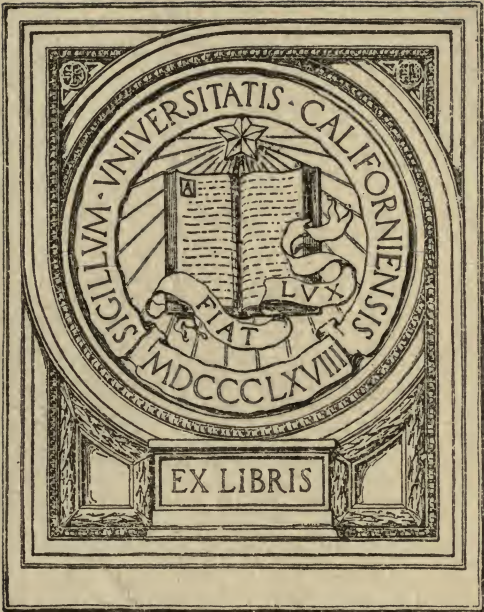
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A CHOICE OF LYRICS AND SONNETS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By H. C. O'NEILL



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INTRODUCTION

THOUGH but few can define the word poetry, there are even fewer who do not recognise what the word describes. A great critic has described absolute poetry as "the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language." This is a true definition in an age when it is increasingly rare to find any real definition, its place being taken by descriptions of effects or causes. The words are necessary; for we cannot discard "concrete," "artistic," "emotional" or "rhythmical," concreteness, art, emotion and rhythm being notes of true poetry. Concreteness is, perhaps, the note which is least commonly realised as among the essentials of poetry, while on reflection, of course, it is clear that abstractions have no place, as such, in the poet's repertoire.

With our great wealth of English poetry most of us know as much of each of the two great divisions of poetic art, the dramatic and the lyrical. Shakespeare, though he is to all ages and nations one of the greatest dramatic poets, is represented in this volume by examples of lyrical imagination. In the dramatic forms of poetry the poet does not appear; the movement unfolds itself as it were from its own inertia, inevitably. In lyrical poetry, though the matter may be objective, the method, mould, and motive are personal.

Pure lyric poetry, as the name implies, has the element of music in it, the essence of song: and, in fact, it ranges the gamut of song, in its broadest sense, from the pæan (the ode) to the plaint (the elegy) and the pastoral (the idyll). But

these forms, like the sonnet, are not ordinarily set to or accompanied by music, while the song is.

The lyric produced by the Hebrew poets and preserved in the Bible, is so different in kind from any other lyrics that Mr. Watts-Dunton calls it "the Great Lyric," just as one may speak of the Great Drama of Shakespeare, Æschylus, and Sophocles. Two of the ingredients of the Great Lyric, unconsciousness and power, are born of the absorption of the Hebrew poets in their subject, God, who, conceived as the Lord of all being, could call forth the innermost feelings. Naturally one cannot pour forth more than the cruse holds, and hence these lyrical outpourings of the soul to God presume some depth in the subjects. They are marked by a dignity and grace which allows them to handle any subject undefiling and undefiled.

There is a law which governs all poetry indeed, but more especially lyrical poetry—the law of necessity. Metre and rhythm are both subservient to this law, emotional urgency excusing the fantasies of arrangement as the lack of it condemns them.

The Ode is a form of lyric in which poetic frenzy is of the essence. If it follows an arrangement in stanzas it is called regular; if it does not it is called irregular. Of this latter class English literature is not without some famous examples. Dryden's "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" is a fine specimen, and Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" even finer. Of regular odes, Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," Keats' "Ode to a Grecian Urn," and Spenser's "Epithalamion" are specimens which can never die.

The Song is lyric *par excellence*, *i.e.* a collection of verses adapted for singing purposes or actually set to music. In method more spontaneous and melodic, it is more universal in subject than other forms of lyric. The examples of Burns quoted in this volume are good songs, but the folklore of every country abounds in songs.

The Elegy is a more ambitious form of lyric than the sonnet or song, and its excellence draws much from perfection of

form. Its motive is regret or lamentation on the death of some one dear, or, less commonly, upon the slightness of mortal man. Gray's *Elegy*, the most celebrated in the English language, is a classical example which springs from the latter emotion; Milton's *Lycidas*, a most perfect and beautiful specimen of the commoner theme.

Of more ambiguous character is the *Idyll*. Strictly it is a short poem descriptive of simple rustic or pastoral life and scenes; but more loosely the *idyll* tends to become a descriptive or narrative poem, marked by a perfection of expression, dealing with chivalry or legend, and nearly akin to minor epic. Of this character are Tennyson's "*Idylls of the King*," which are unsurpassed for the loftiness of their character, the purity of their language, and the ample grace of their imaginative treatment.

A narrower prescription applies to the *Sonnet*, and yet partly for this very reason, partly because the poetic form has more inevitability than other forms with looser limits, and partly too because so many gems in so many countries have been given to the world in this setting, it merits a more extended treatment. A sonnet consists of fourteen rhymed verses whose arrangement, as well as number, is prescribed, and not a small part of the pleasure of a sonnet is due to this fact. Yet this does but describe the shell of the sonnet. Its inner self has been well described in a sonnet by Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, the latter part of which runs:

"A Sonnet is a wave of melody:

From heaving waters of the impassioned soul
A billow of tidal music one and whole
Flows in the 'octave'; then returning free,
Its ebbing surges in the 'Sestet' roll
Back to the deep of Life's tumultuous sea."

This "*Sestet*" not only describes the soul of all sonnets; it further gives the reason for the particular form of sonnet which has been called variously the "*Natural*," the "*Contemporary*," but more commonly the "*Petrarchan*," from the poet who first made that form immortal, though it can be

traced back at least a century before his time. The sonnet has ever attracted the greatest poets when they wished to express a single wave of emotion; but while the number of verses seems ever to have been constant, confirmed apparently by a more fundamental sanction, the arrangement has varied in certain recognised ways, corresponding to a varying function.

The latter half of the sestet quoted, admirably expresses the point of the arrangements which are now generally associated with the pure Petrarchan form of the sonnet. In it the octave—the first eight lines—is clearly divided from the sestet. The octave has but two rhymes arranged in the order a b b a a b b a, while the sestet is quite free to be written in two or three rhymes arranged in any manner suitable only to emotional requirements.

A sonnet form which, at first sight, is very similar to the "Contemporary" is the Miltonic. In carrying the octave on to the sestet there can be little doubt that Milton missed the very end of the Petrarchan sonnet, the rule of which he otherwise follows. But William Sharp included under the term "Miltonic" sonnets which consisted of three quatrains of alternative rhymes and a couplet, as well as those which admit of but two rhymes for the octave and two or three for the sestet, only provided they preserved unbroken continuity of arrangement. This, however, is to associate with Milton a sonnet with which he had nothing to do, and which is moreover (unlike the Milton sonnets, English Petrarchan) merely a variant of the Shakespearean.

The Shakespearean sonnet consists of three quatrains of alternate rhymes, clinched at the end by a rhymed couplet. There is some parity between the sestet of the Petrarchan sonnet and the couplet, the ebb-movement being conspicuous in each. But while the Petrarchan form by the fairer proportion of its parts may be compared to a bouquet bound together in a splendid wrapping of cloth of gold, the Shakespearean resembles a chaplet of flowers pinned by a single diamond. The Petrarchan sestet is more leisurely

and stately: the Shakespearean couplet more instant and crystal.

The Shakespearean sonnet is so called because of the splendid use the poet made of it, just as Petrarch has for a like reason given his name to the older form. Drayton, Shakespeare's contemporary, has left in "A Parting" (p. 44) a sonnet in the Shakespearean form, the peer of which is difficult to find, and which is surpassed by none in the English tongue. But Shakespeare in a thread of jewels once for all established the English sonnet as an independent and noble form. But the sureness of their appeal and their enduring glory does not so much lie, as William Sharp thought, in the revelation they give of Shakespeare, the man of human passions, who is otherwise known as but stage manager for other actors, but because they have a certain universality of touch, as indeed have many of the first sonnets by other writers. This is well exemplified in such a poem as "The Expense of Spirit in a Waste of Shame" (p. 87). "A Shakespearean sonnet," as Rossetti said, "is better than the most perfect in form, because Shakespeare wrote it."

But the whole class fulfils a different function. "The quest of the Shakespearean sonnet," says Mr. Watts-Dunton, "is not like that of the sonnet of octave and sestet, sonority, and, so to speak, metrical counterpoint, but sweetness; and the sweetest of all possible arrangements in English versification is a succession of decasyllabic quatrains in alternate rhymes knit together and clinched by a couplet—a couplet coming not so far from the initial verse as to lose its binding power, and yet not so near the initial verse that the ring of epigram disturbs the 'linked sweetness long drawn out' of this movement, but sufficiently near to shed its influence over the poem back to the initial verse. A chief part of the pleasure of the Shakespearean sonnet is the expectance of the climacteric rest of the couplet at the end (just as a chief part of the pleasure of the sonnet of octave and sestet is the expectance of the answering ebb of the sestet when the close of the octave has been reached); and this expectance is

gratified too early if it comes after two quatrains, while, if it comes after a greater number of quatrains than three it is dispersed and wasted altogether."

The genius of the Petrarchan can be compared with that of the Shakespearean sonnet by a study of Shakespeare's sonnets given here alongside those of the greatest master of the sonnet since his time, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who is by far the best exponent of the "natural" form. The dominant impression left on the mind is much that of a comparison of Italian with Greek art, the one warmer, the other more majestic. Yet how far the character of forms, with, normally, a specific effect, can be changed in the song of the master singers can only be appreciated by a careful comparison of the different sonnets. A great musician can draw the character of many diverse instruments from one. A very apt illustration of this point is given by the splendid *irregular* sonnet of Wordsworth "On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic."

In this tiny anthology I cannot say I have chosen the best lyrics in the English language. It may seem to some that, like the legendary child, I have attempted to bale the sea with a spoon. But I think I can say that no poem has been included which is not worthy of being held in perpetual memory. I have striven to make a sheaf of golden corn, in which each ear should be perfect. Whether I have succeeded rests with others to judge. Some long lyrics, like Spenser's "Epithalamion," have been given in full; and I cannot but think that, even in so small a collection, they are worthy of the space.

With the exception of a few poems, none which are not out of copyright have been included. I must thank those who have kindly given me permission to include copyright poems: Mrs. Henley (Henley's "Invictus"), Mr. Wilfrid Meynell (Thompson's "The Poppy"), Messrs Ellis (D. G. Rossetti, "Sibylla Palmifera" and "Lovesight"), Messrs. Macmillan (C. Tennyson Turner, "Letty's Globe") and George Bell and Son (Coventry Patmore, "The Toys").

Finally, I have to thank Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton for allowing me to print the dedicatory sonnet from "Tristram of Lyonesse" and the First Chorus from "Atalanta in Calydon," for many valuable suggestions, and for the interest he has been kind enough to take throughout the compilation of the selection.

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PURE GOLD

SINCE FIRST I SAW YOUR FACE

SINCE first I saw your face I resolved to honour and
renown ye ;

If now I be disdainèd, I wish my heart had never
known ye.

What? I that loved and you that liked, shall we begin
to wrangle ?

No, no, no, my heart is fast, and cannot disentangle.

If I admire or praise you too much, that fault you may
forgive me ;

Or if my hands had stray'd but a touch, then justly might
you leave me.

I ask'd you leave, you bade me love ; is't now a time
to chide me ?

No, no, no, I'll love you still, what fortune e'er betide me.

The Sun, whose beams most glorious are, rejecteth no
beholder,

And your sweet beauty past compare made my poor eyes
the bolder :

Where beauty moves, and wit delights, and signs of kind-
ness bind me,

There, O, there ! where'er I go, I'll leave my heart
behind me !

ANONYMOUS (*circa* 1600)

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

COME, dear children, let us away ;
 Down and away below,
 Now my brothers call from the bay ;
 Now the great winds shoreward blow ;
 Now the salt tides seawards flow ;
 Now the wild white horses play,
 Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
 Children dear, let us away,
 This way, this way !

Call her once before you go.
 Call once yet,
 In a voice that she will know :
 " Margaret ! Margaret !"
 Children's voices should be dear
 (Call once more) to a mother's ear :
 Children's voices wild with pain.
 Surely she will come again.
 Call her once and come away,
 This way, this way !
 " Mother dear, we cannot stay,"
 The wild white horses foam and fret.
 Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down,
 Call no more.
 One last look at the white-wall'd town,
 And the little grey church on the windy shore.
 Then come down.
 She will not come though you call all day,
 Come away, come away,

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail, and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea.
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee.
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the waves.
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-
caves."
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?

"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.

Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say.

Come," I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down

Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town.

Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,

To the little grey church on the windy hill.

From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,

But we stood without in the cold-blowing airs.

We climb'd on the graves, on the stones, worn with
rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.

She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:

"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here.

Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone.

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."

But, ah! she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book.

Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.

Come away, children, call no more.

Come away, come away, call no more.

Down, down, down;

Down to the depths of the sea.

She sits at her wheel in the humming town,

Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,

For the humming street, and the child with its toy.

For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well.

For the wheel where I spun,

And the blessèd light of the sun."

And so she sings her fill,

Singing most joyfully,

Till the shuttle falls from her hand,

And the whizzing wheel stands still.

She steals to the window, and looks at the sand;

And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh.
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaid,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children.
Come, children, come down.
The hoarse wind blows colder :
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, " Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she :
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow ;
When clear falls the moonlight ;
When spring-tides are low :
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom ;
The high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom :

TO SPRING

Up the still glistening beaches,
 Up the creeks we will hie ;
 Over banks of bright seaweed
 The ebb-tide leaves dry.
 We will gaze from the sand-hills,
 At the white, sleeping town ;
 At the church on the hill-side—
 And then come back down.
 Singing, " There dwells a loved one,
 But cruel is she.
 She left lonely for ever
 The kings of the sea."

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

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 turn'd
 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 perfumèd 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 languish'd head,
 Whose modest tresses are bound up for thee.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

LAST LINES

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere :
I see Heaven's glories shine
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity !
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee !

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts : unutterably vain ;
Worthless as wither'd weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main.

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity ;
So surely anchor'd on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy Spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes cease to be,
And Thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void :
Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound,
 I strive and struggle to deliver right
 The music of my nature, day and night
 With dream and thought and feeling interwound,
 And inly answering all the senses round
 With octaves of a mystic depth and height
 Which step out grandly to the infinite
 From the dark edges of the sensual ground.
 This song of soul I struggle to outbear
 Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
 And utter all myself into the air ;
 But if I did it—as the thunder-roll
 Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would perish there,
 Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

E. BARRETT BROWNING (1809–1861)

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I SAID—then, dearest, since 'tis so,
 Since now at length my fate I know,
 Since nothing all my love avails,
 Since all my life seem'd meant for, fails,
 Since this was written and needs must be—
 My whole heart rises up to bless
 Your name in pride and thankfulness !
 Take back the hope you gave—I claim
 Only a memory of the same,
 And this beside, if you will not blame ;
 And leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers,
 Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
 When pity would be softening through,
 Fix'd me a breathing-while or two
 With life or death in the balance : right !

The blood replenish'd me again ;
 My last thought was at least not vain :
 I and my mistress, side by side
 Shall be together, breathe and ride,
 So one day more am I deified.

Who knows but the world may end to-night ?

Hush ! if you saw some western cloud
 All billowy-bosom'd, over-bow'd
 By many benedictions—sun's
 And moon's and evening-star's at once—
 And so, you, looking and loving best,
 Conscious grew, your passion drew
 Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
 Down on you, near and yet more near,
 Till flesh must fade for heaven was here !
 Thus leant she and linger'd—joy and fear !
 Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
 Smooth'd itself out, a long-cramp'd scroll
 Freshening and fluttering in the wind,
 Past hopes already lay behind.
 What need to strive with a life awry ?
 Had I said that, had I done this,
 So might I gain, so might I miss.
 Might she have loved me ? just as well
 She might have hated, who can tell !
 Where had I been now if the worst befell ?
 And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds ?
 Why, all men strive and who succeeds ?
 We rode ; it seem'd my spirit flew,
 Saw other regions, cities new,
 As the world rush'd by on either side.

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I thought—all labour, yet no less
 Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
 Look at the end of work, contrast
 The petty done, the undone vast,
 This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
 I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever pair'd?
 What heart alike conceived and dared?
 What act proved all its thought had been?
 What will but felt the fleshly screen?
 We ride and I see her bosom heave.
 There's many a crown for who can reach.
 Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
 The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
 A soldier's doing! what atones?
 They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
 My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
 Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
 What we felt only; you express'd
 You hold things beautiful the best,
 And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.
 'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but then,
 Have you yourself what's best for men?
 Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
 Nearer one whit your own sublime—
 Than we who never have turn'd a rhyme?
 Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
 A score of years to Art, her slave,
 And that's your Venus, whence we turn
 To yonder girl that fords the burn!
 You acquiesce, and shall I repine?

What, man of music, you grown gray
 With notes and nothing else to say,
 Is this your sole praise from a friend,
 "Greatly his opera's strains intend,
 Put in music we know how fashions end!"
 I gave my youth: but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
 Proposed bliss here should sublimate
 My being—had I sign'd the bond—
 Still one must lead some life beyond,
 Have a bliss to die with, dim-described.
 This foot once planted on the goal,
 This glory-garland round my soul,
 Could I descry such? Try and test!
 I sink back shuddering from the quest.
 Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
 Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
 What if heaven be that, fair and strong
 At life's best, with our eyes upturn'd
 Whither life's flower is first discern'd,
 We, fix'd so, ever should so abide?
 What if we still ride on, we two
 With life for ever old yet new,
 Changed not in kind but in degree,
 The instant made eternity—
 And heaven just prove that I and she
 Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

IN A GONDOLA

THE moth's kiss, first !
 Kiss me as if you made believe
 You were not sure, this eve,
 How my face, your flower, had pursed
 Its petals up ; so, here and there
 You brush it, till I grow aware
 Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

The bee's kiss, now !
 Kiss me as if you enter'd gay
 My heart at some noonday,
 A bud that dares not disallow
 The claim, so all is render'd up,
 And passively its shatter'd cup
 Over your head to sleep I bow.

ROBERT BROWNING

JEAN

OF a' the airts the wind can blaw,
 I dearly like the west,
 For there the bonie lassie lives,
 The lassie I lo'e best :
 There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
 And monie a hill between ;
 But day and night my fancy's flight
 Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
 I see her sweet and fair :
 I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
 I hear her charm the air :

There's not a bonie flower that springs
 By fountain, shaw, or green ;
 There's not a bonie bird that sings,
 But minds me o' my Jean.

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

A RED, RED ROSE

O, MY luvè is like a red, red rose,
 That's newly sprung in June :
 O, my luvè is like the melodie
 That's sweetly play'd in tune !

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
 So deep in luvè am I :
 And I will luvè thee still, my dear,
 Till a' the seas gang dry :

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
 And the rocks melt wi' the sun ;
 I will luvè thee still, my dear,
 While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luvè,
 And fare thee weel a while !
 And I will come again, my luvè,
 Tho' it were ten thousand mile !

ROBERT BURNS

AE FOND KISS

AE fond kiss, and then we sever ;
 Ae farewell, and then for ever !
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee !

THE ISLES OF GREECE

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him
 While the star of hope she leaves him?
 Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
 Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy;
 Naething could resist my Nancy;
 But to see her was to love her,
 Love but her, and love for ever.

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
 Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
 Never met—or never parted,
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
 Faré thee weel, thou best and dearest!
 Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
 Peace, Enjoyment, Love, and Pleasure!

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
 Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

ROBERT BURNS

THE ISLES OF GREECE

THE isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!
 Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
 Where grew the arts of war and peace,
 Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
 Eternal summer gilds them yet,
 But all, except their sun, is set.

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

The mountains look on Marathon—
 And Marathon looks on the sea ;
 And musing there an hour alone,
 I dream'd that Greece might still be free ;
 For standing on the Persians' grave,
 I could not deem myself a slave.

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

And where are they ? and where art thou,
 My country ? On thy voiceless shore
 The heroic lay is tuneless now—
 The heroic bosom beats no more !
 And must thy lyre, so long divine,
 Degenerate into hands like mine ?

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

THE ISLES OF GREECE

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

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

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
 Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
 Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
 And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
 Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
 How answers each bold Bacchanal!

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

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

The tyrant of the Chersonese
 Was freedom's best and bravest friend :
 That tyrant was Miltiades !
 O that the present hour would lend
 Another despot of the kind !
 Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
 On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
 Exists the remnant of a line
 Such as the Doric mothers bore ;
 And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
 The Heracleidan blood might own.

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

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

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

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

YE mariners of England,
That guard our native seas !
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze !
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe,
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow !
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave :
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow !
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep :
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow !
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
 Shall yet terrific burn,
 Till danger's troubled night depart,
 And the star of peace return.
 Then, then, ye ocean-warriors !
 Our song and feast shall flow
 To the fame of your name,
 When the storm has ceased to blow !
 When the fiery fight is heard no more,
 And the storm has ceased to blow.

THOMAS CAMPBELL (1767-1844)

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH

SAY not the struggle naught availeth,
 The labour and the wounds are vain,
 The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
 And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars ;
 It may be, in yon smoke conceal'd,
 Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
 And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking
 Seem here no painful inch to gain,
 Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
 Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
 When daylight comes, comes in the light ;
 In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly !
 But westward, look, the land is bright !

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819-1861)

KUBLA KHAN

NIGHT

THE crackling embers on the hearth are dead
 The indoor note of industry is still ;
 The latch is fast ; upon the window-sill
 The small birds wait not for their daily bread ;
 The voiceless flowers—how quietly they shed
 Their nightly odours ;—and the household rill
 Murmurs continuous dulcet sounds that fill
 The vacant expectation, and the dread
 Of listening night. And haply now she sleeps ;
 For all the garrulous noises of the air
 Are hush'd in peace ; the soft dew silent weeps,
 Like hopeless lovers for a maid so fair :—
 Oh ! that I were the happy dream that creeps
 To her soft heart, to find my image there.

H. COLERIDGE (1796–1849)

KUBLA KHAN

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan
 A stately pleasure-dome decree :
 Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
 Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea.
 So twice five miles of fertile ground
 With walls and towers were girdled round :
 And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
 Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree ;
 And here were forests ancient as the hills,
 Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But O ! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
 Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover !

A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reach'd the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves,
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,

WILLIAM COWPER

And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
 His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
 Weave a circle round him thrice,
 And close your eyes with holy dread,
 For he on honey-dew hath fed,
 And drunk the milk of Paradise.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

WILLIAM COWPER

LINES ON RECEIVING HIS MOTHER'S PICTURE

O THAT those lips had language! Life has passed
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles I see,
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
 “Grieve not, my child—chase all thy fears away!”
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
 (Blest be the art that can immortalise,
 The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
 To quench it) here shines on me still the same,
 Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
 Who bid'st me honour with an artless song,
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
 I will obey, not willingly alone,
 But gladly, as the precept were her own:
 And while that face renews my filial grief,
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
 A momentary dream, that thou art she.
 My mother! when I learnt that thou wast dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?

Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was. Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived,
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child,
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learnt at last submission to my lot,
But though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capt,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced:
Thy nightly visits to my chamber paid
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid;

Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
 The biscuit or confectionery plum ;
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
 By thine own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed ;
 All this, and more endearing still than all,
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
 Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks,
 That humour interposed too often makes ;
 All this still legible in memory's page,
 And still to be so till my latest age,
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
 Not scorned in Heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
 The violet, the pink, the jessamine,
 I pricked them into paper with a pin
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile) ;
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them
 here ?

I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might—
 But no—what here we call our life is such,
 So little to be loved, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
 (The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed),
 Shoots into port as some well-havened isle,
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
 There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below
 While airs impregnated with incense play
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;

So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reached the shore.
“Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,”
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of Life, long since has anchored at thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed—
Me howling winds drive devious, tempest-tossed,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current’s thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet, O the thought that thou art safe and he !
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents passed into the skies.
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation’s help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o’er again ;
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine ;
And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

THE WEEPER

HAIL, sister springs,
Parents of silver-footed rills !
Ever bubbling things,
Thawing crystal, snowy hills !
Still spending, never spent ; I mean
Thy fair eyes, sweet Magdalene.

Heavens thy fair eyes be ;
Heavens of ever-falling stars ;
'Tis seed-time still with thee,
And stars thou sow'st whose harvest dares
 Promise the earth to countershine
 Whatever makes Heaven's forehead fine.

Every morn from hence
A brisk cherub something sips,
Whose soft influence
Adds sweetness to his sweetest lips,
 Then to his music : and his song
 Tastes of this breakfast all day long.

When some new bright guest
Takes up among the stars a room,
And Heaven will make a feast,
Angels with their bottles come,
 And draw from these full eyes of thine
 Their Master's water, their own wine.

The dew no more will weep
The primrose's pale cheek to deck ;
The dew no more will sleep
Nuzzled in the lily's neck :
 Much rather would it tremble here,
 And leave them both to be thy tear.

When sorrow would be seen
In her brightest majesty,
For she is a Queen—
Then is she drest by none but thee :
 Then and only then she wears
 Her richest pearls—I mean thy tears.

Not in the evening's eyes,
When they red with weeping are
For the Sun that dies,
Sits Sorrow with a face so fair.
Nowhere but here did ever meet
Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet.

Does the night arise?
Still thy tears do fall and fall.
Does night lose her eyes?
Still the fountain weeps for all.
Let day and night do what they will,
Thou hast thy task, thou weepest still.

Not *So long she lived*
Will thy tomb report of thee;
But *So long she grieved*:
Thus must we date thy memory.
Others by days, by months, by years,
Measure their ages, thou by tears.

Say, ye bright brothers,
The fugitive sons of those fair eyes
Your fruitful mothers,
What make you here? What hopes can 'tice
You to be born? What cause can borrow
You from those nests of noble sorrow?

Whither away so fast?
For sure the sordid earth
Your sweetness cannot taste,
Nor does the dust deserve your birth.
Sweet, whither haste you then? O say,
Why you trip so fast away?

A PARTING

*We go not to seek
 The darlings of Aurora's bed,
 The rose's modest cheek,
 Nor the violet's humble head.
 No such thing: we go to meet
 A worthier object—our Lord's feet.*

R. CRASHAW (1613-1650)

THE SUN-GOD

I SAW the Master of the Sun. He stood
 High in his luminous car, himself more bright ;
 An Archer of immeasurable might :
 On his left shoulder hung his quivered load ,
 Spurned by his steeds the eastern mountains glowed ;
 Forward his eager eye, and brow of light
 He bent ; and, while both hands that arch embowed,
 Shaft after shaft pursued the flying night.
 No wings profaned that god-like form : around
 His neck high held an ever-moving crowd
 Of locks hung glistening : while such perfect sound
 Fell from his bowstring, that th' ethereal dome
 Thrilled as a dew-drop ; and each passing cloud
 Expanded, whitening like the ocean foam.

AUBREY DE VERE (1814-1902)

A PARTING

SINCE there's no help, come, let us kiss and part—
 Nay, I have done, you get no more of me ;
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free :

Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
 And when we meet at any time again,
 Be it not seen in either of our brows
 That we one jot of former love retain.
 Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
 When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
 When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
 And Innocence is closing up his eyes—
 Now, if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
 From death to life thou might'st him yet recover !

M. DRAYTON (1563-1631)

SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY, 1687

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began :
 When Nature underneath a heap
 Of jarring atoms lay,
 And could not heave her head,
 The tuneful voice was heard from high,
 "Arise, ye more than dead !"
 Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
 In order to their stations leap,
 And Music's power obey.
 From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began :
 From harmony to harmony
 Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
 The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell ?
 When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
 His listening brethren stood around,
 And, wondering, on their faces fell
 To worship that celestial sound :

Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
 Within the hollow of that shell
 That spoke so sweetly and so well.
 What passion cannot Music raise and quell ?

The trumpet's loud clangour
 Excites us to arms,
 With shrill notes of anger
 And mortal alarms.
 The double, double, double beat
 Of the thundering drum
 Cries " Hark ! the foes come ;
 Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat ! "

The soft complaining flute
 In dying notes, discovers
 The woes of hopeless lovers,
 Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
 Their jealous pangs and desperation,
 Fury, frantic indignation,
 Depth of pains, and height of passion,
 For the fair, disdainful dame.

But oh ! what art can teach,
 What human voice can reach
 The sacred organ's praise ?
 Notes inspiring holy love,
 Notes that wing their heavenly ways
 To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race ;
 And trees uprooted left their place
 Sequacious of the lyre :
 But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher :

When to her organ vocal breath was given,
 An angel heard and straight appear'd—
 Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

Grand Chorus.

As for the power of sacred lays
 The spheres began to move,
 And sung the great Creator's praise
 To all the blest above ;
 So when the last and dreadful hour
 This crumbling pageant shall devour,
 The trumpet shall be heard on high,
 The dead shall live, the living die,
 And music shall untune the sky.

J. DRYDEN (1631–1700)

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

I'VE heard them liltin' at our ewe-milkin',
 Lasses a-liltin' before the dawn o' day ;
 But now they are moaning on ilka green loanin'—
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At bughts, in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning ;
 Lasses are lanely, and dowie, and wae ;
 Nae daffin', nae gabbin', but sighin' and sabbin',
 Ilk ane lifts her leglin, and hies her away.

In hairst, at the shearin', nae youths now are jeering :
 Bandsters are lyart, and runkled, and gray,
 At fair or at preachin', nae wooing, nae fleechin'—
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away

At e'en, in the gloamin', nae swankies are roaming
 'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play ;
 But ilk ane sits eerie, lamentin' her dearie—
 The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away

48 ELEGY WRITTEN IN A CHURCHYARD

Dool and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border !
The English, for ance, by guile wan the day ;
The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the foremost,
The prime of our land, lie cauld in the clay.

We'll hear nae mair liltin' at our ewe-milkin' :
Women and bairns are heartless and wae,
Sighin' and moanin' on ilka green loanin' :
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

JEAN ELLIOT (1727-1805)

WOMAN

WHEN lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy ?
What art can wash her tears away ?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from ev'ry eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom is—to die.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds :

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
 The moping owl does to the moon complain
 Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
 Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
 The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;
 How jocund did they drive their team afield !
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
 Await alike th' inevitable hour :
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault
 If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
 Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
 Back to its mansions call the fleeting breath?
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
 Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
 Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre:

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
 Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
 Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
 The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
 Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
 And read their history in a nation's eyes—

Their lot forbade : nor circumscribed alone
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;
 Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind ;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray ;
 Along the cool, sequester'd vale of life
 They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
 The place of fame and elegy supply :
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 Nor cast one longing lingering look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
 E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
 E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
 If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 " Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn ;

" There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
 His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

" Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
 Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;
 Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
 Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

" One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
 Along the heath, and near his favourite tree ;
 Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he ;

" The next with dirges due in sad array
 Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne,—
 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
 Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
 A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown ;
 Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth
 And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send .
He gave to Misery (all he had) a tear,
He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

T. GRAY (1716-1771)

INVICTUS

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

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

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

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

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY (1849-1903)

DELIGHT IN DISORDER

A SWEET disorder in the dress
 Kindles in clothes a wantonness :
 A lawn about the shoulders thrown
 Into a fine distraction,—
 An erring lace, which here and there
 Entrhals the crimson stomacher,—
 A cuff neglectful, and thereby
 Ribbands to flow confusedly,—
 A winning wave, deserving note,
 In the tempestuous petticoat,—
 A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
 I see a wild civility,—
 Do more bewitch me, than when art
 Is too precise in every part.

ROBERT HERRICK (1594-1634)

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may :
 Old Time is still a-flying,
 And this same flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
 The higher he's a-getting,
 The sooner will his race be run,
 And nearer he's to setting.

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

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

ROBERT HERRICK

VOW TO LOVE FAITHFULLY HOWSOEVER HE
 BE REWARDED

SET me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
 Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice ;
 In temperate heat, where he is felt and seen ;
 In presence prest of people, mad or wise ;
 Set me in high, or yet in low degree ;
 In longest night, or in the shortest day ;
 In clearest sky, or where clouds thickest be ;
 In lusty youth, or when my hairs are grey ;
 Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell,
 In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood ;
 Thrall or at large, alive whereso I dwell ;
 Sick or in health, in evil fame or good :

Hers will I be, and only with this thought
 Content myself, although my chance be nought !

HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY (1517-1546)

TO CELIA

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

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
 Not so much honouring thee,
 As giving it a hope, that there
 It could not withered be ;
 But thou thereon didst only breathe,
 And sent'st it back to me :
 Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
 Not of itself, but thee.

BEN JONSON (1573-1637)

LAST SONNET

BRIGHT Star ! would I were steadfast as thou art—
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,

The moving waters at their priest-like task
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
 Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors :—

No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
 Pillow'd upon my fair Love's ripening breast,
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest ;

Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
 And so live ever,—or else swoon to death.

J. KEATS (1795-1821)

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

“O, WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering ?
 The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

“O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone ?
The squirrel’s granary is full,
And the harvest’s done.

“I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.”—

“I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery’s child :
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

“I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone.
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

“I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery’s song.

“She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said :—
‘I love thee true !’

“She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh’d full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

“And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—ah ! woe betide !
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill’s side !

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

“I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all.
 They cried :—‘La Belle Dame sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall!’

“I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
 With horrid warning gapèd wide,
 And I awoke and found me here
 On the cold hill’s side.

“And this is why I sojourn here,
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the sedge is wither’d from the lake,
 And no birds sing.”

JOHN KEATS

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

THOU still unravished bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe of the dales of Arcady ?
 What men or gods are these ? What maidens loth ?
 What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ?
 What pipes and timbrels ? What wild ecstasy ?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve ;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new ;
More happy love ! more happy, happy love !
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting, and for ever young ;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn ?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
Thou, silent form ! dost tease us out of thought

THE MAID'S LAMENT

As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !

When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou sayest,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

JOHN KEATS

THE MAID'S LAMENT

I LOVED him not ; and yet now he is gone,
 I feel I am alone.
 I check'd him while he spoke ; yet, could he speak,
 Alas ! I would not check.
 For reasons not to love him once I sought,
 And wearied all my thought
 To vex myself and him ; I now would give
 My love, could he but live
 Who lately lived for me, and when he found
 'Twas vain, in holy ground
 He hid his face amid the shades of death.
 I waste for him my breath
 Who wasted his for me ; but mine returns,
 And this lorn bosom burns
 With stifling heat, heaving it up in sleep,
 And waking me to weep
 Tears that had melted his soft heart : for years
 Wept he as bitter tears.
 "Merciful God !" such was his latest prayer,
 "These may she never share !"
 Quieter is his breath, his breast more cold
 Than daisies in the mould,
 Where children spell, athwart the churchyard gate,
 His name and life's brief date.
 Pray for him, gentle souls, whoe'er you be,
 And, O, pray too for me !

W. SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864)

TO LUCASTA GOING TO THE WARS

TELL me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
 That from the nunnery
 Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
 To war and arms I fly.

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

Yet this inconstancy is such
 As thou, too, shalt adore:
 I could not love thee, dear, so much,
 Loved I not Honour more.

RICHARD LOVELACE (1618-1658)

THE NAMELESS ONE

ROLL forth, my song, like the rushing river,
 That sweeps along to the mighty sea;
 God will inspire me while I deliver
 My soul of thee!

Tell thou the world, when my bones lie whitening
 Amid the last homes of youth and eld,
 That once there was one whose veins ran lightning
 No eye beheld.

Tell how his boyhood was one drear night-hour,
 How shone for him, through his griefs and gloom,
 No star of all heaven sends to light our
 Path to the tomb.

THE NAMELESS ONE

Roll on, my song, and to after ages
 Tell how, disdaining all earth can give,
 He would have taught men, from wisdom's pages,
 The way to live.

And tell how trampled, derided, hated,
 And worn by weakness, disease, and wrong,
 He fled for shelter to God, who mated
 His soul with song.

—With song which alway, sublime or vapid,
 Flow'd like a rill in the morning beam,
 Perchance not deep, but intense and rapid—
 A mountain stream.

Tell how this Nameless, condemn'd for years long
 To herd with demons from hell beneath,
 Saw things that made him, with groans and tears, long
 For even death.

Go on to tell how, with genius wasted,
 Betray'd in friendship, befool'd in love,
 With spirit shipwreck'd, and young hopes blasted,
 He still, still strove ;

Till, spent with toil, dreeing death for others
 (And some whose hands should have wrought for him,
 If children live not for sires and mothers),
 His mind grew dim ;

And he fell far through that pit abysmal,
 The gulf and grave of Maginn and Burns,
 And pawn'd his soul for the devil's dismal
 Stock of returns.

But yet redeem'd it in days of darkness,
And shapes and signs of the final wrath,
When death, in hideous and ghastly starkness,
Stood on his path.

And tell how now, amid wreck and sorrow,
And want, and sickness, and houseless nights,
He bides in calmness the silent morrow,
That no ray lights.

And lives he still, then? Yes! Old and hoary
At thirty-nine, from despair and woe,
He lives, enduring what future story
Will never know.

Him grant a grave to, ye pitying noble,
Deep in your bosoms: there let him dwell!
He, too, had tears for all souls in trouble,
Here and in hell.

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN (1803-1849)

HYMN ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathise:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
 She woos the gentle air
 To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
 And on her naked shame,
 Pollute with sinful blame,
 The saintly veil of maiden white to throw ;
 Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
 Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But He, her fears to cease,
 Sent down the meek-eyed Peace :
 She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
 Down through the turning sphere,
 His ready harbinger,
 With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing ;
 And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
 She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

No war, or battle's sound,
 Was heard the world around ;
 The idle spear and shield were high uphung ;
 The hookèd chariot stood
 Unstained with hostile blood ;
 The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng
 And kings sat still with awful eye,
 As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night
 Wherein the Prince of Light
 His reign of peace upon the earth began.
 The winds, with wonder whist,
 Smoothly the waters kissed,
 Whispering new joys to the mild Océan,
 Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
 While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warned them thence ;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

And, though the shady Gloom
Had given Day her room,
The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlightened world no more should need :
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row :
Full little thought they than
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below :
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet
As never was by mortal finger strook,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took :
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

Nature, that heard such sound
 Beneath the hollow round
 Of Cynthia's seat the Airy region thrilling,
 Now was almost won
 To think her part was done,
 And that her reign had here its last fulfilling :
 She knew such harmony alone
 Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
 A globe of circular light,
 That with long beams the shamefaced Night arrayed ;
 The helmèd Cherubim
 And sworded Seraphim
 Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
 Harping in loud and solemn quire,
 With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.

Such music (as 'tis said)
 Before was never made
 But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,
 While the Creator great
 His constellations set,
 And the well-balanced World on hinges hung,
 And cast the dark foundations deep,
 And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres !
 Once bless our human ears,
 If ye have power to touch our senses so ;
 And let your silver chime
 Move in melodious time ;
 And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow ;
 And with your ninefold harmony
 Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold ;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die ;
And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould ;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orbed in a rainbow ; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering ;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

But wisest Fate says :—No,
This must not yet be so ;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both himself and us to glorify :
Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep,

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake :
The aged Earth, aghast,
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,
When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

And then at last our bliss
 Full and perfect is,
 But now begins ; for from this happy day
 The Old Dragon under ground,
 In straiter limits bound,
 Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway,
 And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
 Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

The Oracles are dumb ;
 No voice or hideous hum
 Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
 Apollo from his shrine
 Can no more divine,
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
 No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
 Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
 And the resounding shore,
 A voice of weeping heard and loud lament ;
 From haunted spring, and dale
 Edged with poplar pale,
 The parting Genius is with sighing sent ;
 With flower-inwoven tresses torn
 The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn

In consecrated earth,
 And on the holy hearth,
 The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint ;
 In urns, and altars round,
 A drear and dying sound
 Affrights the flamens at their service quaint ;
 And the chill marble seems to sweat,
 While each peculiar Power forgoes his wonted seat.

Peor and Baälim
 Forsake their temples dim,
 With that twice-battered God of Palestine ;
 And moonèd Ashtaroth,
 Heaven's queen and mother both,
 Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine ;
 The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn ;
 In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
 Hath left in shadows dread
 His burning idol all of blackest hue :
 In vain with cymbal's ring
 They call the grisly king,
 In dismal dance about the furnace blue ;
 The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
 Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

Nor is Osiris seen
 In Memphian grove or green,
 Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud ;
 Nor can he be at rest,
 Within his sacred chest ;
 Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud ;
 In vain, with timbrelled anthems dark,
 The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshipped ark.

He feels from Juda's land
 The dreaded Infant's hand ;
 The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eye ;
 Nor all the gods beside
 Longer dare abide,
 Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine :
 Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
 Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

So, when the sun in bed,
 Curtained with cloudy red,
 Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
 The flocking shadows pale
 Troop to the infernal jail,
 Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,
 And the yellow-skirted fays
 Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

But see! the Virgin blest
 Hath laid her Babe to rest.
 Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
 Heaven's youngest-teemèd star
 Hath fixed her polished car,
 Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
 And all about the courtly stable
 Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

LYCIDAS

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
 Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
 I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
 And with forced fingers rude
 Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year!
 Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
 Compels me to disturb your season due;
 For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer!
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
 He must not float upon his watery bier
 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring ;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse :
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn,
And, as he passes, turn
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud !

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill ;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose, at evening, bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute :
Tempered to the oaten flute,
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long ;
And old Damætas loved to hear our song.

But, O ! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return !
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows :
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
 Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
 For neither were ye playing on the steep
 Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
 Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
 Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.
 Ay me! I fondly dream
 "Had ye been there" . . . for what could that have done?
 What could the Muse herself, that Orpheus bore,
 The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
 Whom universal nature did lament,
 When by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care
 To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
 And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
 Were it not better done, as others use,
 To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
 Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
 Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
 (That last infirmity of noble mind)
 To scorn delights and live laborious days;
 But, the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,
 And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
 Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
 "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
 Nor in the glistening foil
 Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
 Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,
 Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
 But now my oat proceeds,
 And listens to the Herald of the Sea,
 That came in Neptune's plea.
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
 And questioned every gust of rugged wings
 That blows from off each beakèd promontory.
 They knew not of his story ;
 And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
 That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed :
 The air was calm, and on the level brine
 Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
 It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
 Built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark,
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
 His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
 Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
 "Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
 Last came and last did go,
 The Pilot of the Galilean Lake ;
 Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
 (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
 He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake :—
 "How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
 Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
 Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold !
 Of other care they little reckoning make
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
 Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
 A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least

That to the faithful herdman's art belongs !
 What reck's it them ? What need they ? They are sped ;
 And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw ;
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
 But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread ;
 Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
 But that two-handed engine at the door
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus ; the dread voice is past
 That shrunk thy streams ! Return, Sicilian Muse,
 And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
 Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues !
 Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
 Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
 On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
 Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
 That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
 And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
 Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
 The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
 The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
 The glowing violet,
 The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
 With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears ;
 Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
 And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
 To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
 For so, to interpose a little ease,
 Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,
 Ay me ! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
 Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled :
 Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,

Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world ;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth :
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth !

Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor !
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky ;
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more ;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey :
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay :

THE TOYS

And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
 And now was dropt into the western bay.
 At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
 To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

JOHN MILTON

ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHEN I consider how my light is spent,
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one Talent which is death to hide,
 Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, least he returning chide,
 Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd,
 I fondly ask; But patience to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
 Bear his milde yoke, they serve him best, his State
 Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
 They also serve who only stand and waite.

JOHN MILTON

THE TOYS

MY little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
 And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
 Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
 I struck him, and dismiss'd
 With hard words and unkiss'd,
 —His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
 Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
 I visited his bed,
 But found him slumbering deep,

With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said :
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

COVENTRY PATMORE (1823-1896)

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee ;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child, and she was a child
 In this kingdom by the sea :
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
 I and my Annabel Lee—
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee ;
So that her high-born kinsman came
 And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me !
Yes !—that was the reason (as all men know
 In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud one night,
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we—
 Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above
 Nor the demons down under the sea
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee :

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;

And so all the night-tide I lie down by the side
 Of my darling—my darling!—my life and my bride,
 In the sepulchre there by the sea,
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809–1849)

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL

VITAL spark of heavenly flame,
 Quit, O, quit this mortal frame!
 Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
 O, the pain, the bliss of dying!
 Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
 And let me languish into life.

Hark, they whisper! Angels say:—
 “Sister spirit, come away!”
 What is this absorbs me quite?
 Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
 Drowns my spirit, draws my breath?
 Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

The world recedes; it disappears!
 Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
 With sounds seraphic ring!
 Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
 O Grave, where is thy Victory?
 O Death, where is thy sting?

ALEXANDER POPE (1688–1744)

REMEMBER

REMEMBER me when I am gone away,
 Gone far away into the silent land;
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,
 Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.

THE BLESSÈD DAMOZEL

Remember me when no more, day by day,
 You tell me of our future that you planned :
 Only remember me ; you understand
 It will be late to counsel then or pray.
 Yet if you should forget me for a while
 And afterwards remember, do not grieve ;
 For if the darkness and corruption leave
 A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
 Better by far you should forget and smile
 Than that you should remember and be sad.

C. G. ROSSETTI (1830-1894)

THE BLESSÈD DAMOZEL

THE blessèd Damozel lean'd out
 From the gold bar of Heaven :
 Her blue grave eyes were deeper much
 Than a deep water, even.
 She had three lilies in her hand,
 And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
 No wrought flowers did adorn,
 But a white rose of Mary's gift
 On the neck meetly worn ;
 And her hair, lying down her back,
 Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseem'd she scarce had been a day
 One of God's choristers ;
 The wonder was not yet quite gone
 From that still look of hers ;
 Albeit, to them she left, her day
 Had counted as ten years.

(To one it is ten years of years :
 . . . Yet now, here in this place,
Surely she lean'd o'er me,—her hair
 Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing : the Autumn-fall of leaves.
 The whole year sets apace.)

It was the terrace of God's house
 That she was standing on,—
By God built over the sheer depth
 In which is Space begun ;
So high, that looking downward thence,
 She could scarce see the sun.

It lies from Heaven across the flood
 Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
 With flame and blackness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
 Spins like a fretful midge.

But in those tracts, with her, it was
 The peace of utter light
And silence. For no breeze may stir
 Along the steady flight
Of seraphim ; no echo there,
 Beyond all depth or height.

Heard hardly, some of her new friends,
 Playing at holy games,
Spake, gentle-mouth'd, among themselves,
 Their virginal chaste names ;
And the souls, mounting up to God,
 Went by her like thin flames.

THE BLESSÈD DAMOZEL

And still she bow'd herself, and stoop'd
 Into the vast waste calm ;
 Till her bosom's pressure must have made
 The bar she lean'd on warm,
 And the lilies lay as if asleep
 Along her bended arm.

From the fixt lull of Heaven, she saw
 Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
 Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove,
 In that steep gulf, to pierce
 The swarm ; and then she spake, as when
 The stars sang in their spheres.

“ I wish that he were come to me,
 For he will come,” she said.
 “ Have I not prayed in solemn Heaven ?
 On earth, has he not pray'd ?
 Are not two prayers a perfect strength ?
 And shall I feel afraid ?

“ When round his head the aureole clings,
 And he is clothed in white,
 I'll take his hand, and go with him
 To the deep wells of light,
 And we will step down as to a stream
 And bathe there in God's sight.

“ We two will stand beside that shrine,
 Occult, withheld, untrod,
 Whose lamps tremble continually
 With prayer sent up to God ;
 And where each need, reveal'd, expects
 Its patient period.

“ We two will lie i’ the shadow of
 That living mystic tree
 Within whose secret growth the Dove
 Is sometimes felt to be,
 While every leaf that His plumes touch
 Saith His name audibly.

“ And I myself will teach to him,—
 I myself, lying so,—
 The songs I sing here ; which his mouth
 Shall pause in, hush’d and slow,
 Finding some knowledge at each pause,
 And some new thing to know.”

(Alas ! to her wise simple mind
 These things were all but known
 Before : they trembled on her sense,—
 Her voice had caught their tone.
 Alas for lonely Heaven ! Alas
 For life wrung out alone !

Alas, and though the end were reach’d ! . . .
 Was thy part understood
 Or borne on trust ? And for her sake
 Shall this too be found good ?—
 May the close lips that knew not prayer
 Praise ever, though they would ?)

“ We two,” she said, “ will seek the groves
 Where the lady Mary is,
 With her five handmaidens, whose names
 Are five sweet symphonies :—
 Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
 Margaret, and Rosalys.

THE BLESSÈD DAMOZEL

“ Circle-wise sit they, with bound locks
 And bosoms coverèd ;
 Into the fine cloth, white like flame,
 Weaving the golden thread,
 To fashion the birth-ropes for them
 Who are just born, being dead.

“ He shall fear, haply, and be dumb.
 Then I will lay my cheek
 To his, and tell about our love,
 Not once abash'd or weak :
 And the dear Mother will approve
 My pride, and let me speak.

“ Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
 To Him round whom all souls
 Kneel—the unnumber'd solemn heads
 Bow'd with their aureoles :
 And Angels, meeting us, shall sing
 To their citherns and citoles.

“ There will I ask of Christ the Lord
 Thus much for him and me :—
 To have more blessing than on earth
 In nowise ; but to be
 As then we were,—being as then
 At peace. Yea, verily.

“ Yea, verily ; when he is mine
 We will do thus and thus :
 Till this my vigil seem quite strange
 And almost fabulous ;
 We two will live at once, one life ;
 And peace shall be with us.”

She gazed, and listen'd, and then said,
 Less sad of speech than mild,—
 "All this is when he comes." She ceased :
 The light thrill'd past her, fill'd
 With Angels, in strong level lapse.
 Her eyes pray'd, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their flight
 Was vague 'mid the poised spheres.
 And then she cast her arms along
 The golden barriers,
 And laid her face between her hands,
 And wept. (I heard her tears.)

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882)

SIBYLLA PALMIFERA

UNDER the arch of Life, where love and death,
 Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
 Beauty enthroned ; and though her gaze struck awe,
 I drew it in as simply as my breath.
 Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
 The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,
 By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
 The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
 Thy voice and hand shake still—long known to thee
 By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
 Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
 How passionately and irretrievably,
 In what fond flight, how many ways and days !

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

LOVESIGHT

WHEN do I see thee most, beloved one?
 When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
 Before thy face, their altar, solemnise
 The worship of that Love through thee made known?
 Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)
 Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
 Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
 And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love, my love! if I no more should see
 Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
 Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
 How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
 The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
 The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

SONG FROM

"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING"

SIGH no more, ladies, sigh no more,
 Men were deceivers ever,
 One foot in sea and one on shore,
 To one thing constant never:
 Then sigh not so, but let them go,
 And be you blithe and bonny,
 Converting all your sounds of woe
 Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no more,
 Of dumps so dull and heavy;
 The fraud of men was ever so,
 Since summer first was leavy:
 Then sigh not so, but let them go,
 And be you blithe and bonny,

Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

SONNETS FROM SHAKESPEARE

SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day ?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate :
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date :
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd :
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest ;
Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest :
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

TH' expense of Spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action ; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust ;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despisèd straight ;
Past reason hunted ; and, no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad :
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so ;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme ;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe ;
Before, a joy proposed ; behind, a dream.
 All this the world well knows ; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

LET me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove :
 O no ! it is an ever-fixèd mark
 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken ;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom :—
 If this be error, and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

BEING your slave, what should I do but tend
 Upon the hours and times of your desire ?
 I have no precious time at all to spend,
 Nor services to do, till you require :
 Nor dare I chide the world-without-end-hour
 Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
 Nor think the bitterness of absence sour
 When you have bid your servant once adieu :
 Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
 Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
 But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought
 Save, where you are, how happy you make those ;—
 So true a fool is love, that in your will
 Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.

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 wingèd 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 odours 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 Mænad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

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

Of vapours, 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 Baiæ'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 grey 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)

HYMN OF PAN

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I ARISE from dreams of thee
 In the first sweet sleep of night,
 When the winds are breathing low,
 And the stars are shining bright.
 I arise from dreams of thee,
 And a spirit in my feet
 Hath led me—who knows how?
 To thy chamber window, Sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
 On the dark, the silent stream—
 And the Champak's odours (pine)
 Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
 The nightingale's complaint,
 It dies upon her heart,
 As I must on thine,
 O belovèd as thou art!

O lift me from the grass!
 I die! I faint! I fail!
 Let thy love in kisses rain
 On my lips and eyelids pale.
 My cheek is cold and white, alas!
 My heart beats loud and fast:
 O press it to thine own again,
 Where it will break at last!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

HYMN OF PAN

FROM the forests and highlands
 We come, we come;
 From the river-girt islands,
 Where loud waves are dumb,
 Listening to my sweet pipings.

The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
The bees on the bells of thyme,
The birds on the myrtle bushes,
The cicale above in the lime,
And the lizards below in the grass,
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
The light of the dying day,
Speded by my sweet pipings.

The Sileni and Sylvans and Fauns,
And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
And the brink of the dewy caves,
And all that did then attend and follow,
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing stars,
I sang of the dædal earth,
And of heaven, and the giant wars,
And love, and death, and birth.
And then I changed my pipings—
Singing how down the vale of Mænalus
I pursued a maiden, and clasp'd a reed :
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus ;
It breaks in our bosom, and then we bleed.
All wept—as I think both ye now would,
If envy or age had not frozen your blood—
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

EPITHALAMION

YE learnèd sisters, which have oftentimes
 Beene to me ayding, others to adorne,
 Whom ye thought worthy of your gracefull rymes,
 That even the greatest did not greatly scorne
 To heare their names sung in your simple layes,
 But joyèd in their praise ;
 And when ye list your owne mishaps to mourne,
 Which death, or love, or fortunes wreck did rayse,
 Your string could soone to sadder tenor turne,
 And teach the woods and waters to lament
 Your dolefull dreriment :
 Now lay those sorrowfull complaints aside ;
 And, having all your heads with girlands crownd,
 Helpe me mine owne loves prayes to resound ;
 Ne let the same of any be envide :
 So Orpheus did for his owne bride !
 So I unto my selfe alone will sing ;
 The woods shall to me answer, and my Eccho ring.

Early, before the worlds light-giving lampe
 His golden beame upon the hils doth spread,
 Having disperst the nights unchearefull dampe,
 Doe ye awake ; and, with fresh lusty-hed,
 Go to the bowre of my belovèd love,
 My truest turtle dove ;
 Bid her awake ; for Hymen is awake,
 And long since ready forth his maske to move,
 With his bright Tead that flames with many a flake,
 And many a bachelor to waite on him,
 In theyr fresh garments trim.
 Bid her awake therefore, and soone her dight,
 For lo! the wishèd day is come at last,
 That shall, for all the paynes and sorrowes past

Pay to her usury of long delight :
 And, whylest she doth her dight,
 Doe ye to her of joy and solace sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your Eccho ring.

Bring with you all the Nymphes that you can heare
 Both of the rivers and the forrests greene,
 And of the sea that neighbours to her neare :
 Al with gay girlands goodly wel beseene.
 And let them also with them bring in hand
 Another gay girland
 For my fayre love, of lillyes and of roses,
 Bound truelove wize, with a blew silke riband.
 And let them make great store of bridale poses,
 And let them eeke bring store of other flowers,
 To deck the bridale bowers.
 And let the ground whereas her foot shall tread,
 For feare the stones her tender foot should wrong,
 Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,
 And diapred lyke the discolored mead.
 Which done, doe at her chamber dore awayt,
 For she will waken strayt ;
 The whiles doe ye this song unto her sing,
 The woods shall to you answer, and your Eccho ring.

Ye Nymphes of Mulla, which with carefull heed
 The silver scaly trouts doe tend full well,
 And greedy pikes which use therein to feed ;
 (Those trouts and pikes all others doo excell ;)
 And ye likewise, which keepe the rushy lake,
 Where none doo fishes take ;
 Bynd up the locks the which hang scatterd light,
 And in his waters, which your mirror make,
 Behold your faces as the christall bright,
 That when you come whereas my love doth lie,
 No blemish she may spie.
 And eke, ye lightfoot mayds, which keepe the deere,

That on the hoary mountayne used to towre ;
 And the wylde wolves, which seeke them to devoure,
 With your steele darts doo chace from comming neer ;
 Be also present heere,
 To helpe to decke her, and to help to sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your Eccho ring.

Wake now, my love, awake ! for it is time ;
 The Rosy Morne long since left Tithones bed,
 All ready to her silver coche to clyme ;
 And Phœbus gins to shew his glorious hed.
 Hark ! how the cheerefull birds do chaunt theyr laies
 And carroll of Loves praise.
 The merry Larke hir mattins sings aloft ;
 The Thrush replies ; the Mavis descant playes ;
 The Ouzell shrills ; the Ruddock warbles soft ;
 So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,
 To this dayes merriment.
 Ah ! my deere love, why doe ye sleepe thus long ?
 When meeter were that ye should now awake,
 T' awayt the comming of your joyous make,
 And hearken to the birds love-learnèd song,
 The deawy leaves among !
 Nor they of joy and pleasance to you sing,
 That all the woods them answer, and theyr Eccho ring.

My love is now awake out of her dreames,
 And her fayre eyes, like stars that dimmèd were
 With darksome cloud, now shew theyr goodly beams
 More bright then Hesperus his head doth rere.
 Come now, ye damzels, daughters of delight,
 Helpe quickly her to dight :
 But first come ye fayre houres, which were begot
 In Joves sweet paradice of Day and Night ;
 Which doe the seasons of the yeare allot,
 And al, that ever in this world is fayre,
 Doe make and still repayre :

And ye three handmayds of the Cyprian Queene,
 The which doe still adorne her beauties pride,
 Helpe to adorne my beautifullest bride :
 And, as ye her array, still throw betweene
 Some graces to be seene ;
 And, as ye use to Venus, to her sing,
 The whiles the woods shal answer, and your Eccho ring.

Now is my love all ready forth to come :
 Let all the virgins therefore well awayt :
 And ye fresh boyes, that tend upon her groome,
 Prepare your selves ; for he is comming strayt.
 Set all your things in seemely good aray,
 Fit for so joyfull day :
 The joyfulst day that ever sunne did see.
 Faire Sun ! shew forth thy favourable ray,
 And let thy lifull heat not fervent be,
 For feare of burning her sunshyny face,
 Her beauty to disgrace.
 O fayrest Phœbus ! father of the Muse !
 If ever I did honour thee aright,
 Or sing the thing that mote thy mind delight,
 Doe not thy servants simple boone refuse ;
 But let this day, let this one day, be myne ;
 Let all the rest be thine.
 Then I thy soverayne prayses loud wil sing,
 That all the woods shal answer, and theyr Eccho ring.

Harke ! how the Minstrils gin to shrill aloud
 Their merry Musick that resounds from far,
 The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling Croud,
 That well agree withouten breach or jar.
 But, most of all, the Damzels doe delite
 When they their tymbrels smyte,
 And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,
 That all the sences they doe ravish quite ;
 The whyles the boyes run up and downe the street,

Crying aloud with strong confusèd noyce,
 As if it were one voyce,
 Hymen, iö Hymen, Hymen, they do shout ;
 That even to the heavens theyr shouting shrill
 Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill ;
 To which the people standing all about,
 As in approvance, doe thereto applaud,
 And loud advaunce her laud ;
 And evermore they Hymen, Hymen sing,
 That al the woods them answer, and theyr Eccho ring.

Loe ! where she comes along with portly pace,
 Lyke Phœbe, from her chamber of the East,
 Aysing forth to run her mighty race,
 Clad all in white, that seemes a virgin best.
 So well it her beseemes, that ye would weene
 Some angell she had beene.
 Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden wyre,
 Sprinckled with perle, and perling flowers atweene,
 Doe lyke a golden mantle her attyre ;
 And, being crownèd with a girland greene,
 Seeme lyke some mayden Queene.
 Her modest eyes, abashèd to behold
 So many gazers as on her do stare,
 Upon the lowly ground affixèd are ;
 Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,
 But blush to heare her prayses sung so loud,
 So farre from being proud.
 Nathlesse doe ye still loud her prayses sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your Eccho ring.

Tell me, ye merchants daughters, did ye see
 So fayre a creature in your towne before ;
 So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,
 Adornd with beautyes grace and vertues store ?
 Her goodly eyes lyke Saphyres shining bright,
 Her forehead yvory white,

Her cheekes lyke apples which the sun hath rudded,
 Her lips lyke cherryes charming men to byte,
 Her brest like to a bowle of creame uncrudded,
 Her paps lyke lyllies budded,
 Her snowie necke lyke to a marble towre ;
 And all her body like a pallace fayre,
 Ascending up, with many a stately stayre,
 To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre.
 Why stand ye still ye virgins in amaze,
 Upon her so to gaze,
 Whiles ye forget your former lay to sing,
 To which the woods did answer, and your Eccho ring ?

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,
 The inward beauty of her lively spright,
 Garnisht with heavenly guifts of high degree,
 Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,
 And stand astonisht lyke to those which red
 Medusaes mazeful hed.
 There dwels sweet love, and constant chastity,
 Unspotted fayth, and comely womanhood,
 Regard of honour, and mild modesty ;
 There vertue raynes as Queene in royal throne,
 And giveth lawes alone,
 The which the base affections doe obay,
 And yeeld theyr services unto her will ;
 Ne thought of thing uncomely ever may
 Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill.
 Had ye once seene these her celestial treasures,
 And unrevealèd pleasures,
 Then would ye wonder, and her prayses sing,
 That al the woods should answer, and your Eccho ring.

Open the temple gates unto my love,
 Open them wide that she may enter in,
 And all the postes adorne as doth behove,
 And all the pillours deck with girlands trim,

For to receyve this Saynt with honour dew,
 That commeth in to you.
 With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
 She commeth in, before th' Almightyes view ;
 Of her ye virgins learne obedience,
 When so ye come into those holy places,
 To humble your proud faces :
 Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may
 The sacred ceremonies there partake,
 The which do endlesse matrimony make ;
 And let the roring Organs loudly play
 The praises of the Lord in lively notes ;
 The whiles, with hollow throates,
 The Choristers the joyous Antheme sing,
 That al the woods may answere, and their Eccho ring

Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
 Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes,
 And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
 How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
 And the pure snow, with goodly vermill stayne
 Like crimsin dyde in grayne :
 That even th' Angels, which continually
 About the sacred Altare doe remaine,
 Forget their service and about her fly,
 Ofte peeping in her face, that seems more fayre,
 The more they on it stare.
 But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
 Are governèd with goodly modesty,
 That suffers not one looke to glaunce awry,
 Which may let in a little thought unsownd.
 Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,
 The pledge of all our band !
 Sing, ye sweet Angels, Alleluya sing,
 That all the woods may answere, and your Eccho ring.

Now al is done : bring home the bride againe ;
Bring home the triumph of our victory :
Bring home with you the glory of her gaine ;
With joyance bring her and with jollity.
Never had man more joyfull day than this,
Whom heaven would heape with blis,
Make feast therefore now all this live-long day ;
This day for ever to me holy is.
Poure out the wine without restraint or stay,
Poure not by cups, but by the belly full,
Poure out to all that wull,
And sprinkle all the postes and wals with wine,
That they may sweat, and drunken be withall.
Crowne ye God Bacchus with a coronall,
And Hymen also crowne with wreathes of vine ;
And let the Graces daunce unto the rest,
For they can doo it best :
The whiles the maydens doe theyr carroll sing,
To which the woods shall answer, and theyr Eccho ring.

Ring ye the bells, ye yong men of the towne,
And leave your wonted labors for this day :
This day is holy ; doe ye write it downe,
That ye for ever it remember may.
This day the sunne is in his chiefest hight,
With Barnaby the bright,
From whence declining daily by degrees,
He somewhat loseth of his heat and light,
When once the Crab behind his back he sees.
But for this time it ill ordainèd was,
To chose the longest day in all the yeare,
And shortest night, when longest fitter weare :
Yet never day so long, but late would passe.
Ring ye the bells, to make it weare away,
And bonefiers make all day ;
And daunce about them, and about them sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your Eccho ring.

Ah! when will this long weary day have end,
 And lende me leave to come unto my love?
 How slowly do the houres theyr numbers spend?
 How slowly does sad Time his feathers move?
 Hast thee, O fayrest Planet, to thy home,
 Within the Westerne foam;
 Thy tyrèd steedes long since have need of rest.
 Long though it be, at last I see it gloome,
 And the bright evening-star with golden creast
 Appeare out of the East.
 Fayre childe of beauty! glorious lampe of love!
 That all the host of heaven in rankes doost lead,
 And guydest lovers through the nights sad dread,
 How chearefully thou lookest from above,
 And seemst to laugh atweene thy twinkling light,
 As joying in the sight
 Of these glad many, which for joy doe sing,
 That all the woods them answer and their Eccho ring!

Now cease, ye damsels, your delights fore-past;
 Enough it is that all the day was youres:
 Now day is doen, and night is nighing fast,
 Now bring the Bryde into the brydall boures.
 The night is come, now soon her disaray,
 And in her bed her lay;
 Lay her in lillies and in violets,
 And silken courteins over her display,
 And odoure sheetes, and Arras coverlets.
 Behold how goodly my faire love does ly,
 In proud humility!
 Like unto Maia, when as Jove her took
 In Tempe, lying on the flowry gras,
 Twixt sleepe and wake, after she weary was,
 With bathing in the Acidalian brooke.
 Now it is night, ye damsels may be gon,
 And leave my love alone,

And leave likewise your former lay to sing :
The woods no more shall answere, nor your Eccho ring.

Now welcome, night ! thou night so long expected,
That long daies labour doest at last defray,
And all my cares, which cruell Love collected,
Hast sumd in one, and cancellèd for aye :
Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,
That no man may us see ;
And in thy sable mantle us enwrap,
From feare of perrill and foule horror free.
Let no false treason seeke us to entrap,
Nor any dread disquiet once annoy
The safety of our joy ;
But let the night be calme, and quiet some,
Without tempestuous storms or sad afray :
Lyke as when Jove with fayre Alcmena lay,
When he begot the great Tiryinthian groome :
Or lyke as when he with thy selfe did lie
And begot Majesty.
And let the mayds and yong men cease to sing ;
Ne let the woods them answer nor theyr Eccho ring.

Let no lamenting cryes, nor dolefull teares,
Be heard all night within, nor yet without :
Ne let false whispers, breeding hidden feares,
Breake gentle sleepe with misconceivèd dout.
Let no deluding dreames, nor dreadfull sights,
Make sudden sad affrights ;
Ne let house-fyres, nor lightnings helpelesse harmes,
Ne let the Pouke, nor other evill sprights,
Ne let mischivous witches with theyr charmes,
Ne let hob Goblins, names whose sence we see not,
Fray us with things that be not :
Let not the shriech Oule nor the Storke be heard,
Nor the night Raven, that still deadly yels ;
Nor damnèd ghosts, cald up with mighty spels,

Nor griesly vultures, make us once affeard :
 Ne let th' unpleasant Quayre of Frogs still croking
 Make us to wish theyr choking.
 Let none of these theyr dreery accents sing ;
 Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr Eccho ring.

But let still Silence trew night-watches keepe,
 That sacred Peace may in assurance rayne,
 And tymely Sleep, when it is tyme to sleepe,
 May poure his limbs forth on your pleasant playne ;
 The whiles an hundred little wingèd loves,
 Like divers-fethered doves,
 Shall fly and flutter round about your bed,
 And in the secret darke, that none reproves,
 Their prety stealthes shal worke, and snares shal spread
 To filch away sweet snatches of delight,
 Conceald through covert night.
 Ye sonnes of Venus, play your sports at will !
 For greedy pleasure, carelesse of your toyes,
 Thinks more upon her paradise of joyes,
 Then what ye do, albeit good or ill.
 All night therefore attend your merry play,
 For it will soone be day :
 Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing ;
 Ne will the woods now answer, nor your Eccho ring.

Who is the same, which at my window peepes ?
 Or whose is that faire face that shines so bright ?
 Is it not Cinthia, she that never sleepest,
 But walkes about high heaven al the night ?
 O ! fayrest goddessè, do thou not envy
 My love with me to spy :
 For thou likewise didst love, though now unthought,
 And for a fleece of wooll, which privily
 The Latmian shepherd once unto thee brought,
 His pleasures with thee wrought.

Therefore to us be favorable now ;
 And sith of wemens labours thou hast charge,
 And generation goodly dost enlarge,
 Encline thy will t'effect our wishfull vow,
 And the chaste wombe informe with timely seed,
 That may our comfort breed :
 Till which we cease our hopefull hap to sing ;
 Ne let the woods us answere, nor our Eccho ring.

And thou, great Juno ! which with awful might
 The lawes of wedlock still dost patronize ;
 And the religion of the faith first plight
 With sacred rites has taught to solemnize ;
 And eeke for comfort often callèd art
 Of women in their smart ;
 Eternally bind thou this lovely band,
 And all thy blessings unto us impart.
 And thou, glad Genius ! in whose gentle hand
 The bridale bowre and geniall bed remaine,
 Without blemish or staine ;
 And the sweet pleasures of theyr loves delight
 With secret ayde doest succour and supply,
 Till they bring forth the fruitfull progeny ;
 Send us the timely fruit of this same night.
 And thou, fayre Hebe ! and thou, Hymen free !
 Grant that it may so be.
 Til which we cease your further prayse to sing ;
 Ne any woods shall answer, nor your Eccho ring.

And ye high heavens, the temple of the gods,
 In which a thousand torches flaming bright
 Doe burne, that to us wretched earthly clods,
 In dreadful darknesse lend desired light ;
 And all ye powers which in the same remayne,
 More then we men can fayne !
 Poure out your blessing on us plentiously,
 And happy influence upon us raine,

That we may raise a large posterity,
 Which from the earth, which they may long possesse
 With lasting happinesse,
 Up to your haughty pallaces may mount ;
 And, for the guerdon of theyr glorious merit,
 May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,
 Of blessèd Saints for to increase the count.
 So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this,
 And cease till then our tymely joyes to sing :
 The woods no more us answer, nor our Eccho ring !

Song ! made in lieu of many ornaments,
 With which my love should duly have been dect,
 Which cutting off through hasty accidents,
 Ye would not stay your dew time to expect,
 But promist both to recompens ;
 Be unto her a goodly ornament,
 And for short time an endlesse moniment.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)

TO THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON (DEDICATORY
 SONNET—TRISTRAM OF LYONESSE)

SPRING speaks again, and all our woods are stirred,
 And all our wide glad wastes a-flower around,
 That twice have heard keen April's clarion sound
 Since here we first together saw and heard
 Spring's light reverberate and reiterate word
 Shine forth and speak in season. Life stands crowned
 Here with the best one thing it ever found,
 As of my soul's best birthdays dawns the third.

There is a friend that as the wise man saith
 Cleaves closer than a brother : nor to me
 Hath time not shown, through days like waves at strife,
 This truth more sure than all things else but death,
 This pearl most perfect found in all the sea
 That washes toward your feet those waifs of life.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909)

FIRST CHORUS FROM "ATALANTA"

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 clamour of waters, and with might ;
 Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
 Over the splendour 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 remember'd 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 hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
 The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
 Follows with dancing and fills with delight
 The Mænad 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.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop fitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly,
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot :
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colours gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot :
 There the river eddy whirls,
 And there the surly village-churls,
 And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights,
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
 And music, went to Camelot :
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled in the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot :
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
 Beside remote Shalott.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 As often thro' the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
 From underneath his helmet flow'd
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 From the bank and from the river
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
 " Tirra lirra," by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
 She made three paces thro' the room,
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.
 Out flew the web and floated wide ;
 The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
 " The curse is come upon me ! " cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were waning,
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,
 Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot ;

Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot :
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot ;
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

THE POPPY

Under tower and balcony,
 By garden-wall and gallery,
 A gleaming shape she floated by,
 Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.
 Out upon the wharfs they came,
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
 And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
 And in the lighted palace near
 Died the sound of royal cheer;
 And they crossed themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:
 But Lancelot mused a little space;
 He said, "She has a lovely face;
 God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott."

LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)

THE POPPY

SUMMER set lip to earth's bosom bare,
 And left the flush'd print in a poppy there;
 Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,
 And the fanning wind puff'd it to flapping flame.

With burnt mouth red like a lion's it drank
 The blood of the sun as he slaughter'd sank,
 And dipp'd its cup in the purpurate shine
 When the eastern conduits ran with wine.

Till it grew lethargied with fierce bliss,
And hot as a swinkèd gipsy is,
And drowsed in sleepy savageries,
With mouth wide a-pout for a sultry kiss.

A child and man paced side by side,
Treading the skirts of eventide ;
But between the clasp of his hand and hers
Lay, felt not, twenty wither'd years.

She turn'd, with the rout of her dusk South hair,
And saw the sleeping gipsy there ;
And snatch'd and snapp'd it in swift child's whim,
With—"Keep it, long as you live!"—to him.

And his smiles, as nymphs from their laving meres,
Trembled up from a bath of tears ;
And joy, like a mew sea-rock'd apart,
Toss'd on the wave of his troubled heart.

For he saw what she did not see,
That—as kindled by its own fervency—
The verge shrivell'd inward smoulderingly :

And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers
He knew the twenty wither'd years—
No flower, but twenty shrivell'd years.

"Was never such thing until this hour,"
Low to his heart he said ; "the flower
Of sleep brings wakening to me,
And of oblivion memory."

"Was never this thing to me," he said,
"Though with bruised poppies my feet are red !"
And again to his own heart very low :
"O child ! I love, for I love and know ;

“ But you, who love nor know at all
 The diverse chambers in Love’s guest-hall,
 Where some rise early, few sit long :
 In how differing accents hear the throng
 His great Pentecostal tongue :

“ Who know not love from amity,
 Nor my reported self from me ;
 A fair fit gift is this, meseems,
 You give—this withering flower of dreams.

“ O frankly fickle, and fickly true,
 Do you know what the days will do to you ?
 To your Love and you what the days will do,
 O frankly fickle, and fickly true ?

“ You had loved me, Fair, three lives—or days :
 ’Twill pass with the passing of my face.
 But where I go, your face goes too,
 To watch lest I play false to you.

“ I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,
 Knowing well when certain years are over
 You vanish from me to another ;
 Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother.

“ So, frankly fickle, and fickly true !
 For my brief life-while I take from you
 This token, fair and fit, meseems,
 For me—this withering flower of dreams.”

.
 The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,
 Heavy with dreams, as that with bread :
 The goodly grain and the sun-flush’d sleeper
 The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.

I hang 'mid men my needless head,
 And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread :
 The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper
 Time shall reap, but after the reaper
 The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper !

Love ! love ! your flower of wither'd dream
 In leavèd rhyme lies safe, I deem,
 Shelter'd and shut in a nook of rhyme,
 From the reaper man, and his reaper Time.

Love ! I fall into the claws of Time :
 But lasts within a leavèd rhyme
 All that the world of me esteems—
 My wither'd dreams, my wither'd dreams.

FRANCIS THOMPSON (1860-1907)

LETTY'S GLOBE

WHEN Letty had scarce pass'd her third glad year,
 And her young artless words began to flow,
 One day we gave the child a colour'd sphere
 Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know,
 By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
 She patted all the world ; old empires peep'd
 Between her baby fingers ; her soft hand
 Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leap'd,
 And laugh'd and prattled in her world-wide bliss ;
 But when we turned her sweet unlearnèd eye
 On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry—
 " Oh ! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there !"
 And while she hid all England with a kiss,
 Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER (1808-1879)

GO, LOVELY ROSE

Go, lovely Rose—
 Tell her, that wastes her time and me,
 That now she knows,
 When I resemble her to thee,
 How sweet and fair she seems to be.

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

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

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

EDMUND WALLER (1606–1687)

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 a curtain of translucent dew,
 Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
 Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
 And lo! Creation widened in man's view.

Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
 Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
 Whilst flow'r 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)

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
 The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Apparell'd in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.
 It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
 And lovely is the rose;
 The moon doth with delight
 Look round her when the heavens are bare;
 Waters on a starry night
 Are beautiful and fair;
 The sunshine is a glorious birth;
 But yet I know, where'er I go,
 That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
 And while the young lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound,
 To me alone there came a thought of grief :
 A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
 And I again am strong :
 The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep ;
 No more shall grief of mine the season wrong ;
 I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
 The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
 And all the earth is gay ;
 Land and sea
 Give themselves up to jollity,
 And with the heart of May
 Doth every beast keep holiday ;—
 Thou child of Joy,
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-
 boy !

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make ; I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal,
 The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 O evil day ! if I were sullen
 While Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the children are culling
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers ; while the sun shines warm,
 And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm :—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear !
 —But there's a tree, of many, one,
 A single field which I have look'd upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone :

The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat :
Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?
Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar :
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home :
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy ;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended ;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.
Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.
Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size !
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes !

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral ;
 And this hath now his heart,
 And unto this he frames his song :
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
 The little actor cons another part ;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage ;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy soul's immensity ;
 Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal Mind,—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest,
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a master o'er a slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by ;
 To whom the grave
 Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight
 Of day or the warm light,
 A place of thought where we in waiting lie ;

Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
 Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That Nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest—
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—

Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature

Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts, before which our mortal Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:

But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,

Which, be they what they may,
 Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
 Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
 To perish never:

To live beneath your more habitual sway.
 I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
 Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they ;
 The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
 Is lovely yet ;
 The clouds that gather round the setting sun
 Do take a sober colouring from an eye
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;
 Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

W. WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

ONCE did she hold the gorgeous East in fee ;
 And was the safeguard of the West : the worth
 Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
 Venice the eldest Child of Liberty.
 She was a maiden city, bright and free ;
 No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
 And when she took unto herself a mate,
 She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
 And what if she had seen those glories fade,
 Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ;
 Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
 When her long life hath reach'd its final day :
 Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
 Of that which once was great is pass'd away.

W. WORDSWORTH

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

THE subject of poetry has been the theme of a vast array of books from Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Art of Poetry* to the *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* by Mr. A. C. Bradley. But a student will find almost all that he needs of stimulus to thought in the masterly article on "Poetry" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Two articles on "The Sonnet," one in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, and the other in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, by the writer of the article on "Poetry," adequately discuss that poetic form. It will be most profitable for a student who has mastered these three articles to spend the rest of his time at the feet of the Muses, studying the principles incarnate in the forms of poetry.

Anthologies tend to take colour from their compilers; but of course they have the qualities of their defects. The best modern anthology of English verse is *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, by A. T. Quiller-Couch. Cheaper anthologies are the *Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*, selected and arranged with notes by F. T. Palgrave—first and second series. The "second series," while it includes some good verse, must not be taken too seriously as a judicious compilation.

Sonnets of this Century, with a critical introduction on the Sonnet by William Sharp, gives a good survey of the history of the Sonnet in England from Milton down to the present day (1886).

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