Essential Lyrics in English to 1900

ANONYMOUS

The Twa Corbies

As I was walking all alane,  
I heard twa corbies makin a mane;  
The tane unto the ither say,  
"Whar sall we gang and dine the-day?"

"In ahint yon auld fail dyke,  
I wot there lies a new slain knight;  
And nane do ken that he lies there,  
But his hawk, his hound an his lady fair."

"His hound is tae the huntin gane,  
His hawk tae fetch the wild-fowl hame,   
His lady's tain anither mate,  
So we may mak oor dinner swate."

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,  
And I'll pike oot his bonny blue een;  
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair   
We'll theek oor nest whan it grows bare."

"Mony a one for him makes mane,  
But nane sall ken whar he is gane;  
Oer his white banes, whan they are bare,  
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

[As I was walking all alone,  
I heard two crows (or ravens) making a moan;  
One said to the other,  
"Where shall we go and dine today?"

"In behind that old turf wall,  
I sense there lies a newly slain knight;  
And nobody knows that he lies there,  
But his hawk, his hound and his lady fair."

"His hound is to the hunting gone,  
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl home,   
His lady's has taken another mate,  
So we may make our dinner sweet."

"You will sit on his white neck-bone,  
And I'll peck out his pretty blue eyes;  
With one lock of his golden hair   
We'll thatch our nest when it grows bare."

"Many a one for him is moaning,  
But nobody will know where he is gone;  
Over his white bones, when they are bare,  
The wind will blow for evermore."]

Edward, Edward

(Old Scots ballad adapted by Thomas Percy)

Why dois your brand sae drap wi' bluid,   
    Edward, Edward?  
    Why dois your brand sae drap wi' bluid?  
    And why sae sad gang ye, O?  
    O, I hae killed my hauke sae guid,  
    Mither, mither,  
    O, I hae killed my hauke sae guid,  
    And I had nae mair bot hee, O.  
  
    Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,  
  Edward, Edward,  
  Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,  
  My deir son I tell thee, O.  
  O, I hae killed my reid-roan steid,  
  Mither, mither,  
  O, I hae killed my reid-roan steid,  
  That erst was sae fair and frie, O.  
  
  Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,  
  Edward, Edward,  
  Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,  
  Sum other dule ye drie, O.  
  O, I hae killed my fadir deir,  
  Mither, mither,  
  O, I hae killed my fadir deir,  
  Alas, and wae is mee, O.  
  
  And whatten penance wul ye drie for that,  
  Edward, Edward?  
  And whatten penance will ye drie for that?  
  My deir son, now tell me, O.  
  Ile set my feit in yonder boat,  
  Mither, mither,  
  Il set my feit in yonder boat,  
  And Ile fare ovir the sea, O.  
  
  And what wul ye doe wi' your towirs and your ha',  
  Edward, Edward?  
  And what wul ye doe wi' your towirs and your ha',  
  That were sae fair to see, O?  
  Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa',  
  Mither, mither,  
  Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa',  
  For here nevir mair maun I bee, O.  
  
  And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,  
  Edward, Edward?  
  And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,  
  Whan ye gang ovir the sea, O?  
  The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,  
  Mither, mither,  
  The warldis room, let them beg thrae life,  
  For thame nevir mair wul I see, O.  
  
  And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,  
  Edward, Edward?  
  And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?  
  My deir son, now tell mee, O.  
  The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,  
  Mither, mither,  
  The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,  
  Sic counseils ye gave to me, O.

'Why does your sword so drip with blood,   
Edward, Edward?  
Why does your sword so drip with blood?  
And why so sad are ye, O?'  
'O, I have killed my hawk so good,  
Mother, mother:  
O I have killed my hawk so good:  
And I had no more but he, O.'  
  
'Your hawk's blood was never so red,  
Edward, Edward:  
Your hawk’s blood was never so red,  
My dear son I tell thee, O.'  
'O, I have killed my red-roan steed,  
Mother, mother:  
O, I have killed my red-roan steed,  
That once was so fair and free, O.'  
  
'Your steed was old, and we have got more,  
Edward, Edward:  
Your steed was old, and we have got more,  
Some other evil ye fear, O.'  
'O, I have killed my father dear,  
Mother, mother:  
O, I have killed my father dear,  
Alas! and woe is me, O!'  
  
'And what penance will ye suffer for that,   
Edward, Edward?  
And what penance will ye suffer for that?  
My dear son, now tell me, O.'  
'I'll set my feet in yonder boat,  
Mother, mother:  
I’ll set my feet in yonder boat,  
And I’ll fare over the sea, O.'  
  
'And what will ye do with your towers and your halls,  
Edward, Edward?  
And what will ye do with your towers and your halls,  
That were sae fair to see, O?'  
'I’ll let them stand till they down fall,  
Mother, mother:  
I’ll let them stand till they down fall,  
For here never more may I be, O.'  
  
'And what will ye leave to your children and your wife,  
Edward, Edward?  
And what will ye leave to your children and your wife  
When ye go over the sea, O?'  
'The world is large, let them beg through life,  
Mother, mother:  
The world is large, let them beg throw life,  
For them never more will I see, O.'  
  
'And what will ye leave to your own mother dear,  
Edward, Edward?  
And what will ye leave to your own mother dear?  
My dear son, now tell me, O.'  
'The curse of hell from me shall you bear,  
Mother, mother:  
The curse of hell from me shall you bear,  
Such counsels you gave to me, O.'

[GEOFFREY CHAUCER](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/geoffrey-chaucer" \t "_blank)

*From the* General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*

*Here bygynneth the Book of the tales of Caunterbury*

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote\*, sweet

The droghte\* of March hath perced to the roote, drought

And bathed every veyne in swich licóur

Of which vertú\* engendred is the flour; power

Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth

Inspired hath in every holt and heeth

The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne

Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,

And smale foweles maken melodye,

That slepen al the nyght with open ye,

So priketh hem Natúre in hir corages,

Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,

And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,

To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;

And specially, from every shires ende

Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,

The hooly blisful martir for to seke,

That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

WILLIAM DUNBAR

Lament for the Makaris

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | I THAT in heill was and glaidness |  | | Am trublit now with great seikness |  | | And feblit with infirmitie:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | Our plesance heir is all vain glory, | *5* | | This fals world is but transitory, |  | | The flesh is brukle, the Feynd is slee:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | The state of man does change and vary, |  | | Now sound, now sick, now blyth, now sary, | *10* | | Now dansand mirry, now like to die:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | No state in Erd heir standis sicker; |  | | As with the wynd wavis the wicker |  | | So wavis this world’s vanitie:— | *15* | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | Unto the Deid gois all Estatis, |  | | Princis, Prelattis, and Potestatis, |  | | Baith rich and poor of all degre:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* | *20* | |  |  | | He takis the Knychtis in to feild |  | | Enarmit under helm and scheild; |  | | Victour he is at all mellie:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | That strang unmercifull tyrand | *25* | | Takis, on the motheris breast sowkand, |  | | The babe full of benignitie:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | He takis the campioun in the stour, |  | | The captain closit in the tour, | *30* | | The lady in bour full of bewtie:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | He spairis no lord for his piscence |  | | Na clerk for his intelligence; |  | | His awfull straik may no man flee:— | *35* | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | Art-magicianis and astrologis, |  | | Rethoris, logicianis, and theologis, |  | | Them helpis no conclusionis slee:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* | *40* | |  |  | | In medecyne the most practicianis, |  | | Leechis, surrigianis and physicianis, |  | | Themself fra Death may nocht supplee:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | I see that makaris amang the lave | *45* | | Playis here their padyanis, syne gois to grave; |  | | Spairit is nocht their facultie:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | He hes done petuously devour |  | | The noble Chaucer, of makaris flour, | *50* | | The Monk of Bury, and Gower, all three:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | The gude Sir Hew of Eglintoun, |  | | Ettrick, Heriot, and Wyntoun, |  | | He has tane out of this cuntrie:— | *55* | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | That scorpion fell hes done infeck |  | | Maister John Clerk, and James Afflek, |  | | Fra ballat-making and tragedie:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* | *60* | |  |  | | Holland and Barbour he has berevit; |  | | Alas! that he not with us levit |  | | Sir Mungo Lockart of the Lee:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | Clerk of Tranent eke he hes tane, | *65* | | That made the awnteris of Gawane; |  | | Sir Gilbert Hay endit hes he:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | He hes Blind Harry and Sandy Traill |  | | Slain with his schour of mortal hail, | *70* | | Quhilk Patrick Johnstoun might nocht flee:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | He has reft Merseir his endyte |  | | That did in luve so lively write, |  | | So short, so quick, of sentence hie:— | *75* | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | He has tane Rowll of Abirdene, |  | | And gentill Rowll of Corstorphine; |  | | Two better fallowis did no man see:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* | *80* | |  |  | | In Dumfermelyne he has tane Broun |  | | With Maister Robert Henrysoun; |  | | Sir John the Ross enbrasit hes he:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | And he hes now tane, last of a, | *85* | | Good gentil Stobo and Quintyne Shaw, |  | | Of quhom all wichtis hes pitie:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | Good Maister Walter Kennedy |  | | In poynt of dede lies verily; | *90* | | Great ruth it were that so suld be:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | Sen he hes all my brothers tane, |  | | He will nocht let me live alane; |  | | Of force I mon his next prey be:— | *95* | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |  |  | | Since for the death remeid is none, |  | | Best is that we for death dispone |  | | After our death that live may we:— |  | | *Timor Mortis conturbat me.* |  | |

[JOHN SKELTON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/john-skelton)

To Mistress Margaret Hussey

Merry Margaret,

As midsummer flower,

Gentle as a falcon

Or hawk of the tower:

With solace and gladness,

Much mirth and no madness,

All good and no badness;

So joyously,

So maidenly,

So womanly

Her demeaning

In every thing,

Far, far passing

That I can indite,

Or suffice to write

Of Merry Margaret

As midsummer flower,

Gentle as falcon

Or hawk of the tower.

As patient and still

And as full of good will

As fair Isaphill,

Coriander,

Sweet pomander,

Good Cassander,

Steadfast of thought,

Well made, well wrought,

Far may be sought

Ere that ye can find

So courteous, so kind

As Merry Margaret,

This midsummer flower,

Gentle as falcon

Or hawk of the tower.

[SIR THOMAS WYATT](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/thomas-wyatt" \t "_blank)

My Galley, Chargèd with Forgetfulness,

My galley, chargèd with forgetfulness,

Thorough sharp seas in winter nights doth pass

'Tween rock and rock; and eke mine en'my, alas,

That is my lord, steereth with cruelness;

And every owre a thought in readiness,

As though that death were light in such a case.

An endless wind doth tear the sail apace

Of forced sighs and trusty fearfulness.

A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,

Hath done the weared cords great hinderance;

Wreathèd with error and eke with ignorance.

The stars be hid that led me to this pain;

Drownèd is Reason that should me comfort,

And I remain despairing of the port.

They Flee From Me

They flee from me that sometime did me seek

With naked foot, stalking in my chamber.

I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,

That now are wild and do not remember

That sometime they put themself in danger

To take bread at my hand; and now they range,

Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise

Twenty times better; but once in special,

In thin array after a pleasant guise,

When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,

And she me caught in her arms long and small;

Therewithall sweetly did me kiss

And softly said, “Dear heart, how like you this?”

It was no dream: I lay broad waking.

But all is turned thorough my gentleness

Into a strange fashion of forsaking;

And I have leave to go of her goodness,

And she also, to use newfangleness.

But since that I so kindly am served

I would fain know what she hath deserved.

Whoso List to Hunt

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,

But as for me, *hélas*, I may no more.

The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,

I am of them that farthest cometh behind.

Yet may I by no means my wearied mind

Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore

Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,

Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind.

Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,

As well as I may spend his time in vain.

And graven with diamonds in letters plain

There is written, her fair neck round about:

*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar's I am,

And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

PHILIP SIDNEY

From *Certain Sonnets*

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust;

And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;

Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;

Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.

Draw in thy beams and humble all thy might

To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;

Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light,

That both doth shine and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold; let that light be thy guide

In this small course which birth draws out to death,

And think how evil becometh him to slide,

Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.

Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:

Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

*Astrophil and Stella* 30

With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb’st the skies!

How silently, and with how wan a face!

What! may it be that even in heavenly place

That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?

Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes

Can judge of love, thou feel’st a lover’s case:

I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace

To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.

Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,

Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?

Are beauties there as proud as here they be?

Do they above love to be loved, and yet

    Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?

    Do they call ‘virtue’ there—ungratefulness?

*Ye Goat-herd Gods*

***Strephon.***

Ye Goatherd gods, that love the grassy mountains,

Ye nymphs which haunt the springs in pleasant valleys,

Ye satyrs joyed with free and quiet forests,

Vouchsafe your silent ears to plaining music,

Which to my woes gives still an early morning,

And draws the dolor on till weary evening.

***Klaius****.*

O Mercury, foregoer to the evening,

O heavenly huntress of the savage mountains,

O lovely star, entitled of the morning

While that my voice doth fill these woeful valleys,

Vouchsafe your silent ears to plaining music,

Which oft hath *Echo* tired in secret forests.

***Strephon****.*

I that was once free burgess of the forests,

Where shade from Sun, and sport I sought in evening,

I, that was once esteemed for pleasant music,

Am banished now among the monstrous mountains

Of huge despair, and foul affliction's valleys,

Am grown a screech-owl to myself each morning.

***Klaius****.*

I that was once delighted every morning

Hunting the wild inhabiters of forests,

I, that was once the music of these valleys

So darkened am, that all my day is evening,

Heart-broken so, that molehills seem high mountains,

And fill the vales with cries instead of music.

***Strephon****.*

Long since alas, my deadly swannish music

Hath made itself a crier of the morning

And hath with wailing strength climbed highest mountains;

Long since my thoughts more desert be than forests,

Long since I see my joys come to their evening,

And state thrown down to over-trodden valleys.

***Klaius****.*

Long since the happy dwellers of these valleys

Have prayed me leave my strange exclaiming music,

Which troubles their day's work, and joys of evening;

Long since I hate the night, more hate the morning;

Long since my thoughts chase me like beasts in forests,

And make me wish myself laid under mountains.

***Strephon****.*

Meseems I see the high and stately mountains

Transform themselves to low dejected valleys;

Meseems I hear in these ill-changed forests

The nightingales do learn of owls their music;

Meseems I feel the comfort of the morning

Turned to the mortal serene of an evening.

***Klaius****.*

Meseems I see a filthy cloudy evening

As soon as sun begins to climb the mountains;

Meseems I feel a noisome scent, the morning

When I do smell the flowers of these valleys;

Meseems I hear, when I do hear sweet music,

The dreadful cries of murdered men in forests.

***Strephon****,*

I wish to fire the trees of all these forests;

I give the sun a last farewell each evening;

I curse the fiddling finders-out of music;

With envy I do hate the lofty mountains

And with despite despise the humble valleys;

I do detest night, evening, day, and morning.

***Klaius****.*

Curse to myself my prayer is, the morning;

My fire is more than can be made with forests,

My state more base than are the basest valleys;

I wish no evenings more to see, each evening;

Shamed, I hate myself in sight of mountains

And stop mine ears, lest I grow mad with music.

***Strephon****.*

For she, whose parts maintained a perfect music,

Whose beauties shined more than the blushing morning,

Who much did pass in state the stately mountains,

In straightness passed the cedars of the forests,

Hath cast me, wretch, into eternal evening

By taking her two suns from these dark valleys.

***Klaius****.*

For she, with whom compared, the Alps are valleys,

She, whose least word brings from the spheres their music,

At whose approach the sun rose in the evening,

Who, where she went, bare in her forehead morning,

Is gone, is gone from these our spoiled forests,

Turning to deserts our best pastured mountains.

***Strephon***.

These mountains witness shall, so shall these valleys,

***Klaius***

These forests eke, made wretched by our music,

Our morning hymn this is, and song at evening.

[MICHAEL DRAYTON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/michael-drayton)

*Idea* 61

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 wouldst, when all have given him over,

From death to life thou might’st him yet recover!

[SIR WALTER RALEGH](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/sir-walter-ralegh)

The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd[[1]](#footnote-1)

If all the world and love were young,

And truth in every Shepherd’s tongue,

These pretty pleasures might me move,

To live with thee, and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,

When Rivers rage and Rocks grow cold,

And *Philomel* becometh dumb,

The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields,

To wayward winter reckoning yields,

A honey tongue, a heart of gall,

Is fancy’s spring, but sorrow’s fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of Roses,

Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies

Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten:

In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and Ivy buds,

The Coral clasps and amber studs,

All these in me no means can move

To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,

Had joys no date, nor age no need,

Then these delights my mind might move

To live with thee, and be thy love.

The Lie

Go, soul, the body’s guest,

Upon a thankless errand;

Fear not to touch the best;

The truth shall be thy warrant.

Go, since I needs must die,

And give the world the lie.

Say to the court, it glows

And shines like rotten wood;

Say to the church, it shows

What’s good, and doth no good.

If church and court reply,

Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates, they live

Acting by others’ action;

Not loved unless they give,

Not strong but by a faction.

If potentates reply,

Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,

That manage the estate,

Their purpose is ambition,

Their practice only hate.

And if they once reply,

Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most,

They beg for more by spending,

Who, in their greatest cost,

Seek nothing but commending.

And if they make reply,

Then give them all the lie.

Tell zeal it wants devotion;

Tell love it is but lust;

Tell time it is but motion;

Tell flesh it is but dust.

And wish them not reply,

For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth;

Tell honor how it alters;

Tell beauty how she blasteth;

Tell favor how it falters.

And as they shall reply,

Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles

In tickle points of niceness;

Tell wisdom she entangles

Herself in overwiseness.

And when they do reply,

Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness;

Tell skill it is pretension;

Tell charity of coldness;

Tell law it is contention.

And as they do reply,

So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness;

Tell nature of decay;

Tell friendship of unkindness;

Tell justice of delay.

And if they will reply,

Then give them all the lie.

Tell arts they have no soundness,

But vary by esteeming;

Tell schools they want profoundness,

And stand too much on seeming.

If arts and schools reply,

Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it’s fled the city;

Tell how the country erreth;

Tell manhood shakes off pity;

Tell virtue least preferreth.

And if they do reply,

Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I

Commanded thee, done blabbing—

Although to give the lie

Deserves no less than stabbing—

Stab at thee he that will,

No stab the soul can kill.

The Description of Love

Now what is Love, I pray thee, tell?  
It is that fountain and that well  
Where pleasure and repentance dwell;  
It is, perhaps, the sauncing bell  
That tolls all into heaven or hell;  
And this is Love, as I hear tell.  
  
Yet what is Love, I prithee, say?  
It is a work on holiday,  
It is December matched with May,  
When lusty bloods in fresh array  
Hear ten months after of the play;  
And this is Love, as I hear say.  
  
Yet what is Love, good shepherd, sain?  
It is a sunshine mixed with rain,  
It is a toothache or like pain,  
It is a game where none hath gain;  
The lass saith no, yet would full fain;  
And this is Love, as I hear sain.  
  
Yet, shepherd, what is Love, I pray?  
It is a yes, it is a nay,  
A pretty kind of sporting fray,   
It is a thing will soon away.  
Then, nymphs, take vantage while ye may;  
And this is Love, as I hear say.  
  
Yet what is Love, good shepherd, show?  
A thing that creeps, it cannot go,  
A prize that passeth to and fro,  
A thing for one, a thing for moe,  
And he that proves shall find it so;  
And shepherd, this is Love, I trow.

[EDMUND SPENSER](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/edmund-spenser)

*Amoretti* 75

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,

But came the waves and washed it away:

Again I wrote it with a second hand,

But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.

"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain assay,

A mortal thing so to immortalize;

For I myself shall like to this decay,

And eke my name be wiped out likewise."

"Not so," (quod I) "let baser things devise

To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:

My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,

And in the heavens write your glorious name:

Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,

Our love shall live, and later life renew."

[SAMUEL DANIEL](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/samuel-daniel)

*Delia* 45: Care-charmer Sleep

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,

Brother to Death, in silent darkness born:

Relieve my languish, and restore the light,

With dark forgetting of my cares, return;

And let the day be time enough to mourn

The shipwreck of my ill-adventur'd youth:

Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,

Without the torment of the night's untruth.

Cease dreams, th’imagery of our day-desires,

To model forth the passions of the morrow;

Never let rising sun approve you liars,

To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.

Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;

And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

[CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/christopher-marlowe" \t "_blank)

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Come live with me and be my love,

And we will all the pleasures prove,

That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,

Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the Rocks,

Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,

By shallow Rivers to whose falls

Melodious birds sing Madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of Roses

And a thousand fragrant posies,

A cap of flowers, and a kirtle

Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool

Which from our pretty Lambs we pull;

Fair lined slippers for the cold,

With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and Ivy buds,

With Coral clasps and Amber studs:

And if these pleasures may thee move,

Come live with me, and be my love.

The Shepherds’ Swains shall dance and sing

For thy delight each May-morning:

If these delights thy mind may move,

Then live with me, and be my love.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SONGS

When daisies pied and violets blue

And lady-smocks all silver-white

And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue

Do paint the meadows with delight,

The cuckoo then, on every tree,

Mocks married men; for thus sings he, Cuckoo.

(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 5.2.914-19), Spring Song

When icicles hang by the wall

And Dick the shepherd blows his nail

And Tom bears logs into the hall

And milk comes frozen home in pail,

When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul,

Then nightly sings the staring owl, Tu-whit;

Tu-who, a merry note,

While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

(*Love's Labour's Lost*, 5.2.932-39), Winter Song

Full fathom five thy father lies;

Of his bones are coral made;

Those are pearls that were his eyes:

Nothing of him that doth fade

But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell

Hark! now I hear them,--Ding-dong, bell.

(*The Tempest*, 1.2.396), Ariel

Where the bee sucks there suck I;

In a cowslip's bell I lie;

There I couch when owls do cry.

On the bat's back I do fly

After summer merrily.

Merrily, merrily shall I live now

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

(*The Tempest*, 5.1.94-100), Ariel

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?

O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,

That can sing both high and low:

Trip no further, pretty sweeting;

Journeys end in lovers meeting,

Every wise man's son doth know.

(*Twelfth Night*, 2.3.40-5), Feste

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,

Nor the furious winter's rages;

Thou thy worldly task hast done,

Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:

Golden lads and girls all must,

As chimney-sweepers, come to dust...

(From *Cymbeline*, 4.2.324-29)

Sonnets

Sonnet 18: Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

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 ow’st;

Nor shall death brag thou wander’st in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st:

   So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

   So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet 29: When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes

When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes,

I all alone beweep my outcast state,

And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,

And look upon myself and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,

Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,

Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope,

With what I most enjoy contented least;

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,

(Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven’s gate;

       For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings

       That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Sonnet 20: A woman’s face with nature’s own hand painted

A woman’s face with nature’s own hand painted

Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;

A woman’s gentle heart, but not acquainted

With shifting change as is false women’s fashion;

An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,

Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;

A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,

Which steals men’s eyes and women’s souls amazeth.

And for a woman wert thou first created,

Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,

And by addition me of thee defeated

By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.

      But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,

      Mine be thy love and thy love’s use their treasure.

Sonnet 30: When to the sessions of sweet silent thought

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought

I summon up remembrance of things past,

I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,

And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:

Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,

For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,

And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,

And moan th' expense of many a vanish'd sight;

Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,

And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er

The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,

Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,

All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

Sonnet 55: Not marble nor the gilded monuments

Not marble nor the gilded monuments

Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,

But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,

And broils root out the work of masonry,

Nor Mars his sword nor war’s quick fire shall burn

The living record of your memory.

’Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity

Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room

Even in the eyes of all posterity

That wear this world out to the ending doom.

    So, till the Judgement that yourself arise,

    You live in this, and dwell in lovers’ eyes.

Sonnet 60: Like as the waves make towards the pebbl'd shore

Like as the waves make towards the pebbl'd shore,

So do our minutes hasten to their end;

Each changing place with that which goes before,

In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

Nativity, once in the main of light,

Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,

Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,

And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.

Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth

And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,

Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,

And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:

And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,

Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

Sonnet 73: That time of year thou mayst in me behold

That time of year thou mayst in me behold

When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang

Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day

As after sunset fadeth in the west,

Which by and by black night doth take away,

Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

As the death-bed whereon it must expire,

Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,

To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Sonnet 94: They that have power to hurt and will do none

They that have power to hurt and will do none,

That do not do the thing they most do show,

Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,

Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow:

They rightly do inherit heaven's graces

And husband nature's riches from expense;

They are the lords and owners of their faces,

Others but stewards of their excellence.

The summer's flower is to the summer sweet

Though to itself it only live and die,

But if that flower with base infection meet,

The basest weed outbraves his dignity:

For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;

Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

Sonnet 116

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-fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wand'ring 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 even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me prov'd,

I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

Sonnet 129: Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame

Is lust in action; and till action, lust

Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,

Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,

Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight,

Past reason hunted; and, no sooner had

Past reason hated as a swallowed bait

On purpose laid to make the taker mad;

Mad in pursuit 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.

Sonnet 130: My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red than her lips' red;

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,

But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

That music hath a far more pleasing sound;

I grant I never saw a goddess go;

My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

   And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

   As any she belied with false compare.

Sonnet 138: When my love swears that she is made of truth

When my love swears that she is made of truth,

I do believe her, though I know she lies,

That she might think me some untutored youth,

Unlearnèd in the world’s false subtleties.

Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,

Although she knows my days are past the best,

Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:

On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.

But wherefore says she not she is unjust?

And wherefore say not I that I am old?

Oh, love’s best habit is in seeming trust,

And age in love loves not to have years told.

    Therefore I lie with her and she with me,

    And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

Sonnet 144: Two loves I have of comfort and despair

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,

Which like two spirits do suggest me still

The better angel is a man right fair,

The worser spirit a woman coloured ill.

To win me soon to hell, my female evil

Tempteth my better angel from my side,

And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,

Wooing his purity with her foul pride.

And, whether that my angel be turn’d fiend,

Suspect I may, yet not directly tell,

But being both from me both to each friend,

I guess one angel in another’s hell.

   Yet this shall I ne’er know, but live in doubt,

   Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

Sonnet 147: My love is as a fever, longing still

My love is as a fever, longing still

For that which longer nurseth the disease,

Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,

Th’ uncertain sickly appetite to please.

My reason, the physician to my love,

Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,

Hath left me, and I desperate now approve

Desire is death, which physic did except.

Past cure I am, now reason is past care,

And frantic-mad with evermore unrest;

My thoughts and my discourse as madmen’s are,

At random from the truth vainly expressed:

    For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,

    Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

[THOMAS CAMPION](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/thomas-campion)

My Sweetest Lesbia

My sweetest Lesbia, let us live and love,

And though the sager sort our deeds reprove,

Let us not weigh them. Heaven’s great lamps do dive

Into their west, and straight again revive,

But soon as once set is our little light,

Then must we sleep one ever-during night.

If all would lead their lives in love like me,

Then bloody swords and armor should not be;

No drum nor trumpet peaceful sleeps should move,

Unless alarm came from the camp of love.

But fools do live, and waste their little light,

And seek with pain their ever-during night.

When timely death my life and fortune ends,

Let not my hearse be vexed with mourning friends,

But let all lovers, rich in triumph, come

And with sweet pastimes grace my happy tomb;

And Lesbia, close up thou my little light,

And crown with love my ever-during night.

Rose-Cheeked Laura

Rose-cheek'd Laura, come,

Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's

Silent music, either other

Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow

From concent divinely framed;

Heav'n is music, and thy beauty's

Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing

Discords need for helps to grace them;

Only beauty purely loving

Knows no discord,

But still moves delight,

Like clear springs renew'd by flowing,

Ever perfect, ever in them-

Selves eternal.

[BEN JONSON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/ben-jonson)

Still to be neat, still to be dressed

Still to be neat, still to be dressed,

As you were going to a feast;

Still to be powdered, still perfumed;

Lady, it is to be presumed,

Though art's hid causes are not found,

All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face,

That makes simplicity a grace;

Robes loosely flowing, hair as free;

Such sweet neglect more taketh me

Than all th'adulteries of art.

They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

Song 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.

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.

JOHN DONNE

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

   As virtuous men pass mildly away,

   And whisper to their souls to go,

Whilst some of their sad friends do say

   The breath goes now, and some say, No:

So let us melt, and make no noise,

   No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;

'Twere profanation of our joys

   To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,

   Men reckon what it did, and meant;

But trepidation of the spheres,

   Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love

   (Whose soul is sense) cannot admit

Absence, because it doth remove

   Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,

   That our selves know not what it is,

Inter-assured of the mind,

   Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,

   Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion,

   Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so

   As stiff twin compasses are two;

Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show

   To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,

   Yet when the other far doth roam,

It leans and hearkens after it,

   And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,

   Like th' other foot, obliquely run;

Thy firmness makes my circle just,

   And makes me end where I begun.

The Flea

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,

How little that which thou deniest me is;

It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,

And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;

Thou know’st that this cannot be said

A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,

    Yet this enjoys before it woo,

    And pampered swells with one blood made of two,

    And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,

Where we almost, nay more than married are.

This flea is you and I, and this

Our mariage bed, and marriage temple is;

Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,

And cloistered in these living walls of jet.

    Though use make you apt to kill me,

    Let not to that, self-murder added be,

    And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since

Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?

Wherein could this flea guilty be,

Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?

Yet thou triumph’st, and say'st that thou

Find’st not thy self, nor me the weaker now;

    ’Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:

    Just so much honor, when thou yield’st to me,

    Will waste, as this flea’s death took life from thee.

*Holy Sonnets*: Batter my heart

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you

As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;

That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend

Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.

I, like an usurp'd town to another due,

Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;

Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,

But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.

Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,

But am betroth'd unto your enemy;

Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,

Take me to you, imprison me, for I,

Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,

Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

*Holy Sonnets*: Death, be not proud

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

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

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

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

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well

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

One short sleep past, we wake eternally

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

[GEORGE HERBERT](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/george-herbert)

Jordan (I)

Who says that fictions only and false hair

Become a verse? Is there in truth no beauty?

Is all good structure in a winding stair?

May no lines pass, except they do their duty

Not to a true, but painted chair?

Is it no verse, except enchanted groves

And sudden arbours shadow coarse-spun lines?

Must purling streams refresh a lover's loves?

Must all be veil'd, while he that reads, divines,

Catching the sense at two removes?

Shepherds are honest people; let them sing;

Riddle who list, for me, and pull for prime;

I envy no man's nightingale or spring;

Nor let them punish me with loss of rhyme,

Who plainly say, *my God, my King.*

The Collar

I struck the board, and cried, "No more;

                         I will abroad!

What? shall I ever sigh and pine?

My lines and life are free, free as the road,

Loose as the wind, as large as store.

          Shall I be still in suit?

Have I no harvest but a thorn

To let me blood, and not restore

What I have lost with cordial fruit?

          Sure there was wine

Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn

    Before my tears did drown it.

      Is the year only lost to me?

          Have I no bays to crown it,

No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?

                  All wasted?

Not so, my heart; but there is fruit,

            And thou hast hands.

Recover all thy sigh-blown age

On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute

Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage,

             Thy rope of sands,

Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee

Good cable, to enforce and draw,

          And be thy law,

While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.

          Away! take heed;

          I will abroad.

Call in thy death's-head there; tie up thy fears;

          He that forbears

         To suit and serve his need

          Deserves his load."

But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild

          At every word,

Methought I heard one calling, *Child!*

          And I replied *My Lord.*

Love (III)

Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back

                              Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack

                             From my first entrance in,

Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,

                             If I lacked any thing.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:

                             Love said, You shall be he.

I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,

                             I cannot look on thee.

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,

                             Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame

                             Go where it doth deserve.

And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?

                             My dear, then I will serve.

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:

                             So I did sit and eat.

ROBERT HERRICK

The Argument of his Book

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,

Of April, May, of June, and July flowers.

I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,

Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal-cakes.

I write of youth, of love, and have access

By these to sing of cleanly wantonness.

I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece

Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris.

I sing of Time's trans-shifting; and I write

How roses first came red, and lilies white.

I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing

The court of Mab, and of the fairy king.

I write of Hell; I sing (and ever shall)

Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

Upon Julia's Clothes

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,

Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows

That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see

That brave vibration each way free,

O how that glittering taketh me!

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

Enthrals the crimson stomacher;

A cuff neglectful, and thereby

Ribands 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.

To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,

Old Time is still a-flying;

And this same flower that smiles today

Tomorrow 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.

That 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 forever tarry.

Corinna's going a Maying

Get up, get up for shame, the Blooming Morne

Upon her wings presents the god unshorne.

                     See how *Aurora* throwes her faire

                     Fresh-quilted colours through the aire:

                     Get up, sweet-Slug-a-bed, and see

                     The Dew-bespangling Herbe and Tree.

Each Flower has wept, and bow'd toward the East,

Above an houre since; yet you not drest,

                     Nay! not so much as out of bed?

                     When all the Birds have Mattens seyd,

                     And sung their thankful Hymnes: 'tis sin,

                     Nay, profanation to keep in,

When as a thousand Virgins on this day,

Spring, sooner than the Lark, to fetch in May.

Rise; and put on your Foliage, and be seene

To come forth, like the Spring-time, fresh and greene;

                     And sweet as *Flora*. Take no care

                     For Jewels for your Gowne, or Haire:

                     Feare not; the leaves will strew

                     Gemms in abundance upon you:

Besides, the childhood of the Day has kept,

Against you come, some *Orient Pearls* unwept:

                     Come, and receive them while the light

                     Hangs on the Dew-locks of the night:

                     And *Titan* on the Eastern hill

                     Retires himselfe, or else stands still

Till you come forth. Wash, dresse, be briefe in praying:

Few Beads are best, when once we goe a Maying.

Come, my *Corinna*, come; and comming, marke

How each field turns a street; each street a Parke

                     Made green, and trimm'd with trees: see how

                     Devotion gives each House a Bough,

                     Or Branch: Each Porch, each doore, ere this,

                     An Arke a Tabernacle is

Made up of white-thorn neatly enterwove;

As if here were those cooler shades of love.

                     Can such delights be in the street,

                     And open fields, and we not see't?

                     Come, we'll abroad; and let's obay

                     The Proclamation made for May:

And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;

But my *Corinna*, come, let's goe a Maying.

There's not a budding Boy, or Girle, this day,

But is got up, and gone to bring in May.

                     A deale of Youth, ere this, is come

                     Back, and with *White-thorn* laden home.

                     Some have dispatcht their Cakes and Creame,

                     Before that we have left to dreame:

And some have wept, and woo'd, and plighted Troth,

And chose their Priest, ere we can cast off sloth:

                     Many a green-gown has been given;

                     Many a kisse, both odde and even:

                     Many a glance too has been sent

                     From out the eye, Loves Firmament:

Many a jest told of the Keyes betraying

This night, and Locks pickt, yet w'are not a Maying.

Come, let us goe, while we are in our prime;

And take the harmlesse follie of the time.

                     We shall grow old apace, and die

                     Before we know our liberty.

                     Our life is short; and our dayes run

                     As fast away as do's the Sunne:

And as a vapour, or a drop of raine

Once lost, can ne'r be found againe:

                     So when or you or I are made

                     A fable, song, or fleeting shade;

                     All love, all liking, all delight

                     Lies drown'd with us in endlesse night.

Then while time serves, and we are but decaying;

Come, my *Corinna*, come, let's goe a Maying.

[EDMUND WALLER](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/edmund-waller)

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!

[RICHARD LOVELACE](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/richard-lovelace)

To Althea, from Prison

When Love with unconfinèd wings

Hovers within my Gates,

And my divine *Althea* brings

To whisper at the Grates;

When I lie tangled in her hair,

And fettered to her eye,

The Gods that wanton in the Air,

Know no such Liberty.

When flowing Cups run swiftly round

With no allaying *Thames*,

Our careless heads with Roses bound,

Our hearts with Loyal Flames;

When thirsty grief in Wine we steep,

When Healths and draughts go free,

Fishes that tipple in the Deep

Know no such Liberty.

When (like committed linnets) I

With shriller throat shall sing

The sweetness, Mercy, Majesty,

And glories of my King;

When I shall voice aloud how good

He is, how Great should be,

Enlargèd Winds, that curl the Flood,

Know no such Liberty.

Stone Walls do not a Prison make,

Nor Iron bars a Cage;

Minds innocent and quiet take

That for an Hermitage.

If I have freedom in my Love,

And in my soul am free,

Angels alone that soar above,

Enjoy such Liberty.

ANDREW MARVELL

To His Coy Mistress

Had we but world enough and time,

This coyness, lady, were no crime.

We would sit down, and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love’s day.

Thou by the Indian Ganges’ side

Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide

Of Humber would complain. I would

Love you ten years before the flood,

And you should, if you please, refuse

Till the conversion of the Jews.

My vegetable love should grow

Vaster than empires and more slow;

An hundred years should go to praise

Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;

Two hundred to adore each breast,

But thirty thousand to the rest;

An age at least to every part,

And the last age should show your heart.

For, lady, you deserve this state,

Nor would I love at lower rate.

       But at my back I always hear

Time’s wingèd chariot hurrying near;

And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity.

Thy beauty shall no more be found;

Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound

My echoing song; then worms shall try

That long-preserved virginity,

And your quaint honour turn to dust,

And into ashes all my lust;

The grave’s a fine and private place,

But none, I think, do there embrace.

       Now therefore, while the youthful hue

Sits on thy skin like morning dew,

And while thy willing soul transpires

At every pore with instant fires,

Now let us sport us while we may,

And now, like amorous birds of prey,

Rather at once our time devour

Than languish in his slow-chapped power.

Let us roll all our strength and all

Our sweetness up into one ball,

And tear our pleasures with rough strife

Through the iron gates of life:

Thus, though we cannot make our sun

Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Damon the Mower

Hark how the Mower Damon sung,

With love of Juliana stung!

While everything did seem to paint

The scene more fit for his complaint.

Like her fair eyes the day was fair,

But scorching like his am’rous care.

Sharp like his scythe his sorrow was,

And withered like his hopes the grass.

‘Oh what unusual heats are here,

Which thus our sunburned meadows sear!

The grasshopper its pipe gives o’er;

And hamstringed frogs can dance no more.

But in the brook the green frog wades;

And grasshoppers seek out the shades.

Only the snake, that kept within,

Now glitters in its second skin.

‘This heat the sun could never raise,

Nor Dog Star so inflame the days.

It from an higher beauty grow’th,

Which burns the fields and mower both:

Which mads the dog, and makes the sun

Hotter than his own Phaëton.

Not July causeth these extremes,

But Juliana’s scorching beams.

‘Tell me where I may pass the fires

Of the hot day, or hot desires.

To what cool cave shall I descend,

Or to what gelid fountain bend?

Alas! I look for ease in vain,

When remedies themselves complain.

No moisture but my tears do rest,

Nor cold but in her icy breast.

‘How long wilt thou, fair shepherdess,

Esteem me, and my presents less?

To thee the harmless snake I bring,

Disarmèd of its teeth and sting;

To thee chameleons, changing hue,

And oak leaves tipped with honey dew.

Yet thou, ungrateful, hast not sought

Nor what they are, nor who them brought.

‘I am the Mower Damon, known

Through all the meadows I have mown.

On me the morn her dew distills

Before her darling daffodils.

And, if at noon my toil me heat,

The sun himself licks off my sweat.

While, going home, the evening sweet

In cowslip-water bathes my feet.

‘What, though the piping shepherd stock

The plains with an unnumbered flock,

This scythe of mine discovers wide

More ground than all his sheep do hide.

With this the golden fleece I shear

Of all these closes every year.

And though in wool more poor than they,

Yet am I richer far in hay.

‘Nor am I so deformed to sight,

If in my scythe I lookèd right;

In which I see my picture done,

As in a crescent moon the sun.

The deathless fairies take me oft

To lead them in their dances soft:

And, when I tune myself to sing,

About me they contract their ring.

‘How happy might I still have mowed,

Had not Love here his thistles sowed!

But now I all the day complain,

Joining my labour to my pain;

And with my scythe cut down the grass,

Yet still my grief is where it was:

But, when the iron blunter grows,

Sighing, I whet my scythe and woes.’

While thus he threw his elbow round,

Depopulating all the ground,

And, with his whistling scythe, does cut

Each stroke between the earth and root,

The edgèd steel by careless chance

Did into his own ankle glance;

And there among the grass fell down,

By his own scythe, the Mower mown.

‘Alas!’ said he, ‘these hurts are slight

To those that die by love’s despite.

With shepherd’s-purse, and clown’s-all-heal,

The blood I staunch, and wound I seal.

Only for him no cure is found,

Whom Juliana’s eyes do wound.

’Tis death alone that this must do:

For Death thou art a Mower too.’

[JOHN MILTON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/john-milton)

When I consider how my light is spent

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

   Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

   My true account, lest he returning chide;

   “Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”

   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 mild 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 wait.”

Sonnet 23: Methought I saw my late espoused saint

Methought I saw my late espoused saint

       Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave,

       Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,

       Rescu'd from death by force, though pale and faint.

Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint

       Purification in the old Law did save,

       And such as yet once more I trust to have

       Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,

Came vested all in white, pure as her mind;

       Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight

       Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd

So clear as in no face with more delight.

       But Oh! as to embrace me she inclin'd,

       I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

[JOHN DRYDEN](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/john-dryden)

Absalom and Achitophel (opening lines)

In pious times, ere priest-craft did begin,

Before polygamy was made a sin;

When man, on many, multipli'd his kind,

Ere one to one was cursedly confin'd:

When Nature prompted, and no Law deni'd

Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;

Then, Israel's monarch, after Heaven's own heart,

His vigorous warmth did variously impart

To wives and slaves: and, wide as his command,

Scatter'd his Maker's image through the land.

[JONATHAN SWIFT](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/jonathan-swift)

A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General

His Grace! impossible! what dead!

Of old age too, and in his bed!

And could that mighty warrior fall?

And so inglorious, after all!

Well, since he’s gone, no matter how,

The last loud trump must wake him now:

And, trust me, as the noise grows stronger,

He’d wish to sleep a little longer.

And could he be indeed so old

As by the newspapers we’re told?

Threescore, I think, is pretty high;

’Twas time in conscience he should die.

This world he cumbered long enough;

He burnt his candle to the snuff;

And that’s the reason, some folks think,

He left behind so great a stink.

Behold his funeral appears,

Nor widow’s sighs, nor orphan’s tears,

Wont at such times each heart to pierce,

Attend the progress of his hearse.

But what of that, his friends may say,

He had those honours in his day.

True to his profit and his pride,

He made them weep before he died.

    Come hither, all ye empty things,

Ye bubbles raised by breath of kings;

Who float upon the tide of state,

Come hither, and behold your fate.

Let pride be taught by this rebuke,

How very mean a thing’s a Duke;

From all his ill-got honours flung,

Turned to that dirt from whence he sprung.

On Stella's Birth-day

     Stella this Day is thirty four,

(We won't dispute a Year or more)

However Stella, be not troubled,

Although thy Size and Years are doubled,

Since first I saw Thee at Sixteen

The brightest Virgin of the Green,

So little is thy Form declin'd

Made up so largely in thy Mind.

Oh, would it please the Gods to split

Thy Beauty, Size, and Years, and Wit,

No Age could furnish out a Pair

Of Nymphs so gracefull, Wise and fair

With half the Lustre of Your Eyes,

With half thy Wit, thy Years and Size:

And then before it grew too late,

How should I beg of gentle Fate,

(That either Nymph might have her Swain,)

To split my Worship too in twain.

THOMAS GRAY

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,

         The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,

The plowman homeward plods his weary way,

         And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,

         And all the air a solemn stillness holds,

Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,

         And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r

         The moping owl does to the moon complain

Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,

         Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,

         Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,

Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,

         The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,

         The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,

The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,

         No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,

         Or busy housewife ply her evening care:

No children run to lisp their sire's return,

         Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,

         Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;

How jocund did they drive their team afield!

         How 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 pow'r,

         And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,

Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.

         The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,

         If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,

Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault

         The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust

         Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?

Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,

         Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid

         Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;

Hands, that the rod of empire might have 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 flow'r is born to blush unseen,

         And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast

         The little tyrant of his fields withstood;

Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,

         Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,

         The threats of pain and ruin to despise,

To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,

         And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone

         Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;

Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,

         And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,

         To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,

Or heap the shrine of Luxury 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 tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n 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, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,

         Some pious drops the closing eye requires;

Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,

         Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' 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 noontide would he stretch,

         And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,

         Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,

Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,

         Or craz'd 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 fav'rite tree;

Another came; nor yet beside the rill,

         Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array

         Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.

Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,

         Grav'd 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,*

*Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:*

*He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,*

*He gain'd from Heav'n ('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.*

[SAMUEL JOHNSON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/samuel-johnson)

On the Death of Dr. Robert Levet

Condemned to Hope’s delusive mine,

    As on we toil from day to day,

By sudden blasts, or slow decline,

    Our social comforts drop away.

Well tried through many a varying year,

    See Levet to the grave descend;

Officious, innocent, sincere,

    Of every friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills Affection’s eye,

    Obscurely wise, and coarsely kind;

Nor, lettered Arrogance, deny

    Thy praise to merit unrefined.

When fainting Nature called for aid,

    And hovering Death prepared the blow,

His vigorous remedy displayed

    The power of art without the show.

In Misery’s darkest cavern known,

    His useful care was ever nigh,

Where hopeless Anguish poured his groan,

    And lonely Want retired to die.

No summons mocked by chill delay,

    No petty gain disdained by pride,

The modest wants of every day

    The toil of every day supplied.

His virtues walked their narrow round,

    Nor made a pause, nor left a void;

And sure the Eternal Master found

    The single talent well employed.

The busy day, the peaceful night,

    Unfelt, uncounted, glided by;

His frame was firm, his powers were bright,

    Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then with no throbbing fiery pain,

    No cold gradations of decay,

Death broke at once the vital chain,

    And freed his soul the nearest way.

[ROBERT BURNS](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/robert-burns)

To a Mouse

*On Turning up in Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785*

Wee, sleeket, cowran, tim’rous beastie,

O, what a panic’s in thy breastie!

Thou need na start awa sae hasty,

          Wi’ bickerin brattle!

I wad be laith to rin an’ chase thee

          Wi’ murd’ring pattle!

I’m truly sorry Man’s dominion

Has broken Nature’s social union,

An’ justifies that ill opinion,

          Which makes thee startle,

At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,

          An’ fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;

What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!

A daimen-icker in a thrave

          ’S a sma’ request:

I’ll get a blessin wi’ the lave,

          An’ never miss ’t!

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!

It’s silly wa’s the win’s are strewin!

An’ naething, now, to big a new ane,

          O’ foggage green!

An’ bleak December’s winds ensuin,

          Baith snell an’ keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an’ waste,

An’ weary Winter comin fast,

An’ cozie here, beneath the blast,

          Thou thought to dwell,

Till crash! the cruel coulter past

          Out thro’ thy cell.

That wee-bit heap o’ leaves an’ stibble

Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!

Now thou’s turn’d out, for a’ thy trouble,

          But house or hald,

To thole the Winter’s sleety dribble,

          An’ cranreuch cauld!

But Mousie, thou art no thy-lane,

In proving foresight may be vain:

The best laid schemes o’ Mice an’ Men

          Gang aft agley,

An’ lea’e us nought but grief an’ pain,

          For promis’d joy!

Still, thou art blest, compar’d wi’ me!

The present only toucheth thee:

But Och! I backward cast my e’e,

          On prospects drear!

An’ forward tho’ I canna see,

          I guess an’ fear!

"John Anderson my jo, John"

John Anderson my jo, John,

    When we were first acquent,

Your locks were like the raven,

      Your bonie brow was brent;

But now your brow is beld, John,

      Your locks are like the snaw,

but blessings on your frosty pow,

      John Anderson, my jo!

John Anderson my jo, John,

      We clamb the hill thegither,

And monie a cantie day, John,

      We've had wi' ane anither;

Now we maun totter down, John,

      And hand in hand we'll go,

And sleep thegither at the foot,

      John Anderson, my jo!

Ye Flowery Banks (Bonie Doon)

Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,

         How can ye blume sae fair?

How can ye chant, ye little birds,

         And I sae fu' o' care?

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,

         That sings upon the bough;

Thou minds me o' the happy days,

         When my fause love was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,

         That sings beside thy mate;

For sae I sat, and sae I sang,

         And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon

         To see the wood-bine twine,

And ilka bird sang o' its luve,

         And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose

         Frae aff its thorny tree;

And my fause luver staw my rose

         But left the thorn wi' me.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The Chimney-Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,

And my father sold me while yet my tongue

Could scarcely cry ‘Weep! weep! weep! weep!'

So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,

That curled like a lamb’s back, was shaved; so I said,

‘Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head’s bare,

You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.'

And so he was quiet, and that very night,

As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!--

That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,

Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

And by came an angel, who had a bright key,

And he opened the coffins, and set them all free;

Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run

And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,

They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind;

And the angel told Tom, if he’d be a good boy,

He’d have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,

And got with our bags and our brushes to work.

Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm:

So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

The Tyger

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright

In the forests of the night,

What immortal hand or eye

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies

Burnt the fire of thine eyes?

On what wings dare he aspire?

What the hand, dare sieze the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,

Could twist the sinews of thy heart?

And when thy heart began to beat,

What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?

In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? what dread grasp

Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,

And water’d heaven with their tears,

Did he smile his work to see?

Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright

In the forests of the night,

What immortal hand or eye

Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

London

I wander thro’ each charter’d street,

Near where the charter’d Thames does flow,

And mark in every face I meet

Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,

In every Infant’s cry of fear,

In every voice, in every ban,

The mind-forg’d manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper’s cry

Every blackning Church appalls;

And the hapless Soldier’s sigh

Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro’ midnight streets I hear

How the youthful Harlot’s curse

Blasts the new-born Infant’s tear,

And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

A Poison Tree

I was angry with my friend:

I told my wrath, my wrath did end.

I was angry with my foe:

I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears

Night and morning with my tears,

And I sunned it with smiles

And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,

Till it bore an apple bright,

And my foe beheld it shine,

And he knew that it was mine,--

And into my garden stole

When the night had veiled the pole;

In the morning, glad, I see

My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

[WILLIAM WORDSWORTH](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/william-wordsworth)

Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters! and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,

That on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose

Here, under this dark sycamore, and view

These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,

Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves

'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see

These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,

Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke

Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!

With some uncertain notice, as might seem

Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,

Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire

The Hermit sits alone.

                                              These beauteous forms,

Through a long absence, have not been to me

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;

And passing even into my purer mind

With tranquil restoration:—feelings too

Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,

As have no slight or trivial influence

On that best portion of a good man's life,

His little, nameless, unremembered, acts

Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,

To them I may have owed another gift,

Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world,

Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,—

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame

And even the motion of our human blood

Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,

We see into the life of things.

                                                        If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—

In darkness and amid the many shapes

Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir

Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,

Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,

O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,

         How often has my spirit turned to thee!

   And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,

With many recognitions dim and faint,

And somewhat of a sad perplexity,

The picture of the mind revives again:

While here I stand, not only with the sense

Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts

That in this moment there is life and food

For future years. And so I dare to hope,

Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides

Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,

Wherever nature led: more like a man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days

And their glad animal movements all gone by)

To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,

Their colours and their forms, were then to me

An appetite; a feeling and a love,

That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, not any interest

Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,

And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this

Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts

Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,

Abundant recompense. For I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes

The still sad music of humanity,

Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power

To chasten and subdue.—And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:

A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,

And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still

A lover of the meadows and the woods

And mountains; and of all that we behold

From this green earth; of all the mighty world

Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,

And what perceive; well pleased to recognise

In nature and the language of the sense

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul

Of all my moral being.

                                            Nor perchance,

If I were not thus taught, should I the more

Suffer my genial spirits to decay:

For thou art with me here upon the banks

Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,

My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch

The language of my former heart, and read

My former pleasures in the shooting lights

Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while

May I behold in thee what I was once,

My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,

Knowing that Nature never did betray

The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,

Through all the years of this our life, to lead

From joy to joy: for she can so inform

The mind that is within us, so impress

With quietness and beauty, and so feed

With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,

Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all

The dreary intercourse of daily life,

Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb

Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold

Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;

And let the misty mountain-winds be free

To blow against thee: and, in after years,

When these wild ecstasies shall be matured

Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind

Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,

Thy memory be as a dwelling-place

For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,

Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,

And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—

If I should be where I no more can hear

Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget

That on the banks of this delightful stream

We stood together; and that I, so long

A worshipper of Nature, hither came

Unwearied in that service: rather say

With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal

Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,

That after many wanderings, many years

Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,

And this green pastoral landscape, were to me

More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

A Slumber did my Spirit Seal

A slumber did my spirit seal;

I had no human fears:

She seemed a thing that could not feel

The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;

She neither hears nor sees;

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,

With rocks, and stones, and trees.

She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways

She dwelt among the untrodden ways

Beside the springs of Dove,

A Maid whom there were none to praise

And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone

Half hidden from the eye!

—Fair as a star, when only one

Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know

When Lucy ceased to be;

But she is in her grave, and, oh,

The difference to me!

The World Is Too Much With Us

The world is too much with us; late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;

The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. Great God! I’d rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

The Solitary Reaper

Behold her, single in the field,

Yon solitary Highland Lass!

Reaping and singing by herself;

Stop here, or gently pass!

Alone she cuts and binds the grain,

And sings a melancholy strain;

O listen! for the Vale profound

Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt

More welcome notes to weary bands

Of travellers in some shady haunt,

Among Arabian sands:

A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard

In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,

Breaking the silence of the seas

Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—

Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow

For old, unhappy, far-off things,

And battles long ago:

Or is it some more humble lay,

Familiar matter of to-day?

Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,

That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang

As if her song could have no ending;

I saw her singing at her work,

And o'er the sickle bending;—

I listened, motionless and still;

And, as I mounted up the hill,

The music in my heart I bore,

Long after it was heard no more.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine

And twinkle on the milky way,

They stretched in never-ending line

Along the margin of a bay:

Ten thousand saw I at a glance,

Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they

Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:

A poet could not but be gay,

In such a jocund company:

I gazed—and gazed—but little thought

What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie

In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude;

And then my heart with pleasure fills,

And dances with the daffodils.

[SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/samuel-taylor-coleridge)

Kubla Khan

*Or, a vision in a dream. A Fragment.*

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 blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills,

Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! 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 reached the caverns measureless to man,

And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;

And ’mid this tumult Kubla heard from far

Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure

Floated midway on the waves;

Where was heard the mingled measure

From the fountain and the caves.

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,

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.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

When We Two Parted

When we two parted

In silence and tears,

Half broken-hearted

To sever for years,

Pale grew thy cheek and cold,

Colder thy kiss;

Truly that hour foretold

Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning

Sunk chill on my brow--

It felt like the warning

Of what I feel now.

Thy vows are all broken,

And light is thy fame;

I hear thy name spoken,

And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,

A knell to mine ear;

A shudder comes o’er me--

Why wert thou so dear?

They know not I knew thee,

Who knew thee too well--

Long, long shall I rue thee,

Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met--

In silence I grieve,

That thy heart could forget,

Thy spirit deceive.

If I should meet thee

After long years,

How should I greet thee?--

With silence and tears.

She Walks in Beauty

I.

She walks in beauty, like the night

Of cloudless climes and starry skies;

And all that’s best of dark and bright

Meet in her aspect and her eyes:

Thus mellowed to that tender light

Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

II.

One shade the more, one ray the less,

Had half impaired the nameless grace

Which waves in every raven tress,

Or softly lightens o’er her face;

Where thoughts serenely sweet express

How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

III.

And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,

So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,

The smiles that win, the tints that glow,

But tell of days in goodness spent,

A mind at peace with all below,

A heart whose love is innocent!

So We'll Go No More a Roving

So, we'll go no more a roving

   So late into the night,

Though the heart be still as loving,

   And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,

   And the soul wears out the breast,

And the heart must pause to breathe,

   And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,

   And the day returns too soon,

Yet we'll go no more a roving

   By the light of the moon.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Ode to the West Wind

**I**

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,

Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead

Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,

Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,

Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,

Each like a corpse within its grave, until

Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill

(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)

With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;

Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh 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 aëry surge,

Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge

Of the horizon to the zenith's height,

The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night

Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,

Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere

Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

**III**

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams

The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,

Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,

And saw in sleep old palaces and towers

Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers

So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou

For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below

The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear

The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,

And tremble and despoil themselves: oh 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 seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.

Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd

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 wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!

And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth

Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land,

Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,

Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;

And on the pedestal, these words appear:

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

England in 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King;

Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow

Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring;

Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,

But leechlike to their fainting country cling

Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow.

A people starved and stabbed in th' untilled field;

An army, whom liberticide and prey

Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield;

Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;

Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;

A senate, Time’s worst statute, unrepealed—

Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may

Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

To ----

One word is too often profaned

For me to profane it,

One feeling too falsely disdained

For thee to disdain it;

One hope is too like despair

For prudence to smother,

And pity from thee more dear

Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,

But wilt thou accept not

The worship the heart lifts above

And the Heavens reject not,—

The desire of the moth for the star,

Of the night for the morrow,

The devotion to something afar

From the sphere of our sorrow?

[JOHN KEATS](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/john-keats)

Ode to a Nightingale

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

         My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

         One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,

         But being too happy in thine happiness,—

                That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees

                        In some melodious plot

         Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,

                Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been

         Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,

Tasting of Flora and the country green,

         Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,

         Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,

                With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,

                        And purple-stained mouth;

         That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,

                And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget

         What thou among the leaves hast never known,

The weariness, the fever, and the fret

         Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,

         Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;

                Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

                        And leaden-eyed despairs,

         Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

                Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,

         Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

         Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

Already with thee! tender is the night,

         And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,

                Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;

                        But here there is no light,

         Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown

                Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,

         Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet

         Wherewith the seasonable month endows

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;

         White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

                Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;

                        And mid-May's eldest child,

         The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,

                The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time

         I have been half in love with easeful Death,

Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,

         To take into the air my quiet breath;

                Now more than ever seems it rich to die,

         To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

                While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad

                        In such an ecstasy!

         Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—

                   To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!

         No hungry generations tread thee down;

The voice I hear this passing night was heard

         In ancient days by emperor and clown:

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path

         Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,

                She stood in tears amid the alien corn;

                        The same that oft-times hath

         Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam

                Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell

         To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well

         As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades

         Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

                Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep

                        In the next valley-glades:

         Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

                Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

Ode on a Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd 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-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape

       Of deities or mortals, or of both,

               In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

       What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

               What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

       Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,

       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 enjoy'd,

                For ever panting, and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,

         That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,

                A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?

         To what green altar, O mysterious priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,

         And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?

What little town by river or sea shore,

         Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

                Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore

         Will silent be; and not a soul to tell

                Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede

         Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

With forest branches and the trodden weed;

         Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

         When old age shall this generation waste,

                Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

         "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all

                Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Ode on Melancholy

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist

       Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;

Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd

       By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;

               Make not your rosary of yew-berries,

       Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be

               Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl

A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;

       For shade to shade will come too drowsily,

               And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall

       Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,

That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,

       And hides the green hill in an April shroud;

Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,

       Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,

               Or on the wealth of globed peonies;

Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,

       Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,

               And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;

       And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips

Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,

       Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:

Ay, in the very temple of Delight

       Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,

               Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue

       Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;

His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,

               And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be

When I have fears that I may cease to be

   Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,

Before high-pilèd books, in charactery,

   Hold like rich garners the full ripened grain;

When I behold, upon the night’s starred face,

   Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,

And think that I may never live to trace

   Their shadows with the magic hand of chance;

And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,

   That I shall never look upon thee more,

Never have relish in the faery power

   Of unreflecting love—then on the shore

Of the wide world I stand alone, and think

Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,

And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;

Round many western islands have I been

Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

Oft of one wide expanse had I been told

That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene

Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

When a new planet swims into his ken;

Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes

He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men

Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—

Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

The Kraken

Below the thunders of the upper deep,

Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,

His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep

The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee

About his shadowy sides; above him swell

Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;

And far away into the sickly light,

From many a wondrous grot and secret cell

Unnumbered and enormous polypi

Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.

There hath he lain for ages, and will lie

Battening upon huge sea worms in his sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;

Then once by man and angels to be seen,

In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

The Lady of Shalott (1842)

**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 gray walls, and four gray 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 flitteth 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 thro' 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 on 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.

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 seër 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.

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 cross'd 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."

*From* *The Princess*: Tears, Idle Tears

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,

Tears from the depth of some divine despair

Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,

In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,

And thinking of the days that are no more.

         Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,

That brings our friends up from the underworld,

Sad as the last which reddens over one

That sinks with all we love below the verge;

So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

         Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns

The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds

To dying ears, when unto dying eyes

The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;

So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

         Dear as remember'd kisses after death,

And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd

On lips that are for others; deep as love,

Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;

O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

Ulysses

It little profits that an idle king,

By this still hearth, among these barren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink

Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;

For always roaming with a hungry heart

Much have I seen and known; cities of men

And manners, climates, councils, governments,

Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades

For ever and forever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!

As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains: but every hour is saved

From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things; and vile it were

For some three suns to store and hoard myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire

To follow knowledge like a sinking star,

Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

         This is my son, mine own Telemachus,

To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil

This labour, by slow prudence to make mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees

Subdue them to the useful and the good.

Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere

Of common duties, decent not to fail

In offices of tenderness, and pay

Meet adoration to my household gods,

When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

         There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:

There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took

The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;

Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;

Death closes all: but something ere the end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be done,

Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:

The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,

'T is not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite

The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths

Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:

It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,

And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'

We are not now that strength which in old days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,

Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Crossing the Bar

Sunset and evening star,

      And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,

      When I put out to sea,

   But such a tide as moving seems asleep,

      Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

      Turns again home.

   Twilight and evening bell,

      And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell,

      When I embark;

   For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place

      The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face

      When I have crost the bar.

[EDGAR ALLAN POE](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/edgar-allan-poe)

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 highborn kinsmen 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 by 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 her sepulchre there by the sea—

   In her tomb by the sounding sea.

[ROBERT BROWNING](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/robert-browning)

Porphyria's Lover

The rain set early in to-night,

       The sullen wind was soon awake,

It tore the elm-tops down for spite,

       And did its worst to vex the lake:

       I listened with heart fit to break.

When glided in Porphyria; straight

       She shut the cold out and the storm,

And kneeled and made the cheerless grate

       Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;

       Which done, she rose, and from her form

Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,

       And laid her soiled gloves by, untied

Her hat and let the damp hair fall,

       And, last, she sat down by my side

       And called me. When no voice replied,

She put my arm about her waist,

       And made her smooth white shoulder bare,

And all her yellow hair displaced,

       And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,

       And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,

Murmuring how she loved me — she

       Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,

To set its struggling passion free

       From pride, and vainer ties dissever,

       And give herself to me for ever.

But passion sometimes would prevail,

       Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain

A sudden thought of one so pale

       For love of her, and all in vain:

       So, she was come through wind and rain.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes

       Happy and proud; at last I knew

Porphyria worshipped me; surprise

       Made my heart swell, and still it grew

       While I debated what to do.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,

       Perfectly pure and good: I found

A thing to do, and all her hair

       In one long yellow string I wound

       Three times her little throat around,

And strangled her. No pain felt she;

       I am quite sure she felt no pain.

As a shut bud that holds a bee,

       I warily oped her lids: again

       Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.

And I untightened next the tress

       About her neck; her cheek once more

Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:

       I propped her head up as before,

       Only, this time my shoulder bore

Her head, which droops upon it still:

       The smiling rosy little head,

So glad it has its utmost will,

       That all it scorned at once is fled,

       And I, its love, am gained instead!

Porphyria's love: she guessed not how

       Her darling one wish would be heard.

And thus we sit together now,

       And all night long we have not stirred,

       And yet God has not said a word!

My Last Duchess

*FERRARA*

That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall,

Looking as if she were alive. I call

That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf’s hands

Worked busily a day, and there she stands.

Will’t please you sit and look at her? I said

“Fra Pandolf” by design, for never read

Strangers like you that pictured countenance,

The depth and passion of its earnest glance,

But to myself they turned (since none puts by

The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)

And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,

How such a glance came there; so, not the first

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, ’twas not

Her husband’s presence only, called that spot

Of joy into the Duchess’ cheek; perhaps

Fra Pandolf chanced to say, “Her mantle laps

Over my lady’s wrist too much,” or “Paint

Must never hope to reproduce the faint

Half-flush that dies along her throat.” Such stuff

Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough

For calling up that spot of joy. She had

A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad,

Too easily impressed; she liked whate’er

She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

Sir, ’twas all one! My favour at her breast,

The dropping of the daylight in the West,

The bough of cherries some officious fool

Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule

She rode with round the terrace—all and each

Would draw from her alike the approving speech,

Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked

Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked

My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name

With anybody’s gift. Who’d stoop to blame

This sort of trifling? Even had you skill

In speech—which I have not—to make your will

Quite clear to such an one, and say, “Just this

Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,

Or there exceed the mark”—and if she let

Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set

Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—

E’en then would be some stooping; and I choose

Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,

Whene’er I passed her; but who passed without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;

Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands

As if alive. Will’t please you rise? We’ll meet

The company below, then. I repeat,

The Count your master’s known munificence

Is ample warrant that no just pretense

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

Though his fair daughter’s self, as I avowed

At starting, is my object. Nay, we’ll go

Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,

Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,

Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

Home-Thoughts, from Abroad

Oh, to be in England

Now that April's there,

And whoever wakes in England

Sees, some morning, unaware,

That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf

Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,

While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough

In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,

And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!

Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge

Leans to the field and scatters on the clover

Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—

That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,

Lest you should think he never could recapture

The first fine careless rapture!

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,

All will be gay when noontide wakes anew

The buttercups, the little children's dower

—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

[WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/walter-savage-landor)

Dying Speech of an Old Philosopher

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:

Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art:

I warm’d both hands before the fire of Life;

It sinks; and I am ready to depart.

WALT WHITMAN

From *Song of Myself*

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume,  
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,  
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil,  
     this air,  
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and  
     their parents the same,  
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,  
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,  
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never  
     forgotten,  
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,  
Nature without check with original energy.

When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer

When I heard the learn’d astronomer,

When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,

When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,

Till rising and gliding out I wander’d off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,

Look’d up in perfect silence at the stars.

A Noiseless Patient Spider

A noiseless patient spider,

I mark’d where on a little promontory it stood isolated,

Mark’d how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,

It launch’d forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,

Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,

Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,

Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,

Till the bridge you will need be form’d, till the ductile anchor hold,

Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

[CHRISTINA ROSSETTI](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/christina-rossetti)

When I Am Dead, My Dearest

When I am dead, my dearest,

Sing no sad songs for me;

Plant thou no roses at my head,

Nor shady cypress tree:

Be the green grass above me

With showers and dewdrops wet;

And if thou wilt, remember,

And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,

I shall not feel the rain;

I shall not hear the nightingale

Sing on, as if in pain:

And dreaming through the twilight

That doth not rise nor set,

Haply I may remember,

And haply may forget.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSETTI

* The Blessed Damozel

The blessed damozel lean'd out

  From the gold bar of Heaven;

Her eyes were deeper than the depth

  Of waters still'd at 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,

  For service meetly worn;

Her hair that lay along 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, and 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 rampart of God's house

  That she was standing on:

By God built over the sheer depth

  The which is Space begun;

So high, that looking downward thence

  She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood

  Of ether, as a bridge.

Beneath, the tides of day and night

  With flame and darkness ridge

The void, as low as where this earth

  Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met

  'Mid deathless love's acclaims,

Spoke evermore among themselves

  Their heart-remember'd names;

And the souls mounting up to God

  Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bow'd herself and stoop'd

  Out of the circling charm;

Until her bosom must have made

  The bar she lean'd on warm,

And the lilies lay as if asleep

  Along her bended arm.

From the fix'd place of Heaven she saw

  Time like a pulse shake fierce

Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove

  Within the gulf to pierce

Its path; and now she spoke as when

  The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curl'd moon

  Was like a little feather

Fluttering far down the gulf; and now

  She spoke through the still weather.

Her voice was like the voice the stars

  Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,

  Strove not her accents there,

Fain to be hearken'd? When those bells

  Possess'd the mid-day air,

Strove not her steps to reach my side

  Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,

  For he will come," she said.

"Have I not pray'd in Heaven?—on earth,

  Lord, Lord, 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 cloth'd in white,

I'll take his hand and go with him

  To the deep wells of light;

As unto a stream we will step down,

  And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of

  Occult, withheld, untrod,

Whose lamps are stirr'd continually

  With prayer sent up to God;

And see our old prayers, granted, melt

  Each like a little cloud.

"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 voice

  Shall pause in, hush'd and slow,

And find some knowledge at each pause,

  Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! we two, we two, thou say'st!

  Yea, one wast thou with me

That once of old. But shall God lift

  To endless unity

The soul whose likeness with thy soul

  Was but its love for thee?)

"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.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks

  And foreheads garlanded;

Into the fine cloth white like flame

  Weaving the golden thread.

To fashion the birth-robes for them

  Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:

  Then will I 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 clear-ranged unnumber'd 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:—

Only to live as once on earth

  With Love,—only to be,

As then awhile, forever now

  Together, I and he."

She gazed and listen'd and then said,

  Less sad of speech than mild,—

"All this is when he comes." She ceas'd.

  The light thrill'd towards her, fill'd

With angels in strong level flight.

  Her eyes pray'd, and she smil'd

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path

  Was vague in distant spheres:

And then she cast her arms along

  The golden barriers,

And laid her face between her hands,

  And wept. (I heard her tears.)

WILLIAM MORRIS

# The Defence of Guenevere

But, knowing now that they would have her speak,  
She threw her wet hair backward from her brow,  
Her hand close to her mouth touching her cheek,  
  
As though she had had there a shameful blow,  
And feeling it shameful to feel ought but shame  
All through her heart, yet felt her cheek burned so,  
  
She must a little touch it; like one lame  
She walked away from Gauwaine, with her head  
Still lifted up; and on her cheek of flame  
  
The tears dried quick; she stopped at last and said:  
"O knights and lords, it seems but little skill  
To talk of well-known things past now and dead.  
  
"God wot I ought to say, I have done ill,  
And pray you all forgiveness heartily!  
Because you must be right, such great lords; still  
  
"Listen, suppose your time were come to die,  
And you were quite alone and very weak;  
Yea, laid a dying while very mightily  
  
"The wind was ruffling up the narrow streak  
Of river through your broad lands running well:  
Suppose a hush should come, then some one speak:  
  
"'One of these cloths is heaven, and one is hell,  
Now choose one cloth for ever; which they be,  
I will not tell you, you must somehow tell  
  
"'Of your own strength and mightiness; here, see!'  
Yea, yea, my lord, and you to ope your eyes,  
At foot of your familiar bed to see  
  
"A great God's angel standing, with such dyes,  
Not known on earth, on his great wings, and hands,  
Held out two ways, light from the inner skies  
  
"Showing him well, and making his commands  
Seem to be God's commands, moreover, too,  
Holding within his hands the cloths on wands;  
  
"And one of these strange choosing cloths was blue,  
Wavy and long, and one cut short and red;  
No man could tell the better of the two.  
  
"After a shivering half-hour you said:  
'God help! heaven's colour, the blue;' and he said, 'hell.'  
Perhaps you then would roll upon your bed,  
  
"And cry to all good men that loved you well,  
'Ah Christ! if only I had known, known, known;'  
Launcelot went away, then I could tell,  
  
"Like wisest man how all things would be, moan,  
And roll and hurt myself, and long to die,  
And yet fear much to die for what was sown.  
  
"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,  
Whatever may have happened through these years,  
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie."  
  
Her voice was low at first, being full of tears,  
But as it cleared, it grew full loud and shrill,  
Growing a windy shriek in all men's ears,  
  
A ringing in their startled brains, until  
She said that Gauwaine lied, then her voice sunk,  
And her great eyes began again to fill,  
  
Though still she stood right up, and never shrunk,  
But spoke on bravely, glorious lady fair!  
Whatever tears her full lips may have drunk,  
  
She stood, and seemed to think, and wrung her hair,  
Spoke out at last with no more trace of shame,  
With passionate twisting of her body there:  
  
"It chanced upon a day that Launcelot came  
To dwell at Arthur's court: at Christmas-time  
This happened; when the heralds sung his name,  
  
"Son of King Ban of Benwick, seemed to chime  
Along with all the bells that rang that day,  
O'er the white roofs, with little change of rhyme.  
  
"Christmas and whitened winter passed away,  
And over me the April sunshine came,  
Made very awful with black hail-clouds, yea  
  
"And in the Summer I grew white with flame,  
And bowed my head down: Autumn, and the sick  
Sure knowledge things would never be the same,  
  
"However often Spring might be most thick  
Of blossoms and buds, smote on me, and I grew  
Careless of most things, let the clock tick, tick,  
  
"To my unhappy pulse, that beat right through  
My eager body; while I laughed out loud,  
And let my lips curl up at false or true,  
  
"Seemed cold and shallow without any cloud.  
Behold my judges, then the cloths were brought;  
While I was dizzied thus, old thoughts would crowd,  
  
"Belonging to the time ere I was bought  
By Arthur's great name and his little love;  
Must I give up for ever then, I thought,  
  
"That which I deemed would ever round me move  
Glorifying all things; for a little word,  
Scarce ever meant at all, must I now prove  
  
"Stone-cold for ever? Pray you, does the Lord  
Will that all folks should be quite happy and good?  
I love God now a little, if this cord  
  
"Were broken, once for all what striving could  
Make me love anything in earth or heaven?  
So day by day it grew, as if one should  
  
"Slip slowly down some path worn smooth and even,  
Down to a cool sea on a summer day;  
Yet still in slipping there was some small leaven  
  
"Of stretched hands catching small stones by the way,  
Until one surely reached the sea at last,  
And felt strange new joy as the worn head lay  
  
"Back, with the hair like sea-weed; yea all past  
Sweat of the forehead, dryness of the lips,  
Washed utterly out by the dear waves o'ercast,  
  
"In the lone sea, far off from any ships!  
Do I not know now of a day in Spring?  
No minute of the wild day ever slips  
  
"From out my memory; I hear thrushes sing,  
And wheresoever I may be, straightway  
Thoughts of it all come up with most fresh sting:  
  
"I was half mad with beauty on that day,  
And went without my ladies all alone,  
In a quiet garden walled round every way;  
  
"I was right joyful of that wall of stone,  
That shut the flowers and trees up with the sky,  
And trebled all the beauty: to the bone,  
  
"Yea right through to my heart, grown very shy  
With weary thoughts, it pierced, and made me glad;  
Exceedingly glad, and I knew verily,  
  
"A little thing just then had made me mad;  
I dared not think, as I was wont to do,  
Sometimes, upon my beauty; if I had  
  
"Held out my long hand up against the blue,  
And, looking on the tenderly darken'd fingers,  
Thought that by rights one ought to see quite through,  
  
"There, see you, where the soft still light yet lingers,  
Round by the edges; what should I have done,  
If this had joined with yellow spotted singers,  
  
"And startling green drawn upward by the sun?  
But shouting, loosed out, see now! all my hair,  
And trancedly stood watching the west wind run  
  
"With faintest half-heard breathing sound: why there  
I lose my head e'en now in doing this;  
But shortly listen: In that garden fair  
  
"Came Launcelot walking; this is true, the kiss  
Wherewith we kissed in meeting that spring day,  
I scarce dare talk of the remember'd bliss,  
  
"When both our mouths went wandering in one way,  
And aching sorely, met among the leaves;  
Our hands being left behind strained far away.  
  
"Never within a yard of my bright sleeves  
Had Launcelot come before: and now so nigh!  
After that day why is it Guenevere grieves?  
  
"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,  
Whatever happened on through all those years,  
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie.  
  
"Being such a lady could I weep these tears  
If this were true? A great queen such as I  
Having sinn'd this way, straight her conscience sears;  
  
"And afterwards she liveth hatefully,  
Slaying and poisoning, certes never weeps:  
Gauwaine be friends now, speak me lovingly.  
  
"Do I not see how God's dear pity creeps  
All through your frame, and trembles in your mouth?  
Remember in what grave your mother sleeps,  
  
"Buried in some place far down in the south,  
Men are forgetting as I speak to you;  
By her head sever'd in that awful drouth  
  
"Of pity that drew Agravaine's fell blow,  
I pray you pity! let me not scream out  
For ever after, when the shrill winds blow  
  
"Through half your castle-locks! let me not shout  
For ever after in the winter night  
When you ride out alone! in battle-rout  
  
"Let not my rusting tears make your sword light!  
Ah! God of mercy, how he turns away!  
So, ever must I dress me to the fight,  
  
"So: let God's justice work! Gauwaine, I say,  
See me hew down your proofs: yea all men know  
Even as you said how Mellyagraunce one day,  
  
"One bitter day in la Fausse Garde, for so  
All good knights held it after, saw:  
Yea, sirs, by cursed unknightly outrage; though  
  
"You, Gauwaine, held his word without a flaw,  
This Mellyagraunce saw blood upon my bed:  
Whose blood then pray you? is there any law  
  
"To make a queen say why some spots of red  
Lie on her coverlet? or will you say:  
'Your hands are white, lady, as when you wed,  
  
"'Where did you bleed?' and must I stammer out, 'Nay,  
I blush indeed, fair lord, only to rend  
My sleeve up to my shoulder, where there lay  
  
"'A knife-point last night': so must I defend  
The honour of the Lady Guenevere?  
Not so, fair lords, even if the world should end  
  
"This very day, and you were judges here  
Instead of God. Did you see Mellyagraunce  
When Launcelot stood by him? what white fear  
  
"Curdled his blood, and how his teeth did dance,  
His side sink in? as my knight cried and said:  
'Slayer of unarm'd men, here is a chance!  
  
"'Setter of traps, I pray you guard your head,  
By God I am so glad to fight with you,  
Stripper of ladies, that my hand feels lead  
  
"'For driving weight; hurrah now! draw and do,  
For all my wounds are moving in my breast,  
And I am getting mad with waiting so.'  
  
"He struck his hands together o'er the beast,  
Who fell down flat, and grovell'd at his feet,  
And groan'd at being slain so young: 'At least,'  
  
"My knight said, 'rise you, sir, who are so fleet  
At catching ladies, half-arm'd will I fight,  
My left side all uncovered!' then I weet,  
  
"Up sprang Sir Mellyagraunce with great delight  
Upon his knave's face; not until just then  
Did I quite hate him, as I saw my knight  
  
"Along the lists look to my stake and pen  
With such a joyous smile, it made me sigh  
From agony beneath my waist-chain, when  
  
"The fight began, and to me they drew nigh;  
Ever Sir Launcelot kept him on the right,  
And traversed warily, and ever high  
  
"And fast leapt caitiff's sword, until my knight  
Sudden threw up his sword to his left hand,  
Caught it, and swung it; that was all the fight,  
  
"Except a spout of blood on the hot land;  
For it was hottest summer; and I know  
I wonder'd how the fire, while I should stand,  
  
"And burn, against the heat, would quiver so,  
Yards above my head; thus these matters went;  
Which things were only warnings of the woe  
  
"That fell on me. Yet Mellyagraunce was shent,  
For Mellyagraunce had fought against the Lord;  
Therefore, my lords, take heed lest you be blent  
  
"With all this wickedness; say no rash word  
Against me, being so beautiful; my eyes,  
Wept all away to grey, may bring some sword  
  
"To drown you in your blood; see my breast rise,  
Like waves of purple sea, as here I stand;  
And how my arms are moved in wonderful wise,  
  
"Yea also at my full heart's strong command,  
See through my long throat how the words go up  
In ripples to my mouth; how in my hand  
  
"The shadow lies like wine within a cup  
Of marvellously colour'd gold; yea now  
This little wind is rising, look you up,  
  
"And wonder how the light is falling so  
Within my moving tresses: will you dare,  
When you have looked a little on my brow,  
  
"To say this thing is vile? or will you care  
For any plausible lies of cunning woof,  
When you can see my face with no lie there  
  
"For ever? am I not a gracious proof:  
'But in your chamber Launcelot was found':  
Is there a good knight then would stand aloof,  
  
"When a queen says with gentle queenly sound:  
'O true as steel come now and talk with me,  
I love to see your step upon the ground  
  
"'Unwavering, also well I love to see  
That gracious smile light up your face, and hear  
Your wonderful words, that all mean verily  
  
"'The thing they seem to mean: good friend, so dear  
To me in everything, come here to-night,  
Or else the hours will pass most dull and drear;  
  
"'If you come not, I fear this time I might  
Get thinking over much of times gone by,  
When I was young, and green hope was in sight:  
  
"'For no man cares now to know why I sigh;  
And no man comes to sing me pleasant songs,  
Nor any brings me the sweet flowers that lie  
  
"'So thick in the gardens; therefore one so longs  
To see you, Launcelot; that we may be  
Like children once again, free from all wrongs  
  
"'Just for one night.' Did he not come to me?  
What thing could keep true Launcelot away  
If I said, 'Come'? there was one less than three  
  
"In my quiet room that night, and we were gay;  
Till sudden I rose up, weak, pale, and sick,  
Because a bawling broke our dream up, yea  
  
"I looked at Launcelot's face and could not speak,  
For he looked helpless too, for a little while;  
Then I remember how I tried to shriek,  
  
"And could not, but fell down; from tile to tile  
The stones they threw up rattled o'er my head  
And made me dizzier; till within a while  
  
"My maids were all about me, and my head  
On Launcelot's breast was being soothed away  
From its white chattering, until Launcelot said:  
  
"By God! I will not tell you more to-day,  
Judge any way you will: what matters it?  
You know quite well the story of that fray,  
  
"How Launcelot still'd their bawling, the mad fit  
That caught up Gauwaine: all, all, verily,  
But just that which would save me; these things flit.  
  
"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,  
Whatever may have happen'd these long years,  
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie!  
  
"All I have said is truth, by Christ's dear tears."  
She would not speak another word, but stood  
Turn'd sideways; listening, like a man who hears  
  
His brother's trumpet sounding through the wood  
Of his foes' lances. She lean'd eagerly,  
And gave a slight spring sometimes, as she could  
  
At last hear something really; joyfully  
Her cheek grew crimson, as the headlong speed  
Of the roan charger drew all men to see,  
The knight who came was Launcelot at good need.

The Haystack in the Floods

HAD she come all the way for this,  
To part at last without a kiss?  
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain  
That her own eyes might see him slain  
Beside the haystack in the floods?  
Along the dripping leafless woods,  
The stirrup touching either shoe,  
She rode astride as troopers do;  
With kirtle kilted to her knee,  
To which the mud splash'd wretchedly;  
And the wet dripp'd from every tree  
Upon her head and heavy hair,  
And on her eyelids broad and fair;  
The tears and rain ran down her face.

By fits and starts they rode apace,  
And very often was his place  
Far off from her; he had to ride  
Ahead, to see what might betide  
When the roads cross'd; and sometimes, when  
There rose a murmuring from his men, 2  
Had to turn back with promises;  
Ah me! she had but little ease;  
And often for pure doubt and dread  
She sobb'd, made giddy in the head  
By the swift riding; while, for cold,  
Her slender fingers scarce could hold  
The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,  
She felt the foot within her shoe  
Against the stirrup : all for this,  
To part at last without a kiss   
Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they near'd that old soak'd hay,  
They saw across the only way  
That Judas, Godmar, and the three.  
Red running lions dismally  
Grinn'd from his pennon, under which,  
In one straight line along the ditch,  
They counted thirty heads.

                                        So then,  
While Robert turn'd round to his men,  
She saw at once the wretched'end,  
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend  
Her coif the wrong way from her head,  
And hid her eyes; while Robert said :  
'Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one,  
At Poictiers where we made them run  
So fast: why, sweet my love, good cheer,  
The Gascon frontier is so near,  
Nought after this,'

                But, '0,' she said,  
'My God! my God! I have to tread  
The long way back without you; then   
The court at Paris; those six men;  
The gratings of the Chatelet;  
The swift Seine on some rainy day  
Like this, and people standing by,  
And laughing, while my weak hands try  
To recollect how strong men swim.  
All this, or else a life with him,  
For which I should be damned at last,  
Would God that this next hour were past!'

He answer'd not, but cried his cry,   
'St. George for Marny!' cheerily;  
And laid his hand upon her rein.  
Alas! no man of all his train  
Gave back that cheery cry again;  
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast  
Upon his sword-hilts, some one cast  
About his neck a kerchief long,  
And bound him.

                         Then they went along  
To Godmar; who said: 'Now, Jehane,  
Your lover's life is on the wane   
So fast, that, if this very hour  
You yield not as my paramour,  
He will not see the rain leave off.  
Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,  
Sir Robert, or I slay you now.'  
She laid her hand upon her brow,  
Then gazed upon the palm, as though  
She thought her forehead bled, and — 'No.'  
She said, and turn'd her head away,  
As there were nothing else to say,   
And everything were settled: red   
Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:  
'Jehane, on yonder hill there stands  
My castle, guarding well my lands :  
What hinders me from taking you,  
And doing that I list to do  
To your fair wilful body, while  
Your knight lies dead?'

                A wicked smile  
Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,  
A long way out she thrust her chin: go  
'You know that I should strangle you  
While you were sleeping; or bite through  
Your throat, by God's help: ah!' she said,  
'Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!  
For in such wise they hem me in,  
I cannot choose but sin and sin,  
Whatever happens : yet I think  
They could not make me eat or drink,  
And so should I just reach my rest.'  
'Nay, if you do not my behest,   
O Jehane! though I love you well,'  
Said Godmar, 'would I fail to tell  
All that I know.' 'Foul lies,' she said.  
'Eh? lies my Jehane? by God's head,  
At Paris folks would deem them true!  
Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you,  
"Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!  
Give us Jehane to bum or drown!" —   
Eh — gag me Robert! — sweet my friend,  
This were indeed a piteous end no  
For those long fingers, and long feet,  
And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;  
An end that few men would forget  
That saw it — So, an hour yet:  
Consider, Jehane, which to take  
Of life or death!'

                                So, scarce awake,  
Dismounting, did she leave that place,  
And totter some yards : with her face  
Turn'd upward to the sky she lay,  
Her head on a wet heap of hay,  
And fell asleep: and while she slept,  
And did not dream, the minutes crept  
Round to the twelve again; but she,  
Being waked at last, sigh'd quietly,  
And strangely childlike came, and said:  
'I will not.' Straightway Godmar's head,  
As though it hung on strong wires, turn'd  
Most sharply round, and his face burn'd.

For Robert — both his eyes were dry,  
He could not weep, but gloomily   
He seem'd to watch the rain; yea, too,  
His lips were firm; he tried once more  
To touch her lips; she reach'd out, sore  
And vain desire so tortured them,  
The poor grey lips, and now the hem  
Of his sleeve brush'd them.

                                                 With a start  
Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;  
From Robert's throat he loosed the bands  
Of silk and mail; with empty hands  
Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw,   
The long bright blade without a flaw  
Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand  
In Robert's hair; she saw him bend  
Back Robert's head; she saw him send  
The thin steel down; the blow told well,  
Right backward the knight Robert fell,  
And moan'd as dogs do, being half dead,  
Unwitting, as I deem : so then  
Godmar turn'd grinning to his men,  
Who ran, some five or six, and beat   
His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turn'd again and said:  
'So, Jehane, the first fitte is read!  
Take note, my lady, that your way  
Lies backward to the Chatelet!'  
She shook her head and gazed awhile  
At her cold hands with a rueful smile,  
As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had  
Beside the haystack in the floods.

[EMILY DICKINSON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/emily-dickinson)

Because I Could Not Stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death –

He kindly stopped for me –

The Carriage held but just Ourselves –

And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste

And I had put away

My labor and my leisure too,

For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove

At Recess – in the Ring –

We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –

We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –

The Dews drew quivering and Chill –

For only Gossamer, my Gown –

My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed

A Swelling of the Ground –

The Roof was scarcely visible –

The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet

Feels shorter than the Day

I first surmised the Horses' Heads

Were toward Eternity –

I Heard a Fly Buzz - When I Died

I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -

The Stillness in the Room

Was like the Stillness in the Air -

Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -

And Breaths were gathering firm

For that last Onset - when the King

Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away

What portion of me be

Assignable - and then it was

There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain - stumbling Buzz -

Between the light - and me -

And then the Windows failed - and then

I could not see to see –

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed  I taste a liquor never brewed - From Tankards scooped in Pearl - Not all the Frankfort Berries Yield such an Alcohol!  Inebriate of air - am I - And Debauchee of Dew - Reeling - thro' endless summer days - From inns of molten Blue -  When "Landlords" turn the drunken Bee Out of the Foxglove's door - When Butterflies - renounce their "drams" - I shall but drink the more!  Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats - And Saints - to windows run - To see the little Tippler Leaning against the - Sun! |  |

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Tell All the Truth But Tell It Slant

Tell all the truth but tell it slant —

Success in Circuit lies

Too bright for our infirm Delight

The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased

With explanation kind

The Truth must dazzle gradually

Or every man be blind —

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

*from* The Triumph of Time

There are fairer women, I hear; that may be;

      But I, that I love you and find you fair,

Who are more than fair in my eyes if they be,

      Do the high gods know or the great gods care?

Though the swords in my heart for one were seven,

Should the iron hollow of doubtful heaven,

That knows not itself whether night-time or day be,

      Reverberate words and a foolish prayer?

I will go back to the great sweet mother,

      Mother and lover of men, the sea.

I will go down to her, I and none other,

      Close with her, kiss her and mix her with me;

Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast:

O fair white mother, in days long past

Born without sister, born without brother,

      Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,

      Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,

Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,

      Thy large embraces are keen like pain.

Save me and hide me with all thy waves,

Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,

Those pure cold populous graves of thine

      Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,

      Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;

My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,

      I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;

Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,

Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,

As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips

      With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,

      Were it once cast off and unwound from me,

Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,

      Alive and aware of thy ways and thee;

Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,

Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,

A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,

      A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea.

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,

      Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say.

Thou hast taken, and shalt not render again;

      Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they.

But death is the worst that comes of thee;

Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O sea,

But when hast thou fed on our hearts? or when,

      Having given us love, hast thou taken away?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,

      Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.

The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,

      Shall they not vanish away and apart?

But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;

Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;

Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;

      From the first thou wert; in the end thou art.

And grief shall endure not for ever, I know.

      As things that are not shall these things be;

We shall live through seasons of sun and of snow,

      And none be grievous as this to me.

We shall hear, as one in a trance that hears,

The sound of time, the rhyme of the years;

Wrecked hope and passionate pain will grow

      As tender things of a spring-tide sea.

Sea-fruit that swings in the waves that hiss,

      Drowned gold and purple and royal rings.

And all time past, was it all for this?

      Times unforgotten, and treasures of things?

Swift years of liking and sweet long laughter,

That wist not well of the years thereafter

Till love woke, smitten at heart by a kiss,

      With lips that trembled and trailing wings?

There lived a singer in France of old

      By the tideless dolorous midland sea.

In a land of sand and ruin and gold

      There shone one woman, and none but she.

And finding life for her love's sake fail,

Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,

Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,

      And praised God, seeing; and so died he.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Gunga Din

You may talk o' gin and beer  
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,  
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;  
But when it comes to slaughter  
You will do your work on water,  
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.  
Now in Injia's sunny clime,  
Where I used to spend my time  
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,  
Of all them black-faced crew  
The finest man I knew  
Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din.  
﻿He was "Din! Din! Din!  
﻿You limping lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!  
﻿Hi! slippery hitherao!  
﻿Water, get it! Panee lao![[1]](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Departmental_Ditties_and_Ballads_and_Barrack-Room_Ballads/Gunga_Din#cite_note-1)  
﻿You squigy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din."

The uniform 'e wore  
Was nothin' much before,  
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,  
For a piece o' twisty rag  
An' a goatskin water-bag  
Was all the field-equipment e' could find.  
When the sweatin' troop-train lay  
In a sidin' through the day,  
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,  
We shouted "Harry By!"[[2]](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Departmental_Ditties_and_Ballads_and_Barrack-Room_Ballads/Gunga_Din#cite_note-2)  
Till our throats were bricky-dry,  
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.  
﻿It was "Din! Din! Din!  
﻿You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?  
﻿You put some juldee[[3]](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Departmental_Ditties_and_Ballads_and_Barrack-Room_Ballads/Gunga_Din#cite_note-3) in it  
﻿Or I'll marrow[[4]](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Departmental_Ditties_and_Ballads_and_Barrack-Room_Ballads/Gunga_Din#cite_note-4) you this minute  
﻿If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!

﻿'E would dot an' carry one  
﻿Till the longest day was done  
﻿An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.  
﻿If we charged or broke or cut,  
﻿You could bet your bloomin' nut,  
﻿'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.  
﻿With 'is mussick[[5]](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Departmental_Ditties_and_Ballads_and_Barrack-Room_Ballads/Gunga_Din#cite_note-5) on 'is back,  
﻿'E would skip with our attack,  
﻿An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire,"  
﻿An' for all 'is dirty 'ide  
﻿'E was white, clear white, inside  
﻿When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!  
﻿It was "Din! Din! Din!"  
﻿With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.  
﻿When the cartridges ran out,  
﻿You could hear the front-files shout,  
﻿"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

﻿I sha'n't forgit the night  
﻿When I dropped be'ind the fight  
﻿With a bullet where my belt plate should 'a' been.  
﻿I was chokin' mad with thirst,  
﻿An' the man that spied me first  
﻿Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.  
﻿'E lifted up my 'ead,  
﻿An' he plugged me where I bled,  
﻿An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water-green:  
﻿It was crawlin' and it stunk,  
﻿But of all the drinks I've drunk,  
﻿I'm gratefullest to one from Gunga Din.  
﻿It was "Din! Din! Din!"  
﻿'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;  
﻿'E's chawin' up the ground,  
﻿An' 'e's kickin' all around:  
﻿For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!

﻿'E carried me away  
﻿To where a dooli lay,  
﻿An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.  
﻿'E put me safe inside,  
﻿An' just before 'e died:  
﻿"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.  
﻿So I'll meet 'im later on  
﻿At the place where 'e is gone—  
﻿Where it's always double drill and no canteen;  
﻿'E'll be squattin' on the coals,  
﻿Givin' drink to poor damned souls,  
﻿An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!  
﻿Yes, Din! Din! Din!  
﻿You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!  
﻿Though I've belted you and flayed you,  
﻿By the living Gawd that made you,  
﻿You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

[A. E. HOUSMAN](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/a-e-housman)

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now

Is hung with bloom along the bough,

And stands about the woodland ride

Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,

Twenty will not come again,

And take from seventy springs a score,

It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom

Fifty springs are little room,

About the woodlands I will go

To see the cherry hung with snow.

To an Athlete Dying Young

The time you won your town the race

We chaired you through the market-place;

Man and boy stood cheering by,

And home we brought you shoulder-high.

To-day, the road all runners come,

Shoulder-high we bring you home,

And set you at your threshold down,

Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away

From fields where glory does not stay

And early though the laurel grows

It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut

Cannot see the record cut,

And silence sounds no worse than cheers

After earth has stopped the ears:

Now you will not swell the rout

Of lads that wore their honours out,

Runners whom renown outran

And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,

The fleet foot on the sill of shade,

And hold to the low lintel up

The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laurelled head

Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,

And find unwithered on its curls

The garland briefer than a girl's.

When I Was One-and-Twenty

When I was one-and-twenty

       I heard a wise man say,

“Give crowns and pounds and guineas

       But not your heart away;

Give pearls away and rubies

       But keep your fancy free.”

But I was one-and-twenty,

       No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty

       I heard him say again,

“The heart out of the bosom

       Was never given in vain;

’Tis paid with sighs a plenty

       And sold for endless rue.”

And I am two-and-twenty,

       And oh, ’tis true, ’tis true.

With Rue My Heart Is Laden

With rue my heart is laden

For golden friends I had,

For many a rose-lipt maiden

And many a light-foot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping

The light-foot boys are laid;

The rose-lipt girls are sleeping

In fields where roses fade.

Terence, This Is Stupid Stuff

"Terence, this is stupid stuff:  
You eat your victuals fast enough;   
There can't be much amiss, 'tis clear,   
To see the rate you drink your beer.   
But oh, good Lord, the verse you make,   
It gives a chap the belly-ache.   
The cow, the old cow, she is dead;   
It sleeps well, the horned head:   
We poor lads, 'tis our turn now  
To hear such tunes as killed the cow.   
Pretty friendship 'tis to rhyme  
Your friends to death before their time  
Moping melancholy mad:   
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad."

Why, if 'tis dancing you would be,   
There's brisker pipes than poetry.   
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,   
Or why was Burton built on Trent?   
Oh many a peer of England brews  
Livelier liquor than the Muse,   
And malt does more than Milton can  
To justify God's ways to man.   
Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink  
For fellows whom it hurts to think:   
Look into the pewter pot  
To see the world as the world's not.  
And faith, 'tis pleasant till 'tis past:   
The mischief is that 'twill not last.   
Oh I have been to Ludlow fair  
And left my necktie God knows where,   
And carried half-way home, or near,   
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:   
Then the world seemed none so bad,   
And I myself a sterling lad;   
And down in lovely muck I've lain,   
Happy till I woke again.   
Then I saw the morning sky:   
Heigho, the tale was all a lie;   
The world, it was the old world yet,   
I was I, my things were wet,   
And nothing now remained to do  
But begin the game anew.

Therefore, since the world has still  
Much good, but much less good than ill,   
And while the sun and moon endure  
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,   
I'd face it as a wise man would,   
And train for ill and not for good.   
'Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale  
Is not so brisk a brew as ale:   
Out of a stem that scored the hand  
I wrung it in a weary land.   
But take it: if the smack is sour,   
The better for the embittered hour;   
It should do good to heart and head  
When your soul is in my soul's stead;   
And I will friend you, if I may,   
In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East:   
There, when kings will sit to feast,   
They get their fill before they think  
With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.   
He gathered all that springs to birth  
From the many-venomed earth;   
First a little, thence to more,   
He sampled all her killing store;   
And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,   
Sate the king when healths went round.   
They put arsenic in his meat  
And stared aghast to watch him eat;   
They poured strychnine in his cup  
And shook to see him drink it up:   
They shook, they stared as white's their shirt:   
Them it was their poison hurt.   
--I tell the tale that I heard told.   
Mithridates, he died old.

[WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/william-butler-yeats)

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,

And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;

Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,

And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,

Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;

There midnight’s all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,

And evening full of the linnet’s wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day

I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,

I hear it in the deep heart’s core.

Who Goes with Fergus?

Who will go drive with Fergus now,

And pierce the deep wood’s woven shade,

And dance upon the level shore?

Young man, lift up your russet brow,

And lift your tender eyelids, maid,

And brood on hopes and fear no more.

And no more turn aside and brood

Upon love’s bitter mystery;

For Fergus rules the brazen cars,

And rules the shadows of the wood,

And the white breast of the dim sea

And all dishevelled wandering stars.

The Stolen Child

Where dips the rocky highland

Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,

There lies a leafy island

Where flapping herons wake

The drowsy water rats;

There we’ve hid our faery vats,

Full of berrys

And of reddest stolen cherries.

Come away, O human child!

To the waters and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand,

For the world’s more full of weeping than you can understand.

Where the wave of moonlight glosses

The dim gray sands with light,

Far off by furthest Rosses

We foot it all the night,

Weaving olden dances

Mingling hands and mingling glances

Till the moon has taken flight;

To and fro we leap

And chase the frothy bubbles,

While the world is full of troubles

And anxious in its sleep.

Come away, O human child!

To the waters and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand,

For the world’s more full of weeping than you can understand.

Where the wandering water gushes

From the hills above Glen-Car,

In pools among the rushes

That scarce could bathe a star,

We seek for slumbering trout

And whispering in their ears

Give them unquiet dreams;

Leaning softly out

From ferns that drop their tears

Over the young streams.

Come away, O human child!

To the waters and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand,

For the world’s more full of weeping than you can understand.

Away with us he’s going,

The solemn-eyed:

He’ll hear no more the lowing

Of the calves on the warm hillside

Or the kettle on the hob

Sing peace into his breast,

Or see the brown mice bob

Round and round the oatmeal chest.

For he comes, the human child,

To the waters and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand,

For the world’s more full of weeping than he can understand.

The Song of Wandering Aengus

I went out to the hazel wood,

Because a fire was in my head,

And cut and peeled a hazel wand,

And hooked a berry to a thread;

And when white moths were on the wing,

And moth-like stars were flickering out,

I dropped the berry in a stream

And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor

I went to blow the fire a-flame,

But something rustled on the floor,

And someone called me by my name:

It had become a glimmering girl

With apple blossom in her hair

Who called me by my name and ran

And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering

Through hollow lands and hilly lands,

I will find out where she has gone,

And kiss her lips and take her hands;

And walk among long dappled grass,

And pluck till time and times are done,

The silver apples of the moon,

The golden apples of the sun.

1. A reply to Marlowe’s “Passionate Shepherd to His Love” (below) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)