

The Canterbury Tales: General Prologue

BY GEOFFREY CHAUCER **1387 - 1400**

Here bygynneth the Book of the tales of Caunterbury

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote,
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
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 Nature 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.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6T1t6zfF9yU&ab_channel=ABAlphaBeta

Everyman

Unknown – approx. 1485



Pray you all gyue your audyence
And here this mater with reuerence
By fygure a morall playe
The somonyng of euery man called it is
That of our lyues and endyng shewes
How transytory we be all daye
This mater is wonders precyous
But the entent of it is more gracyous
And swete to bere awaye
The story sayth man in the begynnyng
Loke well and take good heed to the endyng
Be you neuer so gay
Ye thynke synne in the begynnyng full swete
Whiche in the ende causeth the soule to wepe
Whan the body lyeth in claye
Here shall you se how felawshyp and Iolyte
Bothe strengthe pleasure and beaute
Wyll fade from the as floure in maye
For ye shall here how our heuen kyng
Calleth euery man to a generall rekenyng
Gyue audyence and here what he doth saye.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EnspCy4BAo&ab_channel=englishteacher9

Shakespeare 1592

Richard III

RICHARD

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this son of York,
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

5 Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments,
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front;
10 And now, instead of mounting barbèd steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEc7k4tsSsA&
ab_channel=A.Z.Foreman](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEc7k4tsSsA&ab_channel=A.Z.Foreman)