

EDMUND SPENSER *from Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*

[Nature's Reply to Mutabilitie]

Then since within this wide great *Universe*
 Nothing doth firme and permanent appeare,
 But all things tost and turned by transverse:
 What then should let, but I aloft should reare
 My Trophée, and from all, the triumph beare?
 Now judge then (ô thou greatest goddesse trew!)
 According as thy selfe doest see and heare,
 And unto me addoom that is my dew;
 That is the rule of all, all being rul'd by you.

So having ended, silence long ensewed,
 Ne *Nature* to or fro spake for a space,
 But with firme eyes affixt, the ground still viewed.
 Meanwhile, all creatures, looking in her face,
 Expecting th'end of this so doubtfull case,
 Did hang in long suspense what would ensue,
 To whether side should fall the soveraigne place:
 At length, she looking up with chearefull view,
 The silence brake, and gave her doome in speeches few.

I well consider all that ye have sayd,
 And find that all things stedfastnes doe hate
 And changed be: yet being rightly wayd
 They are not changed from their first estate;
 But by their change their being doe dilate:
 And turning to themselves at length againe,
 Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
 Then over them Change doth not rule and raigne;
 But they raigne over change, and doe their states maintaine.

Cease therefore daughte further to aspire,
 And thee content thus to be rul'd by me:
 For thy decay thou seekst by thy desire;
 But time shall come that all shall changed be,
 And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see.

So was the *Titaness* put downe and whist,
 And *Jove* confirm'd in his imperiall see.
 Then was that whole assembly quite dismiss,
 And *Natur*'s selfe did vanish, whither no man wist.

The VIII Canto, unperfite

When I bethinke me on that speech whyleare,
 Of *Mutability*, and well it way:
 Me seemes, that though she all unworthy were
 Of the Heav'ns Rule; yet very sooth to say,
 In all things else she beares the greatest sway.
 Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,
 And love of things so vaine to cast away;
 Whose flowing pride, so fading and so fickle,
 Short *Time* shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,
 Of that same time when no more *Change* shall be,
 But stedfast rest of all things firmly stayd
 Upon the pillours of Eternity,
 That is contrayr to *Mutabilitie*:
 For, all that moveth, doth in *Change* delight:
 But thenceforth all shall rest eternally
 With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
 O that great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabbaoths sight.

§ WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *from Sonnets*

18

Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough windes do shake the darling buds of Maie,
 And Sommers 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 faire from faire some-time declines,
 By chance, or natures changing course untrim'd:

Nor shall death brag thou wandr'st in his shade,
When in eternall lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breath or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

55

Nor marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of Princes shall out-live this powrefull rime,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Then unswept stone, besmeer'd with sluttish time.
When wastefull warre shall *Statues* over-turne,
And broiles roote out the worke of masonry,
Nor *Mars* his sword, nor warres quick fire shall burne
The living record of your memory.
Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth, your praise shall stil finde roome,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That weare this world out to the ending doome.
So til the judgement that your selfe arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers eies.

60

Like as the waves make towards the pibled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toile all forwards do contend.
Nativity once in the maine of light,
Crawles to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses gainst his glory fight,
And time that gave, doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfixe the florish set on youth,
And delves the paralels in beauties brow,
Feedes on the rarities of natures truth,
And nothing stands but for his sieth to mow.
And yet to times in hope, my verse shall stand
Praising thy worth, despite his cruell hand.

66

Tyr'd with all these for restfull death I cry,
As to behold desert a begger borne,
And needie Nothing trimd in jollitie,
And purest faith unhappily forsworne,
And gilded honor shamefully misplast,
And maiden vertue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And arte made tung-tide by authoritie,
And Folly (Doctor-like) controuling skill,
And simple-Truth miscalde Simplicitie,
And captive-good attending Captaine ill.
Tyr'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that to dye, I leave my love alone.

73

That time of yeare thou maist in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few doe hange
Upon those boughes which shake against the could,
Bare ruin'd quiers, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twi-light of such day,
As after Sun-set fadeth in the West,
Which by and by blacke night doth take away,
Deaths second selfe that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lye,
As the death bed, whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nurrisht by.
This thou percev'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

When love, with one another so
 Interanimates two soules,
 Defects of lonelinesse controules.
 Of what we are compos'd, and made,
 For, th'Atomies of which we grow,
 Are soules, whom no change can invade.
 But O alas, so long, so farre
 Our bodies why doe wee forbear?
 They're ours, though they're not wee, Wee are
 Th'intelligences, they the spheare.
 We owe them thanks, because they thus,
 Did us, to us, at first convey,
 Yeeled their forces, sense, to us,
 Nor are drosse to us, but allay.
 On man heavens influence workes not so,
 But that it first imprints the ayre,
 Soe soule into the soule may flow,
 Though it to body first repaire.
 As our blood labours to beget
 Spirits, as like soules as it can,
 Because such fingers need to knit
 That subtle knot, which makes us man:
 So must pure lovers soules descend
 T'affections, and to faculties,
 Which sense may reach and apprehend,
 Else a great Prince in prison lies.
 To 'our bodies turne wee then, that so
 Weake men on love reveal'd may looke;
 Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,
 But yet the body is his booke.
 And if some lover, such as wee,
 Have heard this dialogue of one,
 Let him still marke us, he shall see
 Small change, when we're to bodies gone.

(1633)

§ JOHN DONNE *from Holy Sonnets*

VII

At the round earths imagin'd corners, blow
 Your trumpets, Angels, and arise, arise
 From death, you numberlesse infinities
 Of soules, and to your scattred bodies goe,
 All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
 All whom warre, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
 Despaire, law, chance, hath slaine, and you whose eyes,
 Shall behold God, and never tast deaths woe.
 But let them sleepe, Lord, and mee mourne a space,
 For, if above all these, my sinnes abound,
 'Tis late to aske abundance of thy grace,
 When wee are there; here on this lowly ground,
 Teach mee how to repent; for that's as good
 As if thou'hadst seal'd my pardon, with thy blood.

X

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
 Mighty and dreadfull, for, thou art not soe,
 For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
 Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee;
 From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
 Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
 And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
 Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.
 Thou'art slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
 And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse dwell,
 And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well,
 And better then thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
 One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
 And death shall be no more, Death thou shalt die.

DEATH A 5
 SHORT SLEEP
 V
 ETERNALLY

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
 And shudder at the niffer,
 But cast a moment's fair regard
 What maks the mighty differ;
 Discount what scant occasion gave,
 That purity ye pride in,
 And (what 's aft mair than a' the lave)
 Your better art o' hiding.

20

Think, when your castigated pulse
 Gies now and then a wallop,
 What ragings must his veins convulse,
 That still eternal gallop:
 Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
 Right on ye scud your sea-way;
 But, in the teeth o' baith to sail,
 It maks an unco leeway.

25

30

See Social-life and Glee sit down,
 All joyous and unthinking,
 Till, quite transmugrify'd, they're grown
 Debauchery and Drinking:
 O would they stay to calculate
 Th' eternal consequences;
 Or your more dreaded h-l to state,
 D-mnation of expenses!

35

40

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,
 Ty'd up in godly laces,
 Before ye gie poor *Frailty* names,
 Suppose a change o' cases;
 A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
 A treacherous inclination –
 But, let me whisper i' your lug,
 Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

45

Then gently scan your brother Man,
 Still gentler sister Woman;
 Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
 To step aside is human:

50

18 *niffer* exchange; 23 *lave* rest; 32 *unco* strange; 48 *aiblins* perhaps; 51 *a kennin* a little

One point must still be greatly dark,
 The moving *Why* they do it;
 And just as lamely can ye mark,
 How far perhaps they rue it.

55

Who made the heart, 'tis *He* alone
 Decidedly can try us,
 He knows each chord its various tone,
 Each spring its various bias:
 Then at the balance let's be mute,
 We never can adjust it;
 What 's *done* we partly may compute,
 But know not what 's *resisted*.

60

WILLIAM BLAKE *from Songs of Innocence*

1789

Holy Thursday

Twas on a Holy Thursday their innocent faces clean
 The children walking two & two in red & blue & green
 Grey headed beards walkd before with wands as white as snow
 Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thames waters flow

O what a multitude they seemd these flowers of London town
 Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own
 The hum of multitudes was there but multitudes of lambs
 Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song
 Or like harmonious thunders the seats of heaven among
 Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians of the poor
 Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door

CHARLOTTE SMITH *Sonnet. Written in the Church-yard at Middleton in Sussex*

Pressed by the Moon, mute arbitress of tides,
 While the loud equinox its power combines,
 The sea no more its swelling surge confines,
 But o'er the shrinking land sublimely rides.

The wild blast, rising from the Western cave,
 Drives the huge billows from their heaving bed,
 Tears from their grassy tombs the village dead,
 And breaks the silent sabbath of the grave!
 With shells and seaweed mingled, on the shore
 Lo! their bones whiten in the frequent wave;
 But vain to them the winds and waters rave;
They hear the warring element no more:
 While I am doomed – by life's long storm oppressed,
 To gaze with envy on their gloomy rest.

ELIZABETH HANDS On an Unsociable Family

O what a strange parcel of creatures are we,
 Scarce ever to quarrel, or even agree;
 We all are alone, though at home altogether,
 Except to the fire constrained by the weather;
 Then one says, 'Tis cold,' which we all of us know,
 And with unanimity answer, 'Tis so':
 With shrugs and with shivers all look at the fire,
 And shuffle ourselves and our chairs a bit nigher;
 Then quickly, preceded by silence profound,
 A yawn epidemical catches around:
 Like social companions we never fall out,
 Nor ever care what one another's about;
 To comfort each other is never our plan,
 For to please ourselves, truly, is more than we can.

ROBERT BURNS Tam o' Shanter. A Tale

Of Brownie and of Bogillie full is this buke.

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

When chapman billies leave the street,
 And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
 As market-days are wearing late,
 An' folk begin to tak the gate;

1 *chapman billies* pedlars; 2 *drouthy* thirsty; 4 *gate* road;

5 While we sit bousing at the nappy,
 And getting fou and unco happy,
 We think na on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
 That lie between us and our hame,
 10 Where sits our sulky sullen dame,
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.
 This truth fand honest *Tam o' Shanter*,
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
 15 (Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
 For honest men and bonny lasses.)
 O *Tam*! hadst thou but been sae wise,
 As ta'en thy ain wife *Kate*'s advice!
 She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
 20 A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
 That frae November till October,
 Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
 That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
 25 That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
 That at the L – d's house, even on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
 She prophesied that late or soon,
 30 Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
 Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
 By *Alloway*'s auld haunted kirk.
 Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
 To think how many counsels sweet,
 35 How many lengthen'd sage advices,
 The husband frae the wife despises!
 But to our tale: Ae market-night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
 Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
 40 Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
 And at his elbow, Souter *Johnny*,
 His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;

5 *nappy* ale; 6 *fou* drunk; 8 *slaps* gaps in walls; 19 *skellum* good-for-nothings;
 20 *blellum* windbag; 23 *melder* meal-grinding; 24 *siller* silver; 25 *naig* horse;
 ca'd driven; 33 *gars me greet* makes me weep; 38 *unco* uncommonly; 39 *bleezing*
 talking loudly; 40 *reaming swats* foaming ale; 41 *Souter* cobbler;

I told my love I told my love
 I told her all my heart
 Trembling cold in ghastly fears
 Ah she doth depart

Soon as she was gone from me
 A traveller came by
 Silently invisibly
 He took her with a sigh

(1863)

§ WILLIAM BLAKE *from Songs of Innocence and of Experience*

Introduction

Hear the voice of the Bard!
 Who Present, Past, & Future sees
 Whose ears have heard,
 The Holy Word,
 That walk'd among the ancient trees.

Calling the lapsed Soul
 And weeping in the evening dew:
 That might controll,
 The starry pole;
 And fallen fallen light renew!

O Earth O Earth return!
 Arise from out the dewy grass;
 Night is worn,
 And the morn
 Rises from the slumberous mass.

Turn away no more:
 Why wilt thou turn away
 The starry floor
 The watry shore
 Is giv'n thee till the break of day.

The Clod and the Pebble

Love seeketh not Itself to please,
 Nor for itself hath any care;
 But for another gives its ease,
 And builds a Heaven in Hells despair.

So sang a little Clod of Clay,
 Trodden with the cattle's feet:
 But a Pebble of the brook,
 Warbled out these metres meet.

Love seeketh only Self to please,
 To bind another to its delight;
 Joys in anothers loss of ease,
 And builds a Hell in Heavens despite.

The Sick Rose

O Rose thou art sick.
 The invisible worm,
 That flies in the night
 In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
 Of crimson joy:
 And his dark secret love
 Does thy life destroy.

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?

Ah! Sun-Flower

Ah Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun:
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the travellers journey is done.

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow:
Arise from their graves and aspire,
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

The Garden of Love

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And Thou shalt not. writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be:
And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys & desires.

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 Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh,
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

A steady splendour; but at the tip-top,
 There hangs by unseen film, an orbèd drop
 Of light, and that is love: its influence,
 Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,
 At which we start and fret; till in the end,
 Melting into its radiance, we blend,
 Mingle, and so become a part of it –
 Nor with aught else can our souls interknit
 So wingedly. When we combine therewith,
 Life's self is nourished by its proper pith,
 And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.
 Ay, so delicious is the unsating food,
 That men, who might have towered in the van
 Of all the congregated world, to fan
 And winnow from the coming step of time
 All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime
 Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,
 Have been content to let occasion die,
 Whilst they did sleep in love's elysium.
 And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,
 Than speak against this ardent listlessness:
 For I have ever thought that it might bless
 The world with benefits unknowingly,
 As does the nightingale, up-perched high,
 And cloistered among cool and bunched leaves –
 She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives
 How tip-toe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.
 Just so may love, although 'tis understood
 The mere commingling of passionate breath,
 Produce more than our searching witnesseth –
 What I know not: but who, of men, can tell
 That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell
 To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
 The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,
 The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
 The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
 Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
 If human souls did never kiss and greet?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY 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.'

SIR WALTER SCOTT from The Heart of Mid-Lothian

[*Madge Wildfire sings:*]

'Proud Maisie is in the wood,
 Walking so early;
 Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
 Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
 When shall I marry me?" –
 "When six braw gentlemen
 Kirkward shall carry ye."

* * *

"Who makes the bridal bed,
 Birdie, say truly?"

"The gray-headed sexton
 That delves the grave duly."

* * *

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.

JOHN KEATS To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook

1819

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;

Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, -
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

JOHN KEATS 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.

1819

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 shall taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

JOHN KEATS

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art –
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremité,
 The moving waters at their priestlike task
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
 Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors –
 No – yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
 Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
 And so live ever – or else swoon to death.

(1838)

JOHN KEATS La Belle Dame sans Merci. A Ballad

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering?
 The sedge has withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

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

I see a lily on thy brow,
 With anguish moist and fever-dew,
 And on thy cheeks a fading rose
 Fast withereth too.

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

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

I set her on my pacing steed,
 And nothing else saw all day long,
 For sidelong would she bend, and sing
 A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
 And honey wild, and manna-dew,
 And sure in language strange she said –
 'I love thee true'.

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

And there she lulled me asleep
 And there I dreamed – Ah! woe betide! –
 The latest dream I ever dreamt
 On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all:
 They cried – 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
 Thee hath in thrall!'

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

Both nuns and
But those
That

that old, old lily
carse! hideous! – and I, like a silly,

meant the faces of the police-court officials,
right he was, and I signed my initials

firm what he said; but alas, he meant
my pictures, and on the proceedings went.

The upshot was, my picture must burn
that English artists might finally learn

when they painted a nude, to put a *cache sexe* on,
a cache sexe, a cache sexe, or else begone!

A fig-leaf; or, if you cannot find it
a wreath of mist, with nothing behind it.

A wreath of mist is the usual thing
in the north, to hide where the turtles sing.

Though they never sing, they never sing,
don't you dare to suggest such a thing

or Mr Mead will be after you.
– But what a pity I never knew

A wreath of English mist would do
as a cache sexe! I'd have put a whole fog.

But once and forever barks the old dog,
so my pictures are in prison, instead of in the Zoo.

E. C. BENTLEY [Clerihews]

George the Third
Ought never to have occurred.
One can only wonder
At so grotesque a blunder.

Nell
Fell
When Charles the Second
Beckoned.

EDMUND BLUNDEN Report on Experience

I have been young, and now am not too old;
And I have seen the righteous forsaken,
His health, his honour and his quality taken.

This is not what we were formerly told.

I have seen a green country, useful to the race,
Knocked silly with guns and mines, its villages vanished,
Even the last rat and the last kestrel banished –
God bless us all, this was peculiar grace.

I knew Seraphina; Nature gave her hue,
Glance, sympathy, note, like one from Eden.
I saw her smile warp, heard her lyric deaden;
She turned to harlotry; – this I took to be new.

Say what you will, our God sees how they run.
These disillusion are His curious proving
That He loves humanity and will go on loving;
Over there are faith, life, virtue in the sun.

ROBERT GRAVES Sick Love

O Love, be fed with apples while you may,
And feel the sun and go in royal array,
A smiling innocent on the heavenly causeway,

Though in what listening horror for the cry
That soars in outer blackness dimly,
The dumb blind beast, the paranoiac fury:

Be warm, enjoy the season, lift your head,
Exquisite in the pulse of tainted blood,
That shivering glory not to be despised.

W. H. AUDEN Musée des Beaux Arts

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking
dully along;

How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:

They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

JOHN BETJEMAN Pot-Pourri from a Surrey Garden

Miles of pram in the wind and Pam in the gorse track,
Coco-nut smell of the broom, and a packet of Weights
Press'd in the sand. The thud of a hoof on a horse-track –
A horse-riding horse for a horse-track –
Conifer county of Surrey approached
Through remarkable wrought-iron gates.

Over your boundary now, I wash my face in a bird-bath,
Then which path shall I take? that over there by the pram?
Down by the pond! or – yes, I will take the slippery third path,
Trodden away with gym-shoes,
Beautiful fir-dry alley that leads
To the bountiful body of Pam.

Pam, I adore you, Pam, you great big mountainous sports girl,
Whizzing them over the net, full of the strength of five:
That old Malvernian brother, you zephyr and khaki shorts girl,
Although he's playing for Woking,
Can't stand up
To your wonderful backhand drive.

See the strength of her arm, as firm and hairy as Hendren's;
See the size of her thighs, the pout of her lips as, cross,
And full of a pent-up strength, she swipes at the rhododendrons,
Lucky the rhododendrons,
And flings her arrogant love-lock
Back with a petulant toss.

Over the redolent pinewoods, in at the bathroom casement,
One fine Saturday, Windlesham bells shall call:
Up the Butterfield aisle rich with Gothic enlacement,
Licensed now for embracement,
Pam and I, as the organ
Thunders over you all.

WILLIAM EMPSON Missing Dates

1 Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.
It is not the effort nor the failure tires.
3 The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.

It is not your system or clear sight that mills
Down small to the consequence a life requires;
4 Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.

They bled an old dog dry yet the exchange rills
Of young dog blood gave but a month's desires;
3 The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.

It is the Chinese tombs and the slag hills
Usurp the soil, and not the soil retires.
1 Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.

Not to have fire is to be a skin that shrills.
The complete fire is death. From partial fires
3 The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.

It is the poems you have lost, the ills
 From missing dates, at which the heart expires.
 1 Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.
 3 The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.

WILLIAM EMPSON Aubade

Hours before dawn we were woken by the quake.
 My house was on a cliff. The thing could take
 Bookloads off shelves, break bottles in a row.
 Then the long pause and then the bigger shake.
 It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

And far too large for my feet to step by.
 I hoped that various buildings were brought low.
 The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

It seemed quite safe till she got up and dressed.
 The guarded tourist makes the guide the test.
 Then I said The Garden? Laughing she said No.
 Taxi for her and for me healthy rest.
 It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

The language problem but you have to try.
 Some solid ground for lying could she show?
 The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

None of these deaths were her point at all.
 The thing was that being woken he would bawl
 And finding her not in earshot he would know.
 I tried saying Half an Hour to pay this call.
 It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

I slept, and blank as that I would yet lie.
 Till you have seen what a threat holds below,
 The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

Tell me again about Europe and her pains,
 Who's tortured by the drought, who by the rains.
 Glut me with floods where only the swine can row
 Who cuts his throat and let him count his gains.
 It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

A bedshift flight to a Far Eastern sky.
 Only the same war on a stronger toe.
 The heart of standing is you cannot fly.

Tell me more quickly what I lost by this,
 Or tell me with less drama what they miss
 Who call no die a god for a good throw,
 Who say after two aliens had one kiss
 It seemed the best thing to be up and go.

But as to risings, I can tell you why.
 It is on contradiction that they grow.
 It seemed the best thing to be up and go.
 Up was the heartening and the strong reply.
 The heart of standing is we cannot fly.

LOUIS MACNEICE Meeting Point

Time was away and somewhere else,
 There were two glasses and two chairs
 And two people with the one pulse
 (Somebody stopped the moving stairs):
 Time was away and somewhere else.

And they were neither up nor down:
 The stream's music did not stop
 Flowing through heather, limpid brown,
 Although they sat in a coffee shop
 And they were neither up nor down.

The bell was silent in the air
 Holding its inverted poise –
 Between the clang and clang a flower,
 A brazen calyx of no noise:
 The bell was silent in the air.

The camels crossed the miles of sand
 That stretched around the cups and plates;
 The desert was their own, they planned
 To portion out the stars and dates:
 The camels crossed the miles of sand.

That steep field is, where the reaping
Has only just begun
On a wedge-shaped front, and the creeping
Steel edges glint in the sun.

See the cheese-like shape it is taking,
The sliced-off walls of the wheat
And the cheese-mite reapers making
Inroads there, in the heat?

It is Brueghel or Samuel Palmer,
Some painter, coming between
My eye and the truth of a farmer,
So massively sculpts the scene.

The sickles of poets dazzle
These eyes that were filmed from birth;
And the miller comes with an easel
To grind the fruits of earth.

1965

SYLVIA PLATH Sheep in Fog

The hills step off into whiteness.
People or stars
Regard me sadly, I disappoint them.

The train leaves a line of breath.
O slow
Horse the color of rust,

Hooves, dolorous bells –
All morning the
Morning has been blackening,

A flower left out.
My bones hold a stillness, the far
Fields melt my heart.

They threaten
To let me through to a heaven
Starless and fatherless, a dark water.

SYLVIA PLATH The Arrival of the Bee Box

I ordered this, this clean wood box
Square as a chair and almost too heavy to lift.
I would say it was the coffin of a midget
Or a square baby
Were there not such a din in it.

The box is locked, it is dangerous.
I have to live with it overnight
And I can't keep away from it.
There are no windows, so I can't see what is in there.
There is only a little grid, no exit.

I put my eye to the grid.
It is dark, dark,
With the swamy feeling of African hands
Minute and shrunk for export,
Black on black, angrily clambering.

How can I let them out?
It is the noise that appalls me most of all,
The unintelligible syllables.
It is like a Roman mob,
Small, taken one by one, but my god, together!

I lay my ear to furious Latin.
I am not a Caesar.
I have simply ordered a box of maniacs.
They can be sent back.
They can die, I need feed them nothing, I am the owner.

I wonder how hungry they are.
I wonder if they would forget me
If I just undid the locks and stood back and turned into a tree.
There is the laburnum, its blond colonnades,
And the petticoats of the cherry.

They might ignore me immediately
 In my moon suit and funeral veil.
 I am no source of honey
 So why should they turn on me?
 Tomorrow I will be sweet God, I will set them free.

The box is only temporary.

SYLVIA PLATH Edge

The woman is perfected.
 Her dead

Body wears the smile of accomplishment,
 The illusion of a Greek necessity

Flows in the scrolls of her toga,
 Her bare

Feet seem to be saying:
 We have come so far, it is over.

Each dead child coiled, a white serpent,
 One at each little

Pitcher of milk, now empty.
 She has folded

Them back into her body as petals
 Of a rose close when the garden

Stiffens and odors bleed
 From the sweet, deep throats of the night flower.

The moon has nothing to be sad about,
 Staring from her hood of bone.

She is used to this sort of thing.
 Her blacks crackle and drag.

BASIL BUNTING from Briggflatts

I

Brag, sweet tenor bull,
 descant on Rawthey's madrigal,
 each pebble its part
 for the fells' late spring.
 Dance tiptoe, bull,
 black against may.
 Ridiculous and lovely
 chase hurdling shadows
 morning into noon.
 May on the bull's hide
 and through the dale
 furrows fill with may,
 paving the slowworm's way.

A mason times his mallet
 to a lark's twitter,
 listening while the marble rests,
 lays his rule
 at a letter's edge,
 fingertips checking,
 till the stone spells a name
 naming none,
 a man abolished.
 Painful lark, labouring to rise!
 The solemn mallet says:
 In the grave's slot
 he lies. We rot.

Decay thrusts the blade,
 wheat stands in excrement
 trembling. Rawthey trembles.
 Tongue stumbles, ears err
 for fear of spring.
 Rub the stone with sand,
 wet sandstone rending
 roughness away. Fingers
 ache on the rubbing stone.

Per. But whether in paynefull love I pyne,
 Wil. hey ho pinching payne,
 Per. Or thrive in welth, she shalbe mine.
 Wil. but if thou can her obtaine.
 Per. And if for gracelesse greefe I dye,
 Wil. hey ho gracelesse griefe,
 Per. Witnesse, shee slewe me with her eye:
 Wil. let thy follye be the priefte.
 Per. And you, that sawe it, simple shepe,
 Wil. hey ho the fayre flocke,
 Per. For priefte thereof, my death shall weepe,
 Wil. and mone with many a mocke.
 Per. So leard I love on a hollye eve,
 Wil. hey ho holidaye,
 Per. That ever since my hart did greve.
 Wil. now endeth our roundelay.

60

65

70

EDMUND SPENSER Iambicum Trimeterum

1580

Unhappie Verse, the witnesse of my unhappie state,
 Make thy selfe fluttring wings of thy fast flying thought,
 And fly forth unto my Love, whersoever she be:
 Whether lying reastlesse in heavy bedde, or else
 Sitting so cheerelesse at the cheerfull boorde, or else
 Playing alone carelesse on hir heavenlie Virginals.
 If in Bed, tell hir, that my eyes can take no reste:
 If at Boorde, tell hir, that my mouth can eate no meate:
 If at hir Virginals, tel hir, I can heare no mirth:
 Asked why? say: Waking Love suffereth no sleepe:
 Say, that raging Love dothe appall the weake stomacke:
 Say, that lamenting Love marreth the Muscicall.
 Tell hir, that hir pleasures were wonte to lull me asleepe:
 Tell hir, that hir beautie was wonte to feede mine eyes:
 Tell hir, that hir sweete Tongue was wonte to make me mirth:
 Nowe doe I nightly waste, wanting my kindly reste:
 Nowe doe I dayly starve, wanting my lively foode:
 Nowe doe I alwayes dye, wanting thy timely mirth.
 And if I waste, who will bewaile my heavy chauce?
 And if I starve, who will record my cursed end?
 And if I dye, who will saye: *this was, Immerito?*

64 priefte proof

JASPER HEYWOOD *from the Latin of Seneca* [C.
Hercules Furens]

Goe hurles soules, whom mischief hath opprest
 Even in first porch of life but lately had,
 And fathers fury goe unhappy kind
 O litle children, by the way ful sad
 Of journey knowen.
 Goe see the angry kynges.

THOMAS WATSON My Love is Past

1582

Ye captive soules of blindefold Cyprians boate,
 Marke with advise in what estate yee stande,
 Your Boteman never whistles mearie noate,
 And Folly keeping sterne, still puttes from lande,
 And makes a sport to tosse you to and froe
 Twixt sighing windes, and surging waves of woe.
 On Beawties rocke she runnes you at her will,
 And holdes you in suspense twixt hope and feare,
 Where dying oft, yet are you living still,
 But such a life, as death much better were;
 Be therefore circumspect, and follow me,
 When Chaunce, or change of maners sets you free.
 Beware how you returne to seas againe:
 Hang up your votive tables in the quyre
 Of Cupids Church, in witnesse of the paine
 You suffer now by forced fond desire:
 Then hang your throughwett garmentes on the wall,
 And sing with me, that Love is mixt with gall.

ANONYMOUS A new Courtly Sonet, of the Lady Greensleeves. 1584
To the new tune of Greensleeves

Alas my love, ye do me wrong,
 to cast me off discourteously:
 And I have loved you so long,
 Delighting in your companie.

The Grasse-hopper

To My Noble Friend, Mr. CHARLES COTTON. Ode

Oh thou that swing'st upon the waving haire
Of some well-filled Oaten Beard,
Drunke ev'ry night with a Delicious teare
Dropt thee from Heav'n, where now th' art reard.

The Joyes of Earth and Ayre are thine intire,
That with thy feet and wings dost hop and flye;
And when thy Poppy workes thou dost retire
To thy Carv'd Acron-bed to lye.

Up with the Day, the Sun thou welcomst then,
Sportst in the guilt-plats of his Beames,
And all these merry dayes mak'st merry men,
Thy selfe, and Melancholy streames.

But ah the Sickle! Golden Eares are Cropt;
Ceres and *Bacchus* bid good night;
Sharpe frosty fingers all your Flowr's have topt,
And what sithes spar'd, Winds shave off quite.

Poore verdant foole! and now green Ice, thy Joys
Large and as lasting, as thy Peirch of Grasse,
Bid us lay in 'gainst Winter, Raine, and poize
Their foulds, with an o'reflowing glasse.

Thou best of *Men* and *Friends*! we will create
A Genuine Summer in each others breast;
And spite of this cold Time and frosen Fate
Thaw us a warme seate to our rest.

Our sacred harthes shall burne eternally
As Vestall Flames, the North-wind, he
Shall strike his frost-stretch'd Wings, dissolve and flye
This *Ætna* in Epitome.

Dropping *December* shall come weeping in,
Bewayle th' usurping of his Raigne;
But when in show'rs of old Greeke we beginne
Shall crie, he hath his Crowne againe!

To Althea from Prison

When Love with unconfin'd wings
Hovers within my Gates;
And my divine *Althea* brings
To whisper at the Grates:
When I lye tangled in her haire,
And fetter'd to her eye;
The *Gods* that wanton in the Aire,
Know no such Liberty.

When flowing Cups run swiftly round
With no allaying *Thames*,
Our carlesse heads with Roses bound,
Our hearts with Loyall Flames;
When thirsty grieve in Wine we steepe,
When Healths and draughts go free,
Fishes that tittle in the Deepe,
Know no such Liberty.

When (like committed Linnets) I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetnes, Mercy, Majesty,
And glories of my KING;
When I shall voyce aloud, how Good
He is, how Great should be;
Inlarg'd Winds that curl the Flood,
Know no such Liberty.

Stone Walls doe 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 soule am free;
Angels alone that sore above,
Enjoy such Liberty.

With Cedars, chosen by his hand,
 From *Lebanon*, he stores the Land.
 And makes the hollow Seas, that roar,
 Proclaim the Ambergris on shoar.
 He cast (of which we rather boast)
 The Gospels Pearl upon our Coast.
 And in these Rocks for us did frame
 A Temple, where to sound his Name.
 Oh let our Voice his Praise exalt,
 Till it arrive at Heavens Vault:
 Which thence (perhaps) rebounding, may
 Echo beyond the *Mexique Bay*.
 Thus sung they, in the *English* boat,
 An holy and a chearful Note,
 And all the way, to guide their Chime,
 With falling Oars they kept the time.

ANDREW MARVELL To His Coy Mistress

Had we but World enough, and Time,
 This coyneess Lady were no crime.
 We would sit down, and think which way
 To walk, and pass our long Loves Day.
 Thou by the *Indian Ganges* side
 Should'st 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 then 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 alwaies hear
 Times winged Charriot hurrying near:

And yonder all before us lye
 Desarts 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 preserv'd 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 glew
 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 am'rous birds of prey,
 Rather at once our Time devour,
 Than languish in his slow-chapt pow'r.
 Let us roll all our Strength, and all
 Our sweetness, up into one Ball;
 And tear our Pleasures with rough strife,
 Thorough the Iron gates of Life,
 Thus, though we cannot make our Sun
 Stand still, yet we will make him run.

ANDREW MARVELL The Mower to the Glo-Worms

Ye living Lamps, by whose dear light
 The Nightingale does sit so late,
 And studying all the Summer-night,
 Her matchless Songs does meditate;

Ye Country Comets, that portend
 No War, nor Princes funeral,
 Shining unto no higher end
 Then to presage the Grasses fall;

Ye Glo-worms, whose officious Flame
 To wandering Mowers shows the way,
 That in the Night have lost their aim,
 And after foolish Fires do stray;

Sin? O yes – we are sinners, a race
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good will toward men –
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord' – let me hear it again;
'Full of compassion and mercy – long-suffering.' Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder – the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last – I have heard it in church – and the last
may be first.

Suffering – O long-suffering – yes, as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the
snow.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never repented his
sin.

How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill moan like a
man?

Election, Election and Reprobation – it's all very well.
But I go tonight to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has looked into my

care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not
where.

And if *he* be lost – but to save *my* soul that is all your desire:
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark – go, go, you may leave me alone –
You never have borne a child – you are just as hard as a stone.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in the wind –
The snow and the sky so bright – he used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not from the gibbet for
hark!

Nay – you can hear it yourself – it is coming – shaking the walls –
Willy – the moon's in a cloud – Good-night. I am going. He calls.

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

JOSEPH SKIPSEY 'Get Up!'

'Get up!' the caller calls, 'Get up!'
And in the dead of night,
To win the bairns their bite and sup,
I rise a weary wight.

My flannel dudden donn'd, thrice o'er
My birds are kiss'd, and then
I with a whistle shut the door,
I may not ope again.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI 'Summer is Ended'

To think that this meaningless thing was ever a rose,
Scentless, colourless, *this!*
Will it ever be thus (who knows?)
smile
Thus with our bliss,
If we wait till the close?

Tho' we care not to wait for the end, there comes the end
 Sooner, later, at last,
 Which nothing can mar, nothing mend:
 An end locked fast,
 Bent we cannot re-bend.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS Inversnaid

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
 His rollrock highroad roaring down,
 In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
 Flutes and low to the lake falls home.
 A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-fróth
 Turns and twindles over the broth
 Of a pool so pitchblack, féll-frówning,
 It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
 Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
 Wiry heathpacks, fitches of fern,
 And the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
 Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
 O let them be left, wildness and wet;
 Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

(1918)

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
 As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
 Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
 Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
 Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
 Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
 Selves – goes its self, *myself* speaks and spells,
 Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*

I say more: the just man justices;
 Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
 Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is –
 Christ. For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
 Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
 To the Father through the features of men's faces.

(1918)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON *from Treasure Island*

Pirate Ditty

Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest –
 Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
 Drink and the devil had done for the rest –
 Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Last night we had a thunderstorm in style.
 The wild lightning streaked the airs,
 As though my God fell down a pair of stairs.
 The thunder boomed and bounded all the while;
 All cried and sat by water-side and stile –
 To mop our brow had been our chief of cares.
 I lay in bed with a Voltairean smile,
 The terror of good, simple guilty pairs,
 And made this rondeau in ironic style,
 Last night we had a thunderstorm in style.
 Our God the Father fell down-stairs,
 The stark blue lightning went its flight, the while,
 The very rain you might have heard a mile –
 The strenuous faithful buckled to their prayers.

Masculine Islam, the rule of the Just,
 Egyptian sand dunes and geometry,
 A theology of rifle-butts and executions:
 These are the places where the spirit dies.
 And now, in Desertrmartin's sandy light,
 I see a culture of twigs and bird-shit
 Waving a gaudy flag it loves and curses.

1984

SEAMUS HEANEY Widgeon

for *Paul Muldoon*

It had been badly shot.
 While he was plucking it
 he found, he says, the voice box –

like a flute stop
 in the broken windpipe –

and blew upon it
 unexpectedly
 his own small widgeon cries.

SEAMUS HEANEY *from Station Island*

VII

I had come to the edge of the water,
 soothed by just looking, idling over it
 as if it were a clear barometer

or a mirror, when his reflection
 did not appear but I sensed a presence
 entering into my concentration

on not being concentrated as he spoke
 my name. And though I was reluctant
 I turned to meet his face and the shock

is still in me at what I saw. His brow
 was blown open above the eye and blood
 had dried on his neck and cheek. 'Easy now,'
 he said, 'it's only me. You've seen men as raw
 after a football match . . . What time it was
 when I was wakened up I still don't know

but I heard this knocking, knocking, and it
 scared me, like the phone in the small hours,
 so I had the sense not to put on the light

but looked out from behind the curtain.
 I saw two customers on the doorstep
 and an old landrover with the doors open

parked on the street so I let the curtain drop;
 but they must have been waiting for it to move
 for they shouted to come down into the shop.

She started to cry then and roll round the bed,
 lamenting and lamenting to herself,
 not even asking who it was. 'Is your head

astray, or what's come over you?' I roared, more
 to bring myself to my senses
 than out of any real anger at her

for the knocking shook me, the way they kept it up,
 and her whingeing and half-screaming made it worse.
 All the time they were shouting, 'Shop!

Shop!' so I pulled on my shoes and a sportscoat
 and went back to the window and called out,
 'What do you want? Could you quieten the racket

or I'll not come down at all.' 'There's a child not well.
 Open up and see what you have got – pills
 or a powder or something in a bottle,'

one of them said. He stepped back off the footpath
 so I could see his face in the street lamp
 and when the other moved I knew them both.

Delight in Disorder

A sweet disorder in the dresse
 Kindles in cloathes a wantonnesse:
 A Lawne about the shoulders thrown
 Into a fine distraction:
 An erring Lace, which here and there
 Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:
 A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby
 Ribbands to flow confusedly:
 A winning wave (deserving Note)
 In the tempestuous petticoate:
 A carelesse shooe-string, in whose tye
 I see a wilde civility:
 Doe more bewitch me, then 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 to day,
 To morrow will be dying.

The glorious Lamp of Heaven, the Sun,
 The higher he's a getting;
 The sooner will his Race be run,
 And neerer 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, goe marry:
 For having lost but once your prime,
 You may for ever tarry.

The Comming of Good Luck

So Good-luck came, and on my roofe did light,
 Like noyse-lesse Snow; or as the dew of night:
 Not all at once, but gently, as the trees
 Are, by the Sun-beams, tickel'd by degrees.

To Meddowes

Ye have been fresh and green,
 Ye have been fill'd with flowers:
 And ye the Walks have been
 Where Maids have spent their houres.

You have beheld, how they
 With *Wicker Arks* did come
 To kisse, and beare away
 The richer Couslips home.

Y've heard them sweetly sing,
 And seen them in a Round:
 Each Virgin, like a Spring,
 With Hony-suckles crown'd.

But now, we see, none here,
 Whose silv'rie feet did tread,
 And with dishevell'd Haire,
 Adorn'd this smoother Mead.

Like Unthrifts, having spent,
 Your stock, and needy grown,
 Y're left here to lament
 Your poore estates, alone.

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.

§ § §

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE Frost at Midnight

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
 Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
 Came loud – and hark, again! loud as before.
 The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
 Have left me to that solitude, which suits
 Abstruser musings: save that at my side
 My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
 'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
 And vexes meditation with its strange
 And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
 This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
 With all the numberless goings-on of life,
 Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
 Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
 Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
 Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
 Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
 Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
 Making it a companionable form,
 Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
 By its own moods interprets, every where
 Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
 And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
 How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
 Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
 To watch that fluttering *stranger!* and as oft
 With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
 Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
 Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
 From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
 So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
 With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
 Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
 So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
 Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
 And so I brooded all the following morn,
 Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
 Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
 Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
 A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
 For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,
 Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
 My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
 Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
 Fill up the intersperséd vacancies
 And momentary pauses of the thought!
 My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
 With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
 And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
 And in far other scenes! For I was reared
 In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
 And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
 But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
 By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
 Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
 Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
 And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
 The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
 Of that eternal language, which thy God
 Utters, who from eternity doth teach
 Himself in all, and all things in himself.
 Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
 Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

1799

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH from *The Two-Part Prelude* of

1799

Was it for this

That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
That flowed along my dreams? For this didst thou,
O Derwent, travelling over the green plains
Near my 'sweet birthplace', didst thou, beauteous stream,
Make ceaseless music through the night and day,
Which with its steady cadence tempering
Our human waywardness, composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me
Among the fretful dwellings of mankind
A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
Which nature breathes among the fields and groves?
Beloved Derwent, fairest of all streams,
Was it for this that I, a four years' child,
A naked boy, among thy silent pools
Made one long bathing of a summer's day,
Basked in the sun, or plunged into thy streams,
Alternate, all a summer's day, or coursed
Over the sandy fields, and dashed the flowers
Of yellow groundsel – or, when crag and hill,
The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
Were bronzed with a deep radiance, stood alone
A naked savage in the thunder-shower?

And afterwards ('twas in a later day,
Though early), when upon the mountain-slope
The frost and breath of frosty wind had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
To wander half the night among the cliffs
And the smooth hollows where the woodcocks ran
Along the moonlight turf. In thought and wish
That time, my shoulder all with springes hung,
I was a fell destroyer. Gentle powers,
Who give us happiness and call it peace,
When scudding on from snare to snare I plied
My anxious visitation, hurrying on,
Still hurrying, hurrying onward, how my heart
Panted; among the scattered yew-trees and the crags
That looked upon me, how my bosom beat
With expectation! Sometimes strong desire
Resistless overpowered me, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toils
Became my prey, and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less in springtime, when on southern banks
The shining sun had from his knot of leaves
Decoyed the primrose flower, and when the vales
And woods were warm, was I a rover then
In the high places, on the lonesome peaks,
Among the mountains and the winds. Though mean,
And though inglorious, were my views, the end
Was not ignoble. Oh, when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
Or half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustained, and almost (as it seemed)
Suspended by the blast which blew amain
Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time,
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ears! The sky seemed not a sky
Of earth – and with what motion moved the clouds!

Crush – rush; – Soak'd Silks with wet white Satin mingle.
 Hengler! Madam! round whom all bright sparks lurk,
 Calls audibly on Mr and Mrs Pringle
 To study the Sublime, &c. – (vide Burke)
 All Noses are upturn'd! – Whish – ish! – On high
 The rocket rushes – trails – just steals in sight –
 Then droops and melts in bubbles of blue light –
 And Darkness reigns – Then balls flare up and die –
 Wheels whiz – smack crackers – serpents twist – and then
 Back to the cold transparent ham again!

ROBERT BROWNING 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: Frà Pandolf's hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
 'Frà 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
 Frà 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 pretence
 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!

ROBERT BROWNING from Waring

I

I

What's become of Waring
 Since he gave us all the slip,
 Chose land-travel or seafaring,
 Boots and chest or staff and scrip,
 Rather than pace up and down
 Any longer London town?

I know not how, turned sharply round,
 Laying her whole side on the sea
 As a leaping fish does; from the lee
 Into the weather, cut somehow
 Her sparkling path beneath our bow
 And so went off, as with a bound,
 Into the rosy and golden half
 O' the sky, to overtake the sun
 And reach the shore, like the sea-calf
 Its singing cave; yet I caught one
 Glance ere away the boat quite passed,
 And neither time nor toil could mar
 Those features: so I saw the last
 Of Waring! – You? Oh, never star
 Was lost here but it rose afar!
 Look East, where whole new thousands are!
 In Vishnu-land what Avatar?

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON Ulysses

It little profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
 Matched with an agèd 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 enjoyed
 Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
 Through 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 honoured 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 wherethrough
 Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
 As though 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 through 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 toiled, 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,
 'Tis 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.
 Though much is taken, much abides; and though
 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.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING Grief

I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless;
 That only men incredulous of despair,
 Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
 Beat upward to God's throne in loud access
 Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness,
 In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare
 Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
 Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
 Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death –
 Most like a monumental statue set
 In everlasting watch and moveless woe
 Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
 Touch it; the marble eyelids are not wet:
 If it could weep, it could arise and go.

1844

WILLIAM BARNES The Clote

(Water-Lily)

O zummer clote! when the brook's a-gliden
 So slow an' smooth down his zedgy bed,
 Upon thy broad leaves so seäfe a-riden
 The water's top wi' thy yellow head,
 By alder's heads, O,
 An' bulrush beds, O,
 Thou then dost float, goolden zummer clote!

The grey-bough'd withy's a-leänèn lowly
 Above the water thy leaves do hide;
 The bendèn bulrush, a-swayèn slowly,
 Do skirt in zummer thy river's zide;
 An' perch in shoals, O,
 Do vill the holes, O,
 Where thou dost float, goolden zummer clote!
 Oh! when thy brook-drinkèn flow'r's a-blowèn,
 The burnèn zummer's a-zettèn in;
 The time o' greenness, the time o' mowèn,
 When in the hay-yield, wi' zunburnt skin,
 The vo'k do drink, O,
 Upon the brink, O,
 Where thou dost float, goolden zummer clote!
 Wi' eärms a-spreadèn, an' cheeks a-blowèn,
 How proud wer I when I vu'st could zwim
 Athirt the pléace where thou bist a-growèn,
 Wi' thy long more vrom the bottom dim;
 While cows, knee-high, O,
 In brook, wer nigh, O,
 Where thou dost float, goolden zummer clote!
 Ov all the brooks drough the meäds a-windèn,
 Ov all the meäds by a river's brim,
 There's nwone so feäir o' my own heart's vindèn,
 As where the maidens do zee thee zwim,
 An' stan' to teäke, O,
 Wi' long-stemm'd reäke, O,
 Thy flow'r afloat, goolden zummer clote!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH The Simplon Pass

1845

—Brook and road
 Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
 And with them did we journey several hours
 At a slow step. The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
 The stationary blasts of waterfalls,

Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
 That budding slant in furrow-cloven falls
 To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
 But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
 To find him in the valley; let the wild
 Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
 The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
 Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
 That like a broken purpose waste in air:
 So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
 Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
 Arise to thee; the children call, and I
 Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound;
 Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
 And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay
 Listening.

1848

JOHN CLARE 'I Am'

I am – yet what I am, none cares or knows;
 My friends forsake me like a memory lost: –
 I am the self-consumer of my woes; –
 They rise and vanish in oblivion's host,
 Like shadows in love's frenzied stifled throes: –
 And yet I am, and live – like vapours tost
 Into the nothingness of scorn and noise, –
 Into the living sea of waking dreams,
 Where there is neither sense of life or joys,
 But the vast shipwreck of my life's esteems;
 Even the dearest, that I love the best
 Are strange – nay, rather stranger than the rest.

I long for scenes, where man hath never trod
 A place where woman never smiled or wept
 There to abide with my Creator, God;
 And sleep as I in childhood, sweetly slept,
 Untroubling, and untroubled where I lie,
 The grass below – above the vaulted sky.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

1849

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.

MATTHEW ARNOLD *from Resignation. To Fausta*

[The Poet]

He sees the gentle stir of birth
 When morning purifies the earth;
 He leans upon a gate and sees
 The pastures, and the quiet trees.
 Low, woody hill, with gracious bound,
 Folds the still valley almost round;
 The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
 Is answer'd from the depth of dawn;
 In the hedge straggling to the stream,
 Pale, dew-drench'd, half-shut roses gleam;
 But, where the farther side slopes down,
 He sees the drowsy new-waked clown
 In his white quaint-embroider'd frock
 Make, whistling, tow'rd his mist-wreathed flock –
 Slowly, behind his heavy tread,
 The wet, flower'd grass heaves up its head.
 Lean'd on his gate, he gazes – tears
 Are in his eyes, and in his ears
 The murmur of a thousand years.
 Before him he sees life unroll,
 A placid and continuous whole –
 That general life, which does not cease,
 Whose secret is not joy, but peace;
 That life, whose dumb wish is not miss'd
 If birth proceeds, if things subsist;
 The life of plants, and stones, and rain,
 The life he craves – if not in vain
 Fate gave, what chance shall not control,
 His sad lucidity of soul.

And the cave just under, with a voice still so hollow
 That it seems to call out to me from forty years ago,
 When you were all aglow,
 And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow!

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,
 The waked birds preen and the seals flop lazily,
 Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,
 For the stars close their shutters and the dawn whitens hazily.
 Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,
 The bringing me here; nay, bring me here again!
 I am just the same as when
 Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers.

At Castle Boterel

As I drive to the junction of lane and highway,
 And the drizzle bedrenches the waggonette,
 I look behind at the fading byway,
 And see on its slope, now glistening wet,
 Distinctly yet

Myself and a girlish form benighted
 In dry March weather. We climb the road
 Beside a chaise. We had just alighted
 To ease the sturdy pony's load
 When he sighed and slowed.

What we did as we climbed, and what we talked of
 Matters not much, nor to what it led, -
 Something that life will not be balked of
 Without rude reason till hope is dead,
 And feeling fled.

It filled but a minute. But was there ever
 A time of such quality, since or before,
 In that hill's story? To one mind never,
 Though it has been climbed, foot-swift, foot-sore,
 By thousands more.

Primaeval rocks form the road's steep border,
 And much have they faced there, first and last,
 Of the transitory in Earth's long order;
 But what they record in colour and cast
 Is - that we two passed.

And to me, though Time's unflinching rigour,
 In mindless rote, has ruled from sight
 The substance now, one phantom figure
 Remains on the slope, as when that night
 Saw us alight.

I look and see it there, shrinking, shrinking,
 I look back at it amid the rain
 For the very last time; for my sand is sinking,
 And I shall traverse old love's domain
 Never again.



W. B. YEATS The Cold Heaven

Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting heaven
 That seemed as though ice burned and was but the more ice,
 And thereupon imagination and heart were driven
 So wild that every casual thought of that and this
 Vanished, and left but memories, that should be out of season
 With the hot blood of youth, of love crossed long ago;
 And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,
 Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,
 Riddled with light. Ah! when the ghost begins to quicken,
 Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent
 Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken
 By the injustice of the skies for punishment?

ALUN LEWIS Raiders' Dawn

Softly the civilized
Centuries fall,
Paper on paper,
Peter on Paul.

And lovers waking
From the night –
Eternity's masters,
Slaves of Time –
Recognize only
The drifting white
Fall of small faces
In pits of lime.

Blue necklace left
On a charred chair
Tells that Beauty
Was startled there.

NORMAN CAMERON Green, Green is El Aghir

Sprawled on the crates and sacks in the rear of the truck,
I was gummy-mouthed from the sun and the dust of the track.
And the two Arab soldiers I'd taken on as hitch-hikers
At a torrid petrol-dump, had been there on their hunkers
Since early morning. I said, in a kind of French
'On m'a dit, qu'il y a une belle source d'eau fraîche.
Plus loin, à El Aghir' . . .

It was eighty more kilometres
Until round a corner we heard a splashing of waters,
And there, in a green, dark street, was a fountain with two faces
Discharging both ways, from full-throated faucets
Into basins, thence into troughs and thence into brooks.
Our negro corporal driver slammed his brakes,
And we yelped and leapt from the truck and went at the double

To fill our bidons and bottles and drink and dabble.
Then, swollen with water, we went to an inn for wine.
The Arabs came, too, though their faith might have stood between.
'After all,' they said, 'it's a boisson,' without contrition.

Green, green is El Aghir. It has a railway-station,
And the wealth of its soil has borne many another fruit,
A mairie, a school and an elegant Salle de Fêtes.
Such blessings, as I remarked, in effect, to the waiter,
Are added unto them that have plenty of water.

STEVIE SMITH Bog-Face

Dear little Bog-Face,
Why are you so cold?
And why do you lie with your eyes shut? –
You are not very old.

I am a Child of this World,
And a Child of Grace,
And Mother, I shall be glad when it is over,
I am Bog-Face.

STEVIE SMITH Dirge

From a friend's friend I taste friendship,
From a friend's friend love,
My spirit in confusion,
Long years I strove,
But now I know that never
Nearer I shall move,
Than a friend's friend to friendship,
To love than a friend's love.

Into the dark night
Resignedly I go,
I am not so afraid of the dark night
As the friends I do not know,
I do not fear the night above,
As I fear the friends below.