

AS AND A LEVEL

ENGLISH LITERATURE

**DRAMA AND POETRY PRE-1900:
SELECTED POEMS**

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Version 3

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CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

SELECTED POEMS

SONG: 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 5
 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; 10
 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, 15
 And haply may forget.

REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away,
 Gone far away into the silent land;
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,
 Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
 Remember me when no more day by day 5
 You tell me of our future that you planned:
 Only remember me; you understand
 It will be late to counsel then or pray.
 Yet if you should forget me for a while
 And afterwards remember, do not grieve: 10
 For if the darkness and corruption leave
 A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
 Better by far you should forget and smile
 Than that you should remember and be sad.

FROM THE ANTIQUE

It's a weary life, it is; she said: –

Doubly blank in a woman's lot:
I wish and I wish I were a man;
Or, better than any being, were not:

Were nothing at all in all the world, 5
Not a body and not a soul;
Not so much as a grain of dust
Or drop of water from pole to pole.

Still the world would wag on the same, 10
Still the seasons go and come;
Blossoms bloom as in days of old,
Cherries ripen and wild bees hum.

None would miss me in all the world, 15
How much less would care or weep:
I should be nothing; while all the rest
Would wake and weary and fall asleep.

ECHO

Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears, 5
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
Whose waking should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;
Where thirsting longing eyes 10
Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
My very life again tho' cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give 15
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

SHUT OUT

The door was shut. I looked between
 Its iron bars; and saw it lie,
 My garden, mine, beneath the sky,
 Pied with all flowers bedewed and green:

From bough to bough the song-birds crossed, 5
 From flower to flower the moths and bees;
 With all its nests and stately trees
 It had been mine, and it was lost.

A shadowless spirit kept the gate,
 Blank and unchanging like the grave. 10
 I peering thro' said: "Let me have
 Some buds to cheer my outcast state."

He answered not. "Or give me, then,
 But one small twig from shrub or tree;
 And bid my home remember me 15
 Until I come to it again."

The spirit was silent; but he took
 Mortar and stone to build a wall;
 He left no loophole great or small
 Thro' which my straining eyes might look: 20

So now I sit here quite alone
 Blinded with tears; nor grieve for that,
 For nought is left worth looking at
 Since my delightful land is gone.

A violet bed is budding near, 25
 Wherein a lark has made her nest:
 And good they are, but not the best;
 And dear they are, but not so dear.

**IN THE ROUND TOWER AT JHANSI
 (INDIAN MUTINY)**

A hundred, a thousand to one; even so;
 Not a hope in the world remained:
 The swarming howling wretches below
 Gained and gained and gained.

Skene looked at his pale young wife: – 5
 "Is the time come?" – "The time is come!" –
 Young, strong, and so full of life:
 The agony struck them dumb.

Close his arm about her now,
 Close her cheek to his, 10
 Close the pistol to her brow –
 God forgive them this!

"Will it hurt much?" – "No, mine own:
 I wish I could bear the pang for both."
 "I wish I could bear the pang alone: 15
 Courage, dear, I am not loth."

Kiss and kiss: "It is not pain
 Thus to kiss and die.
 One kiss more." – "And yet one again." –
 "Good bye." – "Good bye." 20

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell 5
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes; 10
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life 5
Is come, my love is come to me.

MAUDE CLARE

Out of the church she followed them

With a lofty step and mien:
His bride was like a village maid,
Maude Clare was like a queen.

“Son Thomas,” his lady mother said, 5
With smiles, almost with tears:
“May Nell and you but live as true
As we have done for years;

“Your father thirty years ago 10
Had just your tale to tell;
But he was not so pale as you,
Nor I so pale as Nell.”

My lord was pale with inward strife,
And Nell was pale with pride;
My lord gazed long on pale Maude Clare 15
Or ever he kissed the bride.

“Lo, I have brought my gift, my lord,
Have brought my gift,” she said:
“To bless the hearth, to bless the board,
To bless the marriage-bed. 20

“Here’s my half of the golden chain
You wore about your neck,
That day we waded ankle-deep
For lilies in the beck:

“Here’s my half of the faded leaves 25
We plucked from the budding bough,
With feet amongst the lily leaves, –
The lilies are budding now.”

He strove to match her scorn with scorn,
He faltered in his place: 30
“Lady, he said, – “Maude Clare,” he said, –
“Maude Clare:” – and hid his face.

She turn’d to Nell: “My Lady Nell,
I have a gift for you;
Tho’, were it fruit, the bloom were gone, 35
Or, were it flowers, the dew.

“Take my share of a fickle heart,
Mine of a paltry love:

Take it or leave it as you will,
I wash my hands thereof.” 40

“And what you leave,” said Nell, “I’ll take,
And what you spurn, I’ll wear;
For he’s my lord for better and worse,
And him I love, Maude Clare.

“Yea, tho’ you’re taller by the head, 45
More wise, and much more fair;
I’ll love him till he loves me best,
Me best of all, Maude Clare.”

UP-HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day’s journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting place? 5
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before. 10
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek? 15
Yea, beds for all who come.

“NO, THANK YOU, JOHN.”

I never said I loved you, John:

Why will you teaze me day by day,
And wax a weariness to think upon
With always “do” and “pray”?

You know I never loved you, John; 5
No fault of mine made me your toast:
Why will you haunt me with a face as wan
As shows an hour-old ghost?

I dare say Meg or Moll would take
Pity upon you, if you’d ask: 10
And pray don’t remain single for my sake
Who can’t perform that task.

I have no heart? – Perhaps I have not;
But then you’re mad to take offence
That I don’t give you what I have not got: 15
Use your own common sense.

Let bygones be bygones:
Don’t call me false, who owed not to be true:
I’d rather answer “No” to fifty Johns
Than answer “Yes” to you. 20

Let’s mar our pleasant days no more,
Song-birds of passage, days of youth:
Catch at today, forget the days before:
I’ll wink at your untruth.

Let us strike hands as hearty friends; 25
No more, no less; and friendship’s good:
Only don’t keep in view ulterior ends,
And points not understood

In open treaty. Rise above
Quibbles and shuffling off and on: 30
Here’s friendship for you if you like; but love, –
No, thank you, John.

GOOD FRIDAY

Am I stone and not a sheep
That I can stand, O Christ, beneath Thy Cross,
To number drop by drop Thy Blood’s slow loss,
And yet not weep?

Not so those women loved 5
Who with exceeding grief lamented Thee;
Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly;
Not so the thief was moved;

Not so the Sun and Moon 10
Which hid their faces in starless sky,
A horror of great darkness at broad noon–
I, only I.

Yet give not o’er,
But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock;
Greater than Moses, turn and look once more 15
And smite a rock.

GOBLIN MARKET

Morning and evening		Their hungry thirsty roots?"	45
Maids heard the goblins cry:		"Come buy," call the goblins	
"Come buy our orchard fruits,		Hobbling down the glen.	
Come buy, come buy:		"Oh," cried Lizzie, "Laura, Laura,	
Apples and quinces,	5	You should not peep at goblin men."	
Lemons and oranges,		Lizzie covered up her eyes,	50
Plump unpecked cherries,		Covered close lest they should look;	
Melons and raspberries,		Laura reared her glossy head,	
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,		And whispered like the restless brook:	
Swart-headed mulberries,	10	"Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,	
Wild free-born cranberries,		Down the glen tramp little men.	55
Crab-apples, dewberries,		One hauls a basket,	
Pine-apples, blackberries,		One bears a plate,	
Apricots, strawberries;—		One lugs a golden dish	
All ripe together	15	Of many pounds weight.	
In summer weather,—		How fair the vine must grow	60
Morns that pass by,		Whose grapes are so luscious;	
Fair eves that fly;		How warm the wind must blow	
Come buy, come buy:		Thro' those fruit bushes."	
Our grapes fresh from the vine,	20	"No," said Lizzie: "No, no, no;	
Pomegranates full and fine,		Their offers should not charm us,	65
Dates and sharp bullaces,		Their evil gifts would harm us."	
Rare pears and greengages,		She thrust a dimpled finger	
Damsons and bilberries,		In each ear, shut eyes and ran:	
Taste them and try:	25	Curious Laura chose to linger	
Currants and gooseberries,		Wondering at each merchant man.	70
Bright-fire-like barberries,		One had a cat's face,	
Figs to fill your mouth,		One whisked a tail,	
Citrons from the South,		One tramped at a rat's pace,	
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;	30	One crawled like a snail,	
Come buy, come buy."		One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,	75
		One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.	
		She heard a voice like voice of doves	
		Cooing all together:	
Evening by evening		They sounded kind and full of loves	
Among the brookside rushes,		In the pleasant weather.	80
Laura bowed her head to hear,			
Lizzie veiled her blushes:	35	Laura stretched her gleaming neck	
Crouching close together		Like a rush-imbedded swan,	
In the cooling weather,		Like a lily from the beck,	
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,		Like a moonlit poplar branch,	
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.		Like a vessel at the launch	85
"Lie close," Laura said,	40	When its last restraint is gone.	
Pricking up her golden head:			
"We must not look at goblin men,		Backwards up the mossy glen	
We must not buy their fruits:		Turned and trooped the goblin men,	
Who knows upon what soil they fed			

With their shrill repeated cry, "Come buy, come buy;"	90	She sucked and sucked and sucked the more Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;	135
When they reached where Laura was They stood stock still upon the moss, Leering at each other, Brother with queer brother; Signalling each other, Brother with sly brother. One set his basket down, One reared his plate; One began to weave a crown Of tendrils, leaves and rough nuts brown (Men sell not such in any town); One heaved the golden weight Of dish and fruit to offer her: "Come buy, come buy," was still their cry.	95	As she turned home alone.	140
Laura stared but did not stir, Longed but had no money: The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste In tones as smooth as honey, The cat-faced purr'd, The rat-paced spoke a word Of welcome, and the snail-paced was even heard; One parrot-voiced and jolly Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly;"— One whistled like a bird.	100	Lizzie met her at the gate Full of wise upbraidings: "Dear, you should not stay so late, Twilight is not good for maidens; Should not loiter in the glen In the haunts of goblin men. Do you not remember Jeanie, How she met them in the moonlight, Took their gifts both choice and many, Ate their fruits and wore their flowers Plucked from bowers Where summer ripens at all hours? But ever in the noonlight She pined and pined away; Sought them by night and day, Found them no more but dwindled and grew grey; Then fell with the first snow, While to this day no grass will grow Where she lies low:	145
But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste: "Good folk, I have no coin; To take were to purloin: I have no copper in my purse, I have no silver either, And all my gold is on the furze That shakes in windy weather Above the rusty heather." "You have much gold upon your head," They answered all together: "Buy from us with a golden curl."	105	I planted daisies there a year ago That never blow. You should not loiter so." "Nay, hush," said Laura: "Nay, hush, my sister: I ate and ate my fill, Yet my mouth waters still; Tomorrow night I will Buy more:" and kissed her: "Have done with sorrow; I'll bring you plums tomorrow Fresh on their mothers twigs, Cherries worth getting; You cannot think what figs My teeth have met in, What melons icy-cold Piled on a dish of gold Too huge for me to hold, What peaches with a velvet nap,	150
She clipped a precious golden lock, She dropped a tear more rare than pearl, Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red: Sweeter than honey from the rock, Stronger than man-rejoicing wine, Clearer than water flowed that juice; She never tasted such before, How should it cloy with length of use?	110		
	115		160
	120		165
	125		170
	130		175

Pellucid grapes without one seed: Odorous indeed must be the mead Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink With lilies at the brink, And sugar-sweet their sap." 180	Come, Laura, not another maiden lags, No wilful squirrel wags, The beasts and birds are fast asleep." 225 But Laura loitered still among the rushes And said the bank was steep.
Golden head by golden head, Like two pigeons in one nest 185 Folded in each other's wings, They lay down in their curtained bed: Like two blossoms on one stem, Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow, Like two wands of ivory 190 Tipped with gold for awful kings. Moon and stars gazed in at them, Wind sang to them lullaby, Lumbering owls forbore to fly, Not a bat flapped to and fro 195 Round their rest: Cheek to cheek and breast to breast Locked together in one nest.	And said the hour was early still, The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill: Listening ever, but not catching 230 The customary cry, "Come buy, come buy," With its iterated jingle Of sugar-baited words: Not for all her watching 235 Once discerning even one goblin Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling; Let alone the herds That used to tramp along the glen, In groups or single, 240 Of brisk fruit-merchant men. Till Lizzie urged, "O Laura, come; I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look: You should not loiter longer at this brook: Come with me home. 245 The stars rise, the moon bends her arc, Each glowworm winks her spark, Let us get home before the night grows dark: For clouds may gather Tho' this is summer weather, 250 Put out the lights and drench us thro'; Then if we lost our way what should we do?"
Early in the morning When the first cock crowed his warning, 200 Neat like bees, as sweet and busy, Laura rose with Lizzie: Fetched in honey, milked the cows, Aired and set to rights the house, Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat, 205 Cakes for dainty mouths to eat, Next churned butter, whipped up cream, Fed their poultry, sat and sewed; Talked as modest maidens should: Lizzie with an open heart, 210 Laura in an absent dream, One content, one sick in part; One warbling for the mere bright day's delight, One longing for the night.	Laura turned as cold as stone To find her sister heard that cry alone, That goblin cry 255 "Come buy our fruits, come buy." Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit? Must she no more such succous pasture find, Gone deaf and blind? Her tree of life drooped from the root: 260 She said not one word in her heart's sore ache; But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning, Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way; So crept to bed, and lay Silent till Lizzie slept; 265 Then sat up in passionate yearning,
At length slow evening came: 215 They went with pitchers to the reedy brook; Lizzie most placid in her look, Laura most like a leaping flame. They drew the gurgling water from its deep; Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags, 220 Then turning homewards said: "The sunset flushes Those furthest loftiest crags;	

And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept As if her heart would break.		Longed to buy fruit to comfort her, But feared to pay too dear. She thought of Jeanie in her grave, Who should have been a bride; But who for joys brides hope to have Fell sick and died In her gay prime, In earliest Winter time, With the first glazing rime, With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time.	310 315
Day after day, night after night, Laura kept watch in vain In sullen silence of exceeding pain. She never caught again the goblin cry: "Come buy, come buy;"— She never spied the goblin men Hawking their fruits along the glen: But when the noon waxed bright Her hair grew thin and gray; She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn To swift decay and burn Her fire away.	270 275 280	Till Laura dwindling Seemed knocking at Death's door: Then Lizzie weighed no more Better and worse; But put a silver penny in her purse, Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze At twilight, halted by the brook: And for the first time in her life Began to listen and look.	320
One day remembering her kernel-stone She set it by a wall that faced the south; Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root, Watched it for a waxing shoot, But there came none; It never saw the sun, It never felt the trickling moisture run: While with sunk eyes and faded mouth She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees False waves in desert drouth With shade of leaf-crowned trees, And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.	285 290	Laughed every goblin When they spied her peeping: Came towards her hobbling, Flying, running, leaping, Puffing and blowing, Chuckling, clapping, crowing, Clucking and gobbling, Mopping and mowing, Full of airs and graces, Pulling wry faces, Demure grimaces, Cat-like and rat-like, Ratel- and wombat-like, Snail-paced in a hurry, Parrot-voiced and whistler, Helter skelter, hurry skurry, Chattering like magpies, Fluttering like pigeons, Gliding like fishes,— Hugged her and kissed her, Squeezed and caressed her: Stretched up their dishes, Panniers, and plates: "Look at our apples Russet and dun,	330 335 340 345 350
She no more swept the house, Tended the fowls or cows, Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat Brought water from the brook: But sat down listless in the chimney-nook And would not eat.	295		
Tender Lizzie could not bear To watch her sister's cankerous care Yet not to share. She night and morning Caught the goblins' cry: "Come buy our orchard fruits, Come buy, come buy:"— Beside the brook, along the glen, She heard the tramp of goblin men, The voice and stir Poor Laura could not hear;	300 305		

Bob at our cherries, Bite at our peaches, Citrons and dates, Grapes for the asking, Pears red with basking Out in the sun, Plums on their twigs; Pluck them and suck them, Pomegranates, figs.”–	355	They trod and hustled her, Elbowed and jostled her, Clawed with their nails, Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking, Tore her gown and soiled her stocking, Twitched her hair out by the roots, Stamped upon her tender feet, Held her hands and squeezed their fruits Against her mouth to make her eat.	400
“Good folk,” said Lizzie, Mindful of Jeanie: “Give me much and many.”– Held out her apron, Tossed them her penny. “Nay, take a seat with us, Honour and eat with us,” They answered grinning: “Our feast is but beginning. Night yet is early, Warm and dew-pearly, Wakeful and starry: Such fruits as these No man can carry; Half their bloom would fly, Half their dew would dry, Half their flavour would pass by. Sit down and feast with us, Be welcome guest with us, Cheer you and rest with us.”– “Thank you,” said Lizzie: “But one waits At home alone for me: So without any further parleying, If you will not sell me any Of your fruits tho’ much and many, Give me back my silver penny I tossed you for a fee.”– They began to scratch their pates, No longer wagging, purring, But visibly demurring, Grunting and snarling. One called her proud, Cross-grained, uncivil; Their tones waxed loud, Their looks were evil. Lashing their tails	365	White and golden Lizzie stood, Like a lily in a flood, – Like a rock of blue-veined stone Lashed by tides obstreperously, – Like a beacon left alone In a hoary roaring sea, Sending up a golden fire, – Like a fruit-crowned orange tree White with blossoms honey-sweet Sore beset by wasp and bee, – Like a royal virgin town Topped with gilded dome and spire Close beleaguered by a fleet Mad to tug her standard down.	410
	370		415
	375		420
	380	One may lead a horse to water, Twenty cannot make him drink. Tho’ the goblins cuffed and caught her, Coaxed and fought her, Bullied and besought her, Scratched her, pinched her black as ink, Kicked and knocked her, Mauled and mocked her, Lizzie uttered not a word; Would not open lip from lip Lest they should cram a mouthful in: But laughed in heart to feel the drip Of juice that syrugged all her face, And lodged in dimples of her chin, And streaked her neck which quaked like curd. At last the evil people Worn out by her resistance Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit Along whichever road they took, Not leaving root or stone or shoot; Some writhed into the ground, Some dived into the brook	425
	385		430
	390		435
	395		440

With ring and ripple, Some scudded on the gale without a sound, Some vanished in the distance.	445	Tears once again Refreshed her shrunken eyes, Dropping like rain After long sultry drouth;	490
In a smart, ache, tingle, Lizzie went her way; Knew not was it night or day; Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze, Threaded copse and dingle, And heard her penny jingle Bouncing in her purse, Its bounce was music to her ear. She ran and ran As if she feared some goblin man Dogged her with gibe or curse Or something worse: But not one goblin skurried after, Nor was she pricked by fear; The kind heart made her windy-paced That urged her home quite out of breath with haste And inward laughter.	450	Her lips began to scorch, That juice was wormwood to her tongue, She loathed the feast: Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung, Rent all her robe, and wrung Her hands in lamentable haste, And beat her breast. Her locks streamed like the torch Borne by a racer at full speed, Or like the mane of horses in their flight, Or like an eagle when she stems the light Straight toward the sun, Or like a caged thing freed, Or like a flying flag when armies run.	495
She cried "Laura," up the garden, "Did you miss me? Come and kiss me. Never mind my bruises, Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices Squeezed from goblin fruits for you, Goblin pulp and goblin dew. Eat me, drink me, love me;	465	Swift fire spread thro' her veins, knocked at her heart, Met the fire smouldering there And overbore its lesser flame; She gorged on bitterness without a name: Ah! fool, to choose such part Of soul-consuming care! Sense failed in the mortal strife: Like the watch-tower of a town Which an earthquake shatters down, Like a lightning-stricken mast, Like a wind-uprooted tree Spun about, Like a foam-topped waterspout Cast down headlong in the sea, She fell at last; Pleasure past and anguish past, Is it death or is it life?	510
Laura, make much of me: For your sake I have braved the glen And had to do with goblin merchant men."			
Laura started from her chair, Flung her arms up in the air, Clutched her hair: "Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted For my sake the fruit forbidden? Must your light like mine be hidden, Your young life like mine wasted, Undone in mine undoing And ruined in my ruin, Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?" – She clung about her sister, Kissed and kissed and kissed her:	475	Life out of death. That night long Lizzie watched by her, Counted her pulse's flagging stir, Felt for her breath, Held water to her lips, and cooled her face With tears and fanning leaves: But when the first birds chirped about their eaves, And early reapers plodded to the place	520
	480		525
	485		530

Of golden sheaves,
 And dew-wet grass
 Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
 And new buds with new day 535
 Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
 Laura awoke as from a dream,
 Laughed in the innocent old way,
 Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
 Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey, 540
 Her breath was as sweet as May
 And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
 Afterwards, when both were wives
 With children of their own; 545
 Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
 Their lives bound up in tender lives;
 Laura would call the little ones
 And tell them of her early prime,
 Those pleasant days long gone 550
 Of not-returning time:
 Would talk about the haunted glen,
 The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
 Their fruits like honey to the throat
 But poison in the blood; 555
 (Men sell not such in any town:)
 Would tell them how her sister stood
 In deadly peril to do her good,
 And win the fiery antidote:
 Then joining hands to little hands 560
 Would bid them cling together,
 "For there is no friend like a sister
 In calm or stormy weather;
 To cheer one on the tedious way,
 To fetch one if one goes astray, 565
 To lift one if one totters down,
 To strengthen whilst one stands."

TWICE

I took my heart in my hand
 (O my love, O my love),
 I said: Let me fall or stand,
 Let me live or die,
 But this once hear me speak— 5
 (O my love, O my love)—
 Yet a woman's words are weak;
 You should speak, not I.

You took my heart in your hand
 With a friendly smile, 10
 With a critical eye you scanned,
 Then set it down,
 And said: It is still unripe,
 Better wait awhile;
 Wait until the skylarks pipe, 15
 Till the corn grows brown.

As you set it down it broke—
 Broke, but I did not wince;
 I smiled at the speech you spoke,
 At your judgement that I heard: 20
 But I have not often smiled
 Since then, nor questioned since,
 Nor cared for corn-flowers wild,
 Nor sung with the singing bird.

I take my heart in my hand, 25
 O my God, O my God,
 My broken heart in my hand:
 Thou hast seen, judge Thou.
 My hope was written in sand,
 O my God, O my God; 30
 Now let Thy judgement stand—
 Yea, judge me now.

This contemned of a man,
 This marred one heedless day,
 This heart take Thou to scan 35
 Both within and without:
 Refine with fire its gold,
 Purge Thou its dross away—
 Yea hold it in Thy hold,
 Whence none can pluck it out. 40

I take my heart in my hand—
 I shall not die, but live—

Before Thy face I stand;
 I, for Thou callest such:
 All that I have I bring, 45
 All that I am I give,
 Smile Thou and I shall sing,
 But shall not question much.

WINTER: MY SECRET

I tell my secret? No indeed, not I:
 Perhaps some day, who knows?
 But not today; it froze, and blows, and snows,
 And you're too curious: fie!
 You want to hear it? well: 5
 Only, my secret's mine, and I won't tell.

Or, after all, perhaps there's none:
 Suppose there is no secret after all,
 But only just my fun.

Today's a nipping day, a biting day; 10
 In which one wants a shawl,
 A veil, a cloak, and other wraps:
 I cannot ope to every one who taps,
 And let the draughts come whistling thro' my hall;
 Come bounding and surrounding me, 15
 Come buffeting, astounding me,
 Nipping and clipping thro' my wraps and all.

I wear my mask for warmth: who ever shows
 His nose to Russian snows
 To be pecked at by every wind that blows? 20
 You would not peck? I thank you for good will,
 Believe, but leave that truth untested still.

Spring's an expansive time: yet I don't trust
 March with its peck of dust,
 Nor April with its rainbow-crowned brief showers, 25
 Nor even May, whose flowers
 One frost may wither thro' the sunless hours.

Perhaps some languid summer day,
 When drowsy birds sing less and less,
 And golden fruit is ripening to excess, 30
 If there's not too much sun nor too much cloud,
 And the warm wind is neither still nor loud,
 Perhaps my secret I may say,
 Or you may guess.

SOEUR LOUISE DE LA MISÉRICORDE

I have desired, and I have been desired;
But now the days are over of desire,
Now dust and dying embers mock my fire;
Where is the hire for which my life was hired?
Oh vanity of vanities, desire! 5

Longing and love, pangs of a perished pleasure,
Longing and love, a disenkindled fire,
And memory a bottomless gulf of mire,
And love a fount of tears outrunning measure;
Oh vanity of vanities, desire! 10

Now from my heart, love's deathbed, trickles, trickles,
Drop by drop slowly, drop by drop of fire,
The dross of life, of love, of spent desire;
Alas, my rose of life all gone to prickles,—
Oh vanity of vanities, desire! 15

Oh vanity of vanities, desire;
Stunting my hope which might have strained up higher,
Turning my garden plot to barren mire;
Oh death-struck love, oh disenkindled fire,
Oh vanity of vanities, desire! 20

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

SELECTED POEMS

THE EOLIAN HARP

My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
 Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
 To sit beside our Cot, our Cot o'ergrown
 With white flower'd Jasmin, and the broad-leav'd Myrtle,
 (Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!) 5
 And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
 Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
 Serenely brilliant (such should Wisdom be)
 Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
 Snatch'd from yon bean-field! and the world so hush'd! 10
 The stilly murmur of the distant Sea
 Tells us of silence.

And that simplest Lute,
 Placed length-ways in the clasping casement, hark!
 How by the desultory breeze caress'd,
 Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover, 15
 It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
 Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
 Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
 Over delicious surges sink and rise,
 Such a soft floating witchery of sound 20
 As twilight Elfin's make, when they at eve
 Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
 Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
 Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
 Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untam'd wing! 25
 O! the one Life within us and abroad,
 Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
 A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
 Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where—
 Methinks, it should have been impossible 30
 Not to love all things in a world so fill'd;
 Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
 Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, my Love! as on the midway slope
 Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon, 35
 Whilst through my half-clos'd eye-lids I behold

The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
 And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;
 Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
 And many idle flitting phantasies, 40
 Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
 As wild and various as the random gales
 That swell and flutter on this subject Lute!

And what if all of animated nature
 Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd, 45
 That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
 Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
 At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
 Darts, O beloved Woman! nor such thoughts 50
 Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,
 And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
 Meek Daughter in the family of Christ!
 Well hast thou said and holily disprais'd
 These shapings of the unregenerate mind; 55
 Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
 On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
 For never guiltless may I speak of him,
 The Incomprehensible! save when with awe
 I praise him, and with Faith that inly feels; 60
 Who with his saving mercies heal'd me,
 A sinful and most miserable man,
 Wilder'd and dark, and gave me to possess
 Peace, and this Cot, and thee, heart-honour'd Maid!

REFLECTIONS ON HAVING LEFT A PLACE OF RETIREMENT

Low was our pretty Cot: our tallest Rose
 Peep'd at the chamber-window. We could hear
 At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
 The Sea's faint murmur. In the open air
 Our Myrtles blossom'd; and across the porch 5
 Thick Jasmin's twined: the little landscape round
 Was green and woody, and refresh'd the eye.
 It was a spot which you might aptly call
 The Valley of Seclusion! Once I saw
 (Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness) 10
 A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by
 Bristowa's citizen: methought, it calm'd
 His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
 With wiser feelings: for he paus'd, and look'd
 With a pleas'd sadness, and gaz'd all around, 15
 Then eyed our Cottage, and gaz'd round again,
 And sigh'd, and said, it was a Blesséd Place.
 And we were bless'd. Oft with patient ear
 Long-listening to the viewless sky-lark's note
 (Viewless, or haply for a moment seen 20
 Gleaming on sunny wings) in whisper'd tones
 I've said to my Belovéd, "Such, sweet Girl!
 The inobtrusive song of Happiness,
 Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard
 When the Soul seeks to hear; when all is hush'd, 25
 And the Heart listens!"

But the time, when first
 From that low Dell, steep up the stony Mount
 I climb'd with perilous toil and reach'd the top,
 Oh! what a godly scene! Here the bleak mount,
 The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep; 30
 Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields;
 And river, now with bushy rocks o'er-brow'd,
 Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
 And seats, and lawns, the Abbey and the wood,
 And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire; 35
 The Channel there, the Islands and white sails,
 Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills, and shoreless Ocean—
 It seem'd like Omnipresence! God, methought,
 Had built him there a Temple: the whole World
 Seem'd imag'd in its vast circumference: 40
 No wish profan'd my overwhelméd heart.
 Blest hour! It was a luxury, – to be!

Ah! quiet Dell! dear Cot, and Mount sublime!
 I was constrain'd to quit you. Was it right,
 While my unnumber'd brethren toil'd and bled, 45
 That I should dream away the entrusted hours
 On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart
 With feelings all too delicate for use?
 Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye
 Drops on the cheek of one he lifts from earth: 50
 And he that works me good with unmov'd face,
 Does it but half: he chills me while he aids,
 My benefactor, not my brother man!
 Yet even this, this cold beneficence
 Praise, praise it, O my Soul! oft as thou scann'st 55
 The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe!
 Who sigh for Wretchedness, yet shun the Wretched,
 Nursing in some delicious solitude
 Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies!
 I therefore go, and join head, heart and hand, 60
 Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
 Of Science, Freedom, and the Truth in Christ.

Yet oft when after honourable toil
 Rests the tir'd mind, and waking loves to dream,
 My spirit shall revisit thee, dear Cot! 65
 Thy Jasmin and thy window-peeping Rose,
 And Myrtles fearless of the mild sea-air.
 And I shall sigh fond wishes – sweet Abode!
 Ah! – had none greater! And that all had such!
 It might be so – but the time is not yet. 70
 Speed it, O Father! Let thy Kingdom come!

THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON

In the June of 1797 some long-expected friends paid a visit to the author's cottage; and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the garden-bower.

<p>Well, they are gone, and here I must remain, This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost Beauties and feelings, such as would have been Most sweet to my remembrance even when age Had dimm'd mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile, 5 Friends, whom I never more may meet again, On springy heath, along the hill-top edge, Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance, To that still roaring dell, of which I told; The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep, 10 And only speckled by the mid-day sun; Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock Flings arching like a bridge; – that branchless ash, Unsun'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still, 15 Fann'd by the water-fall! and there my friends Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds, Then all at once (a most fantastic sight!) Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge Of the blue clay-stone. 20</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Now, my friends emerge Beneath the wide wide Heaven – and view again The many-steepled tract magnificent Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea, With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles 25 Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad, My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined And hunger'd after Nature, many a year, In the great City pent, winning thy way 30 With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun! Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb, Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds! 35 Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves! And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood, Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem 40 Less gross than bodily; and of such hues</p>	<p>As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes Spirits perceive his presence.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A delight</p> <p>Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad As I myself were there! Nor in this bower, 45 This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd Much that has sooth'd me. Pale beneath the blaze Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd Some broad and sunny leaf, and lov'd to see The shadow of the leaf and stem above 50 Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue 55 Through the late twilight: and though now the bat Wheels silent by, and now a swallow twitters, Yet still the solitary humble-bee Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure; 60 No plot so narrow, be but Nature there, No waste so vacant, but may well employ Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes 'Tis well to be bereft of promis'd good, 65 That we may lift the soul, and contemplate With lively joy the joys we cannot share. My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rook Beat its straight path along the dusky air Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing 70 (Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light) Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory, While thou stood'st gazing; or, when all was still, Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom 75 No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.</p>
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KUBLA KHAN

The following fragment is here published at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity [Lord Byron], and, as far as the Author's own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed poetic merits.

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in "Purchas's Pilgrimage": "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall." The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but alas! without the after restoration of the latter!

Then all the charm
Is broken – all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,

And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,
Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes –
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo, he stays,
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror.

Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. Αὔριον ἄδιον ἄσω: [tomorrow I shall sing a sweeter song]: but the to-morrow is yet to come.

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. 5
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, 10
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 15
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 20
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 25
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! 30
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, 35
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, 40
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, 45

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! 50
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.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER (IN SEVEN PARTS – 1817 TEXT)

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quae loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernae vitae minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.

T. BURNET: *Archæol. Phil.*, p. 68.

[I can easily believe that there are more invisible creatures in the universe than visible ones. But who will tell us what family each belongs to, what their ranks and relationships are, and what their respective distinguishing characters may be? What do they do? Where do they live? Human wit has always circled around a knowledge of these things without ever attaining it. But I do not doubt that it is beneficial sometimes to contemplate in the mind, as in a picture, the image of a grander and better world; for if the mind grows used to the trivia of daily life, it may dwindle too much and decline altogether into worthless thoughts. Meanwhile, however, we must be on the watch for the truth, keeping a sense of proportion so that we can tell what is certain from what is uncertain and day from night.]

Part 1

It is an Ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, 5
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand, 10
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child 15
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding Guest is spellbound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
 He cannot choose but hear;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner. 20

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
 Merrily did we drop
 Below the kirk, below the hill,
 Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
 Out of the sea came he!
 And he shone bright, and on the right
 Went down into the sea 25

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the line.

Higher and higher every day,
 Till over the mast at noon –"
 The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
 For he heard the loud bassoon. 30

The bride hath paced into the hall,
 Red as a rose is she;
 Nodding their heads before her goes
 The merry minstrelsy. 35

The Wedding Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot choose but hear;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

"And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
 Was tyrannous and strong;
 He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
 And chased us south along.

The ship drawn by a storm toward the south pole.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
 As who pursued with yell and blow
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,
 And forward bends his head,
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
 And southward aye we fled. 45
 50

And now there came both mist and snow,
 And it grew wondrous cold:
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
 As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts 55
 Did send a dismal sheen:
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts were ken –
 The ice was all between.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
 The ice was all around: 60
 It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
 Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross,
 Thorough the fog it came;
 As if it had been a Christian soul 65
 We hailed it in God's name.

Till a great sea-bird, called an Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
 And round and round it flew.
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
 The helmsman steered us through! 70

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
 The Albatross did follow,
 And every day, for food or play,
 Came to the mariners hollo!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75
 It perched for vespers nine;
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
 Glimmered the white Moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
 From the fiends, that plague thee thus! 80
 Why look'st thou so?" – With my cross-bow
 I shot the ALBATROSS.

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

Part 2

The Sun now rose upon the right:
 Out of the sea came he,
 Still hid in mist, and on the left 85
 Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
 But no sweet bird did follow,
 Nor any day for food or play
 Came to the mariners' hollo! 90

And I had done a hellish thing,
 And it would work 'em woe;
 For all averred, I had killed the bird
 That made the breeze to blow.
 Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
 That made the breeze to blow! 95

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
 The glorious Sun uprist;
 Then all averred, I had killed the bird
 That brought the fog and mist. 100
 'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
 That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
 The furrow followed free;
 We were the first that ever burst
 Into that silent sea. 105

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
 'Twas sad as sad could be;
 And we did speak only to break
 The silence of the sea! 110

All in a hot and copper sky,
 The bloody Sun, at noon,
 Right up above the mast did stand,
 No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
 As idle as a painted ship

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

The fair breeze continues, the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where,

And all the boards did shrink;

Water, water, every where,

Nor any drop to drink.

120

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!

That ever this should be!

Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs

Upon the slimy sea.

125

About, about, in reel and rout

The death-fires danced at night;

The water, like a witch's oils,

Burnt green, and blue and white.

130

And some in dreams assuréd were

Of the spirit that plagued us so;

Nine fathom deep he had followed us

From the land of mist and snow.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels, concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,

Was withered at the root;

We could not speak, no more than if

We had been choked with soot.

135

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks

Had I from old and young!

Instead of the cross, the Albatross

About my neck was hung.

140

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hand the dead sea-bird around his neck.

Part 3

There passed a weary time. Each throat
 Was parched, and glazed each eye.
 A weary time! A weary time!
 How glazed each weary eye,
 When looking westward, I beheld
 A something in the sky

145

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
 And then it seemed a mist;
 It moved and moved, and took at last
 A certain shape, I wist.

150

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
 And still it neared and neared:
 As if it dodged a water-sprite,
 It plunged and tacked and veered.

155

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 We could nor laugh nor wail;
 Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
 I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
 And cried, A sail! a sail!

160

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 Agape they heard me call:
 Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
 And all at once their breath drew in,
 As they were drinking all.

165

A flash of joy;

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
 Hither to work us weal;
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel!

170

And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide?

The western wave was all a-flame.
 The day was well nigh done!
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad bright Sun;
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

175

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
 With broad and burning face.

180

It seemed him but the skeleton of a ship.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears!
 Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
 Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
 Did peer, as through a grate?
 And is that Woman all her crew?
 Is that a DEATH? and are there two?
 Is DEATH that woman's mate?

185

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.
 The Spectre-Woman and her Death-Mate, and no other on
 board the skeleton-ship.

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
 Her locks were yellow as gold:
 Her skin was as white as leprosy,
 The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
 Who thicks man's blood with cold.

190

Like vessel, like crew!

The naked hulk alongside came,
 And the twain were casting dice;
 "The game is done! I've won! I've won!"
 Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

195

Death and Life-in-Death have dived for the ship's crew,
 and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
 At one stride comes the dark;
 With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
 Off shot the spectre-bark.

200

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

We listened and looked sideways up!
 Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
 My life-blood seemed to sip!
 The stars were dim, and thick the night,
 The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
 white;
 From the sails the dew did drip –
 Till clomb above the eastern bar
 The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
 Within the nether tip.

205

At the rising of the Moon,

210

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
 Too quick for groan or sigh,
 Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
 And cursed me with his eye. 215

Four times fifty living men,
 (And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
 They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly, – 220
 They fled to bliss or woe!
 And every soul, it passed me by,
 Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

Part 4

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
 I fear thy skinny hand! 225
 And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
 As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
 And thy skinny hand, so brown." –
 Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest! This 230
 body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
 Alone on a wide wide sea!
 And never a saint took pity on
 My soul in agony. 235

The many men, so beautiful!
 And they all dead did lie:
 And a thousand thousand slimy things
 Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
 And drew my eyes away;
 I looked upon the rotting deck,
 And there the dead men lay. 240

One after another,

His shipmates drop down dead.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him.

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and
 proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

He despises the creatures of the calm.

And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
 But or ever a prayer had gusht, 245
 A wicked whisper came, and made
 My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
 And the balls like pulses beat;
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky 250
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,
 And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
 Nor rot nor reek did they;
 The look with which they looked on me 255
 Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
 A spirit from on high;
 But oh! more horrible than that
 Is the curse in a dead man's eye! 260
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
 And yet I could not die

The moving Moon went up the sky,
 And no where did abide:
 Softly she was going up, 265
 And a star or two beside –

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
 Like April hoar-frost spread;
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
 The charmed water burnt away 270
 A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
 I watched the water-snakes:
 They moved in tracks of shining white,
 And when they reared, the elfish light 275
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Within the shadow of the ship
 I watched their rich attire:
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
 They coiled and swam: and every track 280
 Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
 Their beauty might declare:
 A spring of love gushed from my heart,
 And I blessed them unaware; 285
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me
 And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
 And from my neck so free
 The Albatross fell off, and sank 290
 Like lead into the sea.

Part 5

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
 Beloved from pole to pole!
 To Mary Queen the praise be given!
 She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven, 295
 That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
 That had so long remained,
 I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
 And when I awoke, it rained. 300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
 My garments all were dank;
 Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
 And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs: 305
 I was so light – almost
 I thought that I had died in my sleep,
 And was a blesséd ghost.

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his heart.

The spell begins to break.

By the grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
 It did not come anear,
 But with its sound it shook the sails,
 That were so thin and sere.

310

He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and
 commotions in the sky and the element.

The upper air burst into life!
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
 To and fro they were hurried about!
 To and fro, and in and out,
 The wan stars danced between.

315

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
 And the sails did sigh like sedge;
 And the rain poured down from one black
 cloud;
 The Moon was at its edge.

320

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
 The Moon was at its side:
 Like waters shot from some high crag,
 The lightning fell with never a jag,
 A river steep and wide.

325

The loud wind never reached the ship,
 Yet now the ship moved on!
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon
 The dead men gave a groan.

330

The bodies of the ship's crew and inspired, and the ship
 moves on;

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
 It had been strange, even in a dream,
 To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
 Yet never a breeze up blew;
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes
 Where they were wont to do;
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools –
 We were a ghastly crew.

335

340

The body of my brother's son
 Stood by me, knee to knee:
 The body and I pulled one rope,
 But he said nought to me.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!" 345
 Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
 Which to their corpses came again,
 But a troop of spirits blest:

But not by the souls of the men, nor by daemons of earth
 or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits,
 sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

For when it dawned – they dropped their arms, 350
 And clustered round the mast;
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
 mouths,
 And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
 Then darted to the Sun; 355
 Slowly the sounds came back again,
 Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
 I heard the sky-lark sing;
 Sometimes all little birds that are, 360
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air

With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
 Now like a lonely flute;
 And now it is an angel's song, 365
 That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased, yet still the sails made on
 A pleasant noise till noon,
 A noise like of a hidden brook
 In the leafy month of June, 370
 That to the sleeping woods all night
 Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
 Yet never a breeze did breathe:
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship, 375
 Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
 From the land of mist and snow,
 The spirit slid: and it was he
 That made the ship to go, 380
 The sails at noon left off their tune,
 And the ship stood still also.

The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
 Had fixed her to the ocean:
 But in a minute she 'gan stir, 385
 With a short uneasy motion –
 Backwards and forwards half her length
 With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
 She made a sudden bound: 390
 It flung the blood into my head,
 And I fell down in a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,
 I have not to declare;
 But ere my living life returned, 395
 I heard and in my soul discerned
 Two voices in the air.

"Is it he?" quoth one, "Is this the man?
 By him who died on cross,
 With his cruel bow he laid full low 400
 The harmless Albatross.

The Polar Spirit's fellow daemons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

The spirit who bideth by himself
 In the land of mist and snow,
 He loved the bird that loved the man
 Who shot him with his bow." 405

The other was a softer voice,
 As soft as honey-dew:
 Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
 And penance more will do."

Part 5

FIRST VOICE

"But tell me, tell me! speak again, 410
 Thy soft response renewing –
 What makes that ship drive on so fast?
 What is the ocean doing?"

SECOND VOICE

"Still as a slave before his lord,
 The ocean hath no blast; 415
 His great bright eye most silently
 Up to the Moon is cast –

If he may know which way to go;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 See, brother, see! how graciously 420
 She looketh down on him."

FIRST VOICE

"But why drives on that ship so fast,
 Without or wave or wind?"

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

"The air is cut away before,
 And closes from behind. 425

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
 Or we shall be belated:
 For slow and slow that ship will go,
 When the Mariner's trance is abated."

I woke, and we were sailing on 430

As in a gentle weather:

'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter: 435
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen – 445

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend 450
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breather a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade. 455

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

The curse is finally expiated.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
 Like a meadow-gale of spring –
 It mingled strangely with my fears,
 Yet it felt like welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
 Yet she sailed softly too:
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze –
 On me alone it blew.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
 The light-house top I see? 465
 Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
 Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
 And I with sobs did pray –
 O let me be awake, my God! 470
 Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
 So smoothly was it strewn!
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,
 And the shadow of the Moon. 475

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
 That stands above the rock:
 The moonlight steeped in silentness
 The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light, 480
 Till rising from the same,
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow
 Those crimson shadows were: 485
 I turned my eyes upon the deck –
 Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corpse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
 And, by the holy rood!

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

And appear in their own forms of light.

A man all light, a seraph-man, 490
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light; 495

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart –
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500
I heard the pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast: 505
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third – I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns 510
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

Part 7

This Hermit good lives in that wood

Which slopes down to the sea. 515
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
 He loves to talk with marineres
 That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve –
 He hath a cushion plump: 520
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
 "Why, this is strange, I trow!
 Where are those lights so many and fair, 525
 That signal made but now?"

"Strange, by my faith!" the Hermit said –
 "And they answered not our cheer!
 The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
 How thin they are and sere! 530
 I never saw aught like to them,
 Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
 My forest-brook along;
 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
 That eats the she-wolf's young."

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look –
 (The Pilot made a reply)
 I am a-feared" – "Push on, push on!" 540
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
 But I not spake nor stirred;
 The boat came close beneath the ship,
 And straight a sound was heard. 545

Under the water it rumbled on,
 Still louder and more dread:
 It reached the ship, it split the bay;
 The ship went down like lead.

The Hermit of the wood,

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
 Which sky and ocean smote,
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned
 My body lay afloat;
 But swift as dreams, myself I found
 Within the Pilot's boat. 555

The Ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
 The boat spun round and round;
 And all was still, save that the hill
 Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips – the Pilot shrieked
 And fell down in a fit;
 The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
 And prayed where he did sit. 560

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
 Who now doth crazy go, 565
 Laughed loud and long, and all the while
 His eyes went to and fro.
 "Ha! ha!" quoth he, "full plain I see,
 The Devil knows how to row."

And now, all in my own cuntrye,
 I stood on the firm land! 570
 The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
 And scarcely he could stand.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!"
 The Hermit crossed his brow. 575
 "Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say –
 What manner of man art thou?"

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
 With a woful agony,
 Which forced me to begin my tale;
 And then it left me free. 580

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
 That agony returns:
 And till my ghastly tale is told,
 This heart within me burns. 585

And even and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land;

I pass, like night, from land to land;
 I have strange power of speech;
 That moment that his face I see,
 I know the man that must hear me:
 To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
 The wedding-guests are there:
 But in the garden-bower the bride
 And bride-maids singing are:
 And hark the little vesper bell, 595
 Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide wide sea:
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seeméd there to be. 600

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company! –
 To walk together to the kirk, 605
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
 And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell 610
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
 He prayeth well, who loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast.

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to
 all things that God made and loveth.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
 All things both great and small; 615
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
 Whose beard with age is hoar,
 Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest 620
 Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
 And is of sense forlorn:
 A sadder and a wiser man,
 He rose the morrow morn. 625

CHRISTABEL

PREFACE

The first part of the following poem was written in the year 1797, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in the year 1800, at Keswick, Cumberland. It is probable that the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second part had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare at present to expect. But for this I have only my own indolence to blame. The dates are mentioned for the exclusive purpose of precluding charges of plagiarism or servile imitation from myself. For there is amongst us a set of critics, who seem to hold, that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank. I am confident, however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages, or in the tone and spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggerel version of two monkish Latin hexameters.

'Tis mine and it is likewise yours;
 But an if this will not do;
 Let it be mine, good friend! for I
 Am the poorer of the two.

I have only to add that the metre of Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless, this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion.

Part 1

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock, And the owls have awakened the crowing cock; Tu – whit! – Tu – whoo! And hark, again! the crowing cock, How drowsily it crew.	5	The lovely lady, Christabel, Whom her father loves so well, What makes her in the wood so late, A furlong from the castle gate?	25
Sir Leoline, the Baron rich, Hath a toothless mastiff bitch; From her kennel beneath the rock She maketh answer to the clock, Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour; Ever and aye, by shine and shower, Sixteen short howls, not over loud; Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.	10	She had dreams all yesternight Of her own betrothed knight; And she in the midnight wood will pray For the weal of her lover that's far away.	30
Is the night chilly and dark? The night is chilly, but not dark. The thin gray cloud is spread on high, It covers but not hides the sky. The moon is behind, and at the full; And yet she looks both small and dull. The night is chill, the cloud is gray: 'Tis a month before the month of May, And the Spring comes slowly up this way.	15 20	She stole along, she nothing spoke, The sighs she heaved were soft and low, And naught was green upon the oak But moss and rarest mistletoe: She kneels beneath the huge oak tree, And in silence prayeth she.	 35
		The lady sprang up suddenly, The lovely lady, Christabel! It moaned as near, as near can be, But what it is she cannot tell.– On the other side it seems to be, Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree. The night is chill; the forest bare;	 40

Is it the wind that moaneth bleak? There is not wind enough in the air To move away the ringlet curl From the lovely lady's cheek— There is not wind enough to twirl The one red leaf, the last of its clan, That dances as often as dance it can, Hanging so light, and hanging so high, On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.				
Hush, beating heart of Christabel! Jesu, Maria, shield her well! She folds her arms beneath her cloak, And stole to the other side of the oak. What sees she there?				
There she sees a damsel bright, Drest in a silken robe of white, That shadowy in the moonlight shone: The neck that made that white robe wan, Her stately neck, and arms were bare; Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were, And wildly glittered here and there The gems entangled in her hair. I guess, 'twas frightful there to see A lady so richly clad as she— Beautiful exceedingly!	45			
Mary mother, save me now! (Said Christabel,) And who art thou? The lady strange made answer meet, And her voice was faint and sweet:— Have pity on my sore distress, I scarce can speak for weariness: Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear! Said Christabel, How camest thou here? And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet, Did thus pursue her answer meet:—				
My sire is of a noble line, And my name is Geraldine: Five warriors seized me yesternorn, Me, even me, a maid forlorn: They choked my cries with force and fright, And tied me on a palfrey white. The palfrey was as fleet as wind, And they rode furiously behind.				
		They spurred amain, their steeds were white: And once we crossed the shade of night. As sure as Heaven shall rescue me, I have no thought what men they be; Nor do I know how long it is (For I have lain entranced I wis) Since one, the tallest of the five, Took me from the palfrey's back. A weary woman, scarce alive. Some muttered words his comrades spoke: He placed me underneath this oak; He swore they would return with haste; Whither they went I cannot tell— I thought I heard, some minutes past, Sounds as of a castle bell. Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she), And help a wretched maid to flee.	90	
	50		95	
	55		100	
	60	Then Christabel stretched forth her hand, And comforted fair Geraldine: O well, bright dame! may you command The service of Sir Leoline; And gladly our stout chivalry Will he send forth and friends withal To guide and guard you safe and free Home to your noble father's hall.		105
	65		110	
	70	She rose: and forth with steps they passed That strove to be, and were not, fast. Her gracious stars the lady blest, And thus spake on sweet Christabel: All our household are at rest, The hall as silent as the cell; Sir Leoline is weak in health, And may not well awakened be, But we will move as if in stealth, And I beseech your courtesy, This night, to share your couch with me.		115
	75		120	
	80	They crossed the moat, and Christabel Took the key that fitted well; A little door she opened straight, All in the middle of the gate; The gate that was ironed within and without, Where an army in battle array had marched out.		125
	85	The lady sank, belike through pain, And Christabel with might and main		130

Lifted her up, a weary weight, Over the threshold of the gate: Then the lady rose again, And moved, as if she were not in pain.		The rushes of the Chamber floor. The moon shines dim in the open air, And not a moonbeam enters here. But they without its light can see The chamber carved so curiously, Carved with figures strange and sweet, All made out of the carver's brain, For a lady's chamber meet: The lamp with twofold silver chain Is fastened to an angel's feet.	175
So free from danger, free from fear, They crossed the court: right glad they were. And Christabel devoutly cried To the lady by her side, Praise we the Virgin all divine Who hath rescued thee from thy distress! Alas, alas! said Geraldine, I cannot speak for weariness. So free from danger, free from fear, They crossed the court: right glad they were.	135	The silver lamp burns dead and dim; But Christabel the lamp will trim. She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright, And left it swinging to and fro, While Geraldine, in wretched plight, Sank down upon the floor below.	180
Outside her kennel, the mastiff old Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold. The mastiff old did not awake, Yet she an angry moan did make! And what can ail the mastiff bitch? Never till now she uttered yell Beneath the eye of Christabel. Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch: For what can ail the mastiff bitch?	140	O weary lady, Geraldine, I pray you, drink this cordial wine! It is a wine of virtuous powers; My mother made it of wild flowers.	185
They passed the hall, that echoes still, Pass as lightly as you will! The brands were flat, the brands were dying, Amid their own white ashes lying; But when the lady passed, there came A tongue of light, a fit of flame; And Christabel saw the lady's eye, And nothing else she saw thereby, Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall, Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall. O softly tread, said Christabel, My father seldom sleepeth well.	145	And will your mother pity me, Who am a maiden most forlorn? Christabel answered— Woe is me! She died the hour that I was born. I have heard the grey-haired friar tell How on her death-bed she did say, That she should hear the castle-bell Strike twelve upon my wedding-day. O mother dear! that thou wert here! I would, said Geraldine, she were!	190
Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare, And jealous of the listening air They steal their way from stair to stair, Now in glimmer, and now in gloom, And now they pass the Baron's room, As still as death, with stifled breath! And now have reached her chamber door; And now doth Geraldine press down	150	But soon with altered voice, said she— "Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine! I have power to bid thee flee." Alas! what ails poor Geraldine? Why stares she with unsettled eye? Can she the bodiless dead espy? And why with hollow voice cries she, "Off, woman, off! this hour is mine— Though thou her guardian spirit be, Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."	195
	155	Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side, And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—	200
	160		205
	165		210
	170		215

Alas! said she, this ghastly ride— Dear lady! it hath wildered you! The lady wiped her moist cold brow, And faintly said, " 'tis over now!"		To lift some weight with sick assay, And eyes the maid and seeks delay; Then suddenly, as one defied, Collects herself in scorn and pride, And lay down by the Maiden's side!— And in her arms the maid she took, Ah wel-a-day! And with low voice and doleful look These words did say: "In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell, Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel! Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow, This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow; But vainly thou warrest, For this is alone in Thy power to declare, That in the dim forest Thou heard'st a low moaning, And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair; And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity, To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."	260
Again the wild-flower wine she drank: Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright, And from the floor whereon she sank, The lofty lady stood upright: She was most beautiful to see, Like a lady of a far countree.	220		265
And thus the lofty lady spake— "All they who live in the upper sky, Do love you, holy Christabel! And you love them, and for their sake And for the good which left me befel, Even I in my degree will try, Fair maiden, to requite you well. But now unrobe yourself; for I Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."	225		270
Quoth Christabel, So let it be! And as the lady bade, did she. Her gentle limbs did she undress, And lay down in her loveliness.	230		275
But through her brain of weal and woe So many thoughts moved to and fro, That vain it were her lids to close; So half-way from the bed she rose, And on her elbow did recline To look at the lady Geraldine.	235	The conclusion to part 1	
Beneath the lamp the lady bowed, And slowly rolled her eyes around; Then drawing in her breath aloud, Like one that shuddered, she unbound The cincture from beneath her breast: Her silken robe, and inner vest, Dropt to her feet, and full in view, Behold! her bosom and half her side— A sight to dream of, not to tell! O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!	240	It was a lovely night to see The lady Christabel, when she Was praying at the old oak tree. Amid the jaggéd shadows, Of mossy leafless boughs, Kneeling in the moonlight, To make her gentle vows; Her slender palms together prest, Heaving sometimes on her breast; Her face resigned to bliss or bale— Her face, oh call it fair not pale, And both blue eyes more bright than clear, Each about to have a tear.	280
Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs; Ah! what a stricken look was hers! Deep from within she seems half-way	245	With open eyes (ah woe is me!) Asleep, and dreaming fearfully, Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis, Dreaming that alone, which is— O sorrow and shame! Can this be she, The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree? And lo! the worker of these harms, That holds the maiden in her arms, Seems to slumber still and mild,	285
	250		290
	255		295
			300

As a mother with her child.		Between each stroke– a warning knell, Which not a soul can choose but hear From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.	
A star hath set, a star hath risen, O Geraldine! since arms of thine Have been the lovely lady's prison. O Geraldine! one hour was thine–	305	Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell! And let the drowsy sacristan Still count as slowly as he can! There is no lack of such, I ween, As well fill up the space between. In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,	345
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill, The night-birds all that hour were still. But now they are jubilant anew, From cliff and tower, tu–whoo! tu–whoo! Tu–whoo! tu–whoo! from wood and fell!	310	And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent, With ropes of rock and bells of air Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent, Who all give back, one after t'other, The death-note to their living brother;	350
And see! the lady Christabel Gathers herself from out her trance; Her limbs relax, her countenance Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds– Large tears that leave the lashes bright! And oft the while she seems to smile As infants at a sudden light!	315	And oft too, by the knell offended, Just as their one! two! three! is ended, The devil mocks the doleful tale With a merry peal from Borodale.	355
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep, Like a youthful hermitess, Beauteous in a wilderness, Who, praying always, prays in sleep. And, if she move unquietly, Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free Comes back and tingles in her feet. No doubt, she hath a vision sweet. What if her guardian spirit 'twere, What if she knew her mother near? But this she knows, in joys and woes, That saints will aid if men will call: For the blue sky bends over all!	320	The air is still! through mist and cloud That merry peal comes ringing loud; And Geraldine shakes off her dread, And rises lightly from the bed; Puts on her silken vestments white, And tricks her hair in lovely plight, And nothing doubting of her spell Awakens the lady Christabel. "Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel? I trust that you have rested well."	360
	325		365
	330	And Christabel awoke and spied The same who lay down by her side– O rather say, the same whom she Raised up beneath the old oak tree! Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair! For she belike hath drunken deep Of all the blessedness of sleep! And while she spake, her looks, her air Such gentle thankfulness declare, That (so it seemed) her girded vests Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts. "Sure I have sinn'd!" said Christabel, "Now heaven be praised if all be well!" And in low faltering tones, yet sweet, Did she the lofty lady greet With such perplexity of mind	370
Part 2			
Each matin bell, the Baron saith, Knells us back to a world of death. These words Sir Leoline first said, When he rose and found his lady dead: These words Sir Leoline will say Many a morn to his dying day!	335		375
And hence the custom and law began That still at dawn the sacristan, Who duly pulls the heavy bell, Five and forty beads must tell	340		380
			385

As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.
The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted— ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between;—
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,

Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wronged the dame,
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court— that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,

- "What ails then my beloved child?"
 The Barton said— His daughter mild
 Made answer, "Ail will yet be well!"
 I ween, she had no power to tell
 Aught else: so mighty was the spell.
- Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
 Had deemed her sure a thing divine:
 Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
 As if she feared she had offended
 Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
 And with such lowly tones she prayed
 She might be sent without delay
 Home to her father's mansion.
 "Nay!
 Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
 "Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge will be thine!
 Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
 And take two steeds with trappings proud,
 And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
 To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
 And clothe you both in solemn vest,
 And over the mountains haste along,
 Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
 Detain you on the valley road.
- "And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
 My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
 Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
 And reaches soon that castle good
 Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.
- "Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
 Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
 More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
 And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
 Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
 Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
 Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me!
 He bids thee come without delay
 With all thy numerous array
 And take thy lovely daughter home:
 And he will meet thee on the way
 With all his numerous array
 White with their panting palfrey's foam:
 And, by mine honour! I will say,
- 470 That I repent me of the day
 When I spake words of fierce disdain
 To Rolan de Vaux of Tryermaine!—
 — For since that evil hour hath flown,
 Many a summer's sun hath shone;
 Yet ne'er found I a friend again
 Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."
- 475 The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
 Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
 And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
 480 His gracious Hail on all bestowing!—
 "Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
 Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
 Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
 This day my journey should not be,
 So strange a dream hath come to me,
 485 That I had vowed with music loud
 To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
 Warned by a vision in my rest!
 For in my sleep I saw that dove,
 That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
 490 And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
 Sir Leoline! I saw the same
 Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
 Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
 Which when I saw and when I heard,
 I wonder'd what might ail the bird;
 495 For nothing near it I could see,
 Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree.
- "And in my dream methought I went
 To search out what might there be found;
 And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
 500 That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
 I went and peered, and could descry
 No cause for her distressful cry;
 But yet for her dear lady's sake
 I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
 505 When lo! I saw a bright green snake
 Coiled around its wings and neck.
 Green as the herbs on which it crouched,
 Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
 And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
 510 Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
 I woke; it was the midnight hour,

The clock was echoing in the tower; But though my slumber was gone by, This dream it would not pass away— It seems to live upon my eye! And thence I vowed this self-same day	560	The maid, devoid of guile and sin, I know not how, in fearful wise, So deeply had she drunken in That look, those shrunken serpent eyes, That all her features were resigned	600
With music strong and saintly song To wander through the forest bare, Lest aught unholy loiter there.”		To this sole image in her mind: And passively did imitate	605
Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while, Half-listening heard him with a smile;	565	That look of dull and treacherous hate! And thus she stood, in dizzy trance, Still picturing that look askance	
Then turned to Lady Geraldine, His eyes made up of wonder and love; And said in courtly accents fine, “Sweet maid, Lord Roland’s beauteous dove, With arms more strong than harp or song,	570	With forced unconscious sympathy Full before her father’s view —	610
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!” He kissed her forehead as he spake, And Geraldine in maiden wise Casting down her large bright eyes, With blushing cheek and courtesy fine	575	As far as such a look could be In eyes so innocent and blue! And when the trance was o’er, the maid Paused awhile, and inly prayed: Then falling at the Baron’s feet,	615
She turned her from Sir Leoline; Softly gathering up her train, That o’er her right arm fell again; And folded her arms across her chest, And couched her head upon her breast,		“By my mother’s soul do I entreat That thou this woman send away!” She said: and more she could not say: For what she knew she could not tell, O’er-mastered by the mighty spell.	620
And looked askance at Christabel — Jesu, Maria, shield her well!	580	Why is thy cheek so wan and wild, Sir Leoline? Thy only child Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride, So fair, so innocent, so mild;	625
A snake’s small eye blinks dull and shy; And the lady’s eyes they shrunken in her head, Each shrunken up to a serpent’s eye,	585	The same, for whom thy lady died! O by the pangs of her dear mother Think thou no evil of thy child! For her, and thee, and for no other, She prayed the moment ere she died:	630
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread, At Christabel she looked askance!— One moment— and the sight was fled! But Christabel in dizzy trance Stumbling on the unsteady ground	590	Prayed that the babe for whom she died, Might prove her dear lord’s joy and pride! That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled, Sir Leoline! And wouldst thou wrong thy only child, Her child and thine?	635
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound; And Geraldine again turned round, And like a thing, that sought relief, Full of wonder and full of grief, She rolled her large bright eyes divine	595	Within the Baron’s heart and brain If thoughts, like these, had any share, They only swelled his rage and pain, And did but work confusion there. His heart was cleft with pain and rage,	640
Wildly on Sir Leoline.		His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,	
The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone, She nothing sees— no sight but one!			

Dishonoured thus in his old age;
 Dishonoured by his only child,
 And all his hospitality
 To the wronged daughter of his friend
 By more than woman's jealousy
 Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
 He rolled his eye with stern regard
 Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
 And said in tones abrupt, austere —
 "Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
 I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
 And turning from his own sweet maid,
 The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
 Led forth the lady Geraldine!

The Conclusion to Part 2

A little child, a limber elf,
 Singing, dancing to itself,
 A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
 That always finds, and never seeks,
 Makes such a vision to the sight
 As fills a father's eyes with light;
 And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
 Upon his heart, that he at last
 Must needs express his love's excess
 With words of unmeant bitterness.
 Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
 Thoughts so all unlike each other;
 To mutter and mock a broken charm,
 To dally with wrong that does no harm.
 Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
 At each wild word to feel within
 A sweet recoil of love and pity.
 And what, if in a world of sin
 (O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
 Such giddiness of heart and brain
 Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
 So talks as it's most used to do.

THE NIGHTINGALE

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
 Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
 Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
 Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge!
 You see the glimmer of the stream beneath, 5
 But hear no murmuring: it flows silently,
 O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
 A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
 Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
 That gladden the green earth, and we shall find 10
 A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
 And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
 "Most musical, most melancholy" bird!
 A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought!
 In Nature there is nothing melancholy. 15
 But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
 With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
 Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
 (And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself,
 And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale 20
 Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,
 First named these notes a melancholy strain.
 And many a poet echoes the conceit;
 Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
 When he had better far had stretched his limbs 25
 Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
 By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
 Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
 Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
 And of his fame forgetful! so his fame 30
 Should share in Nature's immortality,
 A venerated thing! and so his song
 Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
 Be loved like Nature! But 'twill not be so;
 And youths and maidens most poetical, 35
 Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
 In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
 Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
 O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt 40
 A different lore: we may not thus profane
 Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
 And joyance! 'Tis the merry Nightingale

That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
 With fast thick warble his delicious notes, 45
 As he were fearful that an April night
 Would be too short for him to utter forth
 His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
 Of all its music!

And I know a grove
 Of large extent, hard by a castle huge, 50
 Which the great lord inhabits not; and so
 This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
 And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
 Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
 But never elsewhere in one place I knew 55
 So many nightingales; and far and near,
 In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
 They answer and provoke each other's song,
 With skirmish and capricious passagings,
 And murmurs musical and swift jug jug, 60
 And one low piping sound more sweet than all—
 Stirring the air with such a harmony,
 That should you close your eyes, you might almost
 Forget it was not day! On moonlight bushes,
 Whose dewy leaflets are but half-disclosed, 65
 You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
 Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
 Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
 Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,
 Who dwelleth in her hospitable home 70
 Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
 (Even like a Lady vowed and dedicate
 To something more than Nature in the grove)
 Glides through the pathways; she knows all their notes,
 That gentle Maid! and oft, a moment's space, 75
 What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
 Hath heard a pause of silence; till the moon
 Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky
 With one sensation, and those wakeful birds
 Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy, 80
 As I some sudden gale had swept at once
 A hundred airy harps! And she hath watched
 Many a nightingale perch giddily
 Oh blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,
 And to that motion tune his wanton song 85

Like tipsy Joy tha reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler! till to-morrow eve,
 And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!
 We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
 And now for our dear homes.—That strain again! 90
 Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,
 Who, capable of no articulate sound,
 Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
 How he would place his hand beside his ear,
 His little hand, the small forefinger up, 95
 And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
 To make him Nature's play-mate. He knows well
 The evening-star; and once, when he awoke
 In most distressful mood (some inward pain
 Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream—) 100
 I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
 And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
 Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
 While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
 Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well!— 105
 It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
 Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
 Familiar with these songs, that with the night
 He may associate joy.—Once more, farewell,
 Sweet Nightingale! once more, my friends! farewell. 110

FEARS IN SOLITUDE

Written in April 1798, during the alarm of an invasion

A green and silent spot, amid the hills,
 A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place
 No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
 The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
 Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on, 5
 All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
 Which now blooms most profusely: but the dell,
 Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
 As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
 When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve, 10
 The level sunshine glimmers with green light.
 Oh! 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook!
 Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
 The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
 Knew just so much of folly, as had made 15

His early manhood more securely wise!
 Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,
 While from the singing lark (that sings unseen
 The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
 And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
 Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;
 And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
 Made up a meditative joy, and found
 Religious meanings in the forms of Nature!
 And so, his senses gradually wrapt
 In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
 And dreaming hears thee still, O singing lark,
 That singest like an angel in the clouds!

My God! it is a melancholy thing
 For such a man, who would full fain preserve
 His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
 For all his human brethren—O my God!
 It weighs upon the heart, that he must think
 What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
 This way or that way o'er these silent hills—
 Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
 And all the crash of onset; fear and rage,
 And undetermined conflict—even now,
 Even now, perchance, and in his native isle:
 Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun!
 We have offended, Oh! my countrymen!
 We have offended very grievously,
 And been most tyrannous. From east to west
 A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
 The wretched please against us; multitudes
 Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
 Our brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
 Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
 Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
 And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
 And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
 With slow perdition murders the whole man,
 His body and his soul! Meanwhile, at home,
 All individual dignity and power
 Engulfed in Courts, Committees, Institutions,
 Associations and Societies,
 A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting Guild,
 One Benefit-Club for mutual flattery,
 We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
 Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;

Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
 Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life
 For gold, as at a market! The sweet words
 Of Christian promise, words that even yet
 Might stem destruction, were they wisely preached,
 Are muttered o'er by men, whose tones proclaim
 How flat and wearisome they feel their trade:
 Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent
 To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.
 Oh! blasphemous! the Book of Life is made
 A superstitious instrument, on which
 We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;
 For all must swear—all and in every place,
 College and wharf, council and justice-court;
 All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
 Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
 The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;
 All, all make up one scheme of perjury,
 That faith doth reel; the very name of God
 Sounds like a juggler's charm; and, bold with joy,
 Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
 (Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,
 Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
 Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
 And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,
 Cries out, "Where is it?"

Thankless too for peace,
 (Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas)
 Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
 To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
 Alas! for ages ignorant of all
 Its ghastlier workings, (famine or blue plague,
 Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows,)
 We, this whole people, have been clamorous
 For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
 The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
 Spectators and not combatants! No guess
 Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
 No speculation on contingency,
 However dim and vague, too vague and dim
 To yield a justifying cause; and forth,
 (Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,
 And adjurations of the God in Heaven,)
 We send out mandates for the certain death
 Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and girls,

And women, that would groan to see a child	105	Swept from our shores! And oh! may we return	150
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,		Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,	
The best amusement for our morning meal!		Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung	
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers		So fierce a foe to frenzy!	
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough			
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,	110	I have told,	
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute		O Britons! O my brethren! I have told	
And technical in victories and defeats,		Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.	155
And all our dainty terms for fratricide;		Nor deem my zeal or factious or mistimed;	
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues		Nor never can true courage dwell with them,	
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which	115	Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look	
We join no feeling and attach no form!		At their own vices. We have been too long	
As if the soldier died without a wound;		Dupes of deep delusion! Some, belike,	160
As if the fibres of this godlike frame		Groaning with restless enmity, expect	
Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch,		All change from change of constituted power;	
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,	120	As if a Government had been a robe,	
Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed;		On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged	
As though he had no wife to pine for him,		Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe	165
No God to judge him! Therefore, evil days		Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attached	
Are coming on us, O my countrymen!		A radical causation to a few	
And what if all-avenging Providence,	125	Poor drudges of chastising Providence,	
Strong and retributive, should make us know		Who borrow all of their hues and qualities	
The meaning of our words, force us to feel		From our own folly and rank wickedness,	170
The desolation and the agony		Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others,	
Of our fierce doings?		meanwhile,	
Spare us yet awhile,		Dote with a mad idolatory; and all	
Father and God! O! spare us yet awhile!	130	Who will not fall before their images,	
Oh! let not English women drag their flight		And yield them worship, they are enemies	
Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,		Even of their country!	
Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday			
Laughed at the breast! Sons, brothers, husbands, all		Such have I been deemed.–	175
Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms	135	But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!	
Which grew up with you round the same fire-side,		Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy	
And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells		To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,	
Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure!		A husband, and a father! who revere	
Stand forth! be men! Repel an impious foe,		All bonds of natural love, and find them all	180
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,	140	Within the limits of thy rocky shores.	
Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth		O native Britain! O my Mother Isle!	
With deeds of murder; and still promising		How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy	
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,		To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,	
Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart		Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,	185
Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes		Have drunk in all my intellectual life,	
And all that lifts the spirit! Stand we forth;		All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,	
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,		All adoration of the God in nature,	
And let them toss as idly on its waves		All lovely and all honourable things,	
As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast		Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel	190

The joy and greatness of its future being?
 There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
 Unborrowed from my country! O divine
 And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
 And most magnificent temple, in the which 195
 I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
 Loving the God that made me!—

May my fears,
 My filial fears, be vain! and may the vaunts
 And menace of the vengeful enemy
 Pass like the gust, that roared and died away 200
 In the distant tree: which heard, and only heard
 In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
 The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze:
 The light has left the summit of the hill, 205
 Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,
 Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
 Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot!

On the green sheep-track, up the healthy hill,
 Homeward I wind my way; and lo! recalled 210
 From bodings that have well-nigh wearied me,
 I find myself upon the brow, and pause
 Startled! And after lonely sojourning
 In such a quiet and surrounded nook,
 This burst of prospect, here is the shadowy main, 215
 Dim-tinted, there the mighty majesty
 Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
 And elmy fields, seems like society—
 Conversing with the mind, and giving it
 A livelier impulse and a dance of thought! 220
 And now, beloved Stowey! I behold
 Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
 Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;
 And close behind them, hidden from my view,
 Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe 225
 And my babe's mother dwell in peace! With light
 And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,
 Remembering thee, O green and silent dell!
 And grateful, that by nature's quietness
 And solitary musings, all my heart 230
 Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
 Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
 Unhelped by any wind. The owlet'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 5
 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, 10
 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, 15
 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 20
 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, 25
 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, 30
 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! 35
 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, 40
 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, 45
 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, 50
 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 55
 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 60
 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, 65
 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 70
 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.

DEJECTION: AN ODE

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
 With the old Moon in her arms;
 And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
 We shall have a deadly storm.

Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.

I

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
 The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
 This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence

Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
 Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes, 5
 Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
 Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
 Which better far were mute.
 For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
 And overspread with phantom light, 10
 (With swimming phantom light o'erspread
 But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
 I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
 The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
 And oh! that even now the gust were swelling, 15
 And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
 Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
 And sent my soul abroad,
 Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
 Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live! 20

II

A grief without pang, void, dark, and drear,
 A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
 Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
 In word, or sigh, or tear—
 O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood, 25
 To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd
 All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
 Have I been gazing on the western sky,
 And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
 And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye! 30
 And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
 That give away their motion to the stars;
 Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
 Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
 You crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew 35
 In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
 I see them all so excellently fair,
 I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;
 And what can these avail 40
 To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
 It were a vain endeavour,
 Though I should gaze forever
 On that green light that lingers in the west:
 I may not hope from outward forms to win 45
 The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
 And in our life alone does Nature live:
 Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
 And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
 50 Than that inanimate cold world allowed
 To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
 Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
 Enveloping the Earth—
 55 And from the soul itself must there be sent
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
 What this strong music in the soul may be!
 60 What, and wherein it doth exist,
 This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
 This beautiful and beauty-making power.
 Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
 Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
 65 Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
 Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
 Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
 A new Earth and new Heaven,
 Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
 70 Joys is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—
 We in ourselves rejoice!
 And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
 All melodies the echoes of that voice,
 75 All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
 This joy within me dialled with distress,
 And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
 Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
 80 For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
 And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
 But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
 Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
 But oh! each visitation
 85 Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
 My shaping spirit of Imagination.
 For not to think of what I needs must feel,
 But to be still and patient, all I can;

And haply by abstruse research to steal
 From my own nature all the natural man— 90
 This was my sole resource, my only plan:
 Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
 And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
 Reality's dark dream! 95
 I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
 Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
 Of agony by torture lengthened out
 That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
 100 Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
 Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
 Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
 Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
 Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
 105 Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
 Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
 The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
 Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
 Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold!
 110 What tell'st thou now about?
 'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
 With groans, of trampled men, with smarting wounds—
 At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!
 But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
 115 And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
 With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over—
 It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
 A tale of less affright,
 And tempered with delight,
 120 As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,—
 'Tis of a little child
 Upon a lonesome wild,
 Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
 And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
 125 And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother
 hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
 Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
 Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
 And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
 130 May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,

Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!
 With light heart may she rise,
 Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
 Joy may lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
 To her may all things live, from pole to pole, 135
 Their life the eddying of her living soul!
 O simple spirit, guided from above,
 Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
 Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

THE PAINS OF SLEEP

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
 It hath not been my use to pray
 With moving lips or bended knees;
 But silently, by slow degrees,
 My spirit I to Love compose, 5
 In humble trust mine eye-lids close,
 With reverential resignation,
 No wish conceived, no thought exprest,
 Only a sense of supplication;
 A sense o'er all my soul imprest 10
 That I am weak, yet not unblest,
 Since in me, round me, every where
 Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.

But yester-night I prayed aloud
 In anguish and in agony, 15
 Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
 Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:
 A lurid light, a trampling throng,
 Sense of intolerable wrong,
 And whom I scorned, those only strong! 20
 Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
 Still baffled, and yet burning still!
 Desire with loathing strangely mixed
 On wild or hateful objects fixed.
 Fantastic passions! maddening brawl! 25
 And shame and terror over all!
 Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
 Which all confused I could not know
 Whether I suffered, or I did:
 For all seemed guilt, remorse or woe, 30
 My own or others still the same
 Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame.

So two nights passed: the night's dismay

Saddened and stunned the coming day.
 Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me 35
 Distemper's worst calamity.
 The third night, when my own loud scream
 Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
 O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
 I wept as I had been a child; 40
 And having thus by tears subdued
 My anguish to a milder mood,
 Such punishments, I said, were due
 To natures deepliest stained with sin, –
 For aye entempesting anew 45
 The unfathomable hell within,
 The horror of their deeds to view,
 To know and loathe, yet wish and do!
 Such griefs with such men well agree,
 But wherefore, wherefore fall on me? 50
 To be beloved is all I need,
 And whom I love, I love indeed.

TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Friend of the wise! and Teacher of the Good!
 Into my heart I have received that Lay
 More than historic, that prophetic Lay
 Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
 Of the foundations and the building up 5
 Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
 What may be told, to the understanding mind
 Revealable; and what within the mind
 By vital breathings secret as the soul
 Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart 10
 Thoughts all too deep for words! –

Theme hard as high!

Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
 (The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth),
 Of tides obedient to external force,
 And currents self-determined, as might seem, 15
 Or by some inner Power; of moments awful,
 Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,
 When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received
 The light reflected, as a light bestowed –
 Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth, 20
 Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought
 Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens
 Native or outland, lakes and famous hills!
 Or on the lonely high-road, when the stars
 Were rising; or by secret mountain-streams, 25
 The guides and the companions of thy way!

Of more than Fancy, of the Social Sense
 Distending wide, and man beloved as man,
 Where France in all her towns lay vibrating
 Like some becalméd bark beneath the burst 30
 Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud
 Is visible, or shadow on the main.
 For thou wert there, thine own brows garlanded,
 Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,
 Amid a mighty nation jubilant, 35
 When from the general heart of human kind
 Hope sprang forth like a full-born Deity!
 —Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down,
 So summoned homeward, thenceforth calm and sure
 From the dread watch-tower of man's absolute self, 40
 With light unwaning on her eyes, to look
 Far on—herself a glory to behold,

The Angel of the vision! Then (last strain)
 Of Duty, chosen Laws controlling choice,
 Action and joy!—an Orphic song indeed, 45
 A song divine of high and passionate thoughts
 To their own music chaunted!

O great Bard!

Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
 With steadfast eye I viewed thee in the choir
 Of ever-enduring men. The truly great 50
 Have all one age, and from one visible space
 Shed influence! They, both in power and act,
 Are permanent, and Time is not with them,
 Save as it worketh for them, they in it.
 Nor less a sacred Roll, than those of old, 55
 And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame
 Among the archives of mankind, thy work
 Makes audible a linkéd lay of Truth,
 Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
 Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes! 60
 Ah! as I listened with a heart forlorn,
 The pulses of my being beat anew:
 And even as Life returns upon the drowned,
 Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains –
 Keen pangs of Love, awakening as a babe 65
 Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart;
 And fears self-willed, that shunned the eye of Hope;
 And Hope that scarce would know itself from Fear;
 Sense of past Youth, and Manhood come in vain,
 And Genius given, and Knowledge won in vain; 70
 And all which I had culled in wood-walks wild,
 And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
 Commune with thee had opened out—but flowers
 Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
 In the same coffin, for the self-same grave! 75

That way no more! and ill beseems it me,
 Who came a welcome in herald's guise,
 Singing of Glory, and Futurity,
 To wander back on such unhealthful road,
 Plucking the poisons of self-harm! And ill 80
 Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths
 Strew'd before thy advancing!

Nor do thou,
Sage Bard! impair the memory of that hour
Of thy communion with my nobler mind
By pity or grief, already felt too long! 85
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.
The tumult rose and ceased: for Peace is nigh
Where Wisdom's voice has found a listening heart.
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,
The Halycon hears the voice of vernal hours 90
Already on the wing.

Eve following eve,
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home
Is sweetest! moments for their own sake hailed
And more desired, more precious, for thy song,
In silence listening, like a devout child, 95
My soul lay passive, by thy various strain
Driven as in surges now beneath the stars,
With momentary stars of my own birth,
Fair constellated foam, still darting off
Into the darkness; now a tranquil sea, 100
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.

And when—O Friend! my comforter and guide!
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength!—
Thy long sustained Song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased—yet thou thyself 105
Wert still before my eyes, and round us both
That happy vision of beloved faces—
Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close
I sate, my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?) 110
Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound—
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

THE KNIGHT'S TOMB

Where is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?
Where may the grave of that good man be?—
By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,
Under the twigs of a young birch tree!
The oak that in summer was sweet to hear, 5
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
And whistled and roared in the winter alone,
Is gone,—and the birch in its stead is grown.—
The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust;— 10

His soul is with the saints, I trust.

YOUTH AND AGE

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope and Poesy,
When I was young! 5
When I was young?—Ah, woful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands, 10
How lightly then it flashed along:—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide! 15
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-like, 20
Of Friendship, Love and Liberty,
Ere, I was old!
Ere I was old? Ah woful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet, 25
'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be that Thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd:—
And thou wert aye a masker bold! 30
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe, that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips, 35
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so I think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve! 40
Where no Hope is, life's a warning

That only serves to make us grieve,
 When we are old:
 That only serves to make us grieve
 With oft and tedious taking-leave, 45
 Like some poor nigh-related guest,
 That may not rudely be dismiss;
 Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,
 And tells the jest without the smile.

CONSTANCY TO AN IDEAL OBJECT

Since all that beat about in Nature's range,
 Or veer or vanish; why should'st thou remain
 The only constant in a world of change,
 O yearning Thought! that liv'st but in the brain?
 Call to the Hours, that in the distance play, 5
 The faery people of the future day—
 Fond Thought! not one of all that shining swarm
 Will breathe on thee with life-enkindling breath,
 Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm,
 Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death! 10
 Yet thou still haunt'st me; and though well I see,
 She is not thou, and only thou art she,
 Still, still as though some dear embodied Good,
 Some living Love before my eyes there stood
 With answering look a ready ear to lend, 15
 I mourn to thee and say – "Ah! loveliest friend!
 That this the meed of all my toils might be,
 To have a home, an English home, and thee!"
 Vain repetition! Home and Thou are one.
 The peacefull'st cot, the moon shall shine upon, 20
 Lulled by the thrush and wakened by the lark,
 Without thee were but a becalméd bark,
 Whose Helmsman on an ocean waste and wide
 Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside.

And art thou nothing? Such thou art, as when 25
 The woodman winding westward up the glen
 At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze
 The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,
 See full before him, gliding without tread,
 An image with a glory round its head; 30
 The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,
 Nor knows he makes the shadow, he pursues!

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