

Adam

I am monarch of all I survey
I arise from dreams of thee
I can imagine, in some otherworld
I dream'd that as I wander'd by the way
I dug, beneath the cypress shade
I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden
I had a little bird
I have been here before
I have come to the borders of sleep
I have had playmates, I have had companions
I have led her home, my love, my only friend
I have loved flowers that fade
I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep
I have walked a great while over the snow
I heard a bird at dawn
I heard a thousand blended notes
I looked into my heart to write
I lost the love of heaven above
I love the fitful gust that shakes
I love to rise in a summer morn
I met a traveller from an antique land
I remember, I remember
I saw the sunlit vale, and the pastoral fairy-tale
I saw wherein the shroud did lurk
I set my heart to sing of leaves
I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless
I thought once how Theocritus had sung
I travell'd among unknown men
I wandered lonely as a cloud
I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile
I wish I were where Helen lies
I woke from death and dreaming
I wonder do you feel to-day

William Cowper
The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech—
I start at the sound of my own,
The beasts that roam over the plain
My form with indifference see—
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, Friendship, and Love
Divinely bestow'd upon man,
Oh had I the wings of a dove
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-wingéd arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there,
But, alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair,
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy—encouraging thought!—
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

Percy Bysshe Shelley
Lines to an Indian Air

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

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream,
The champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream,
The nightingale's complaint
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
O beloved, as thou art!
O lift me from the grass!
I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast,
O press it close to thine again
Where it will break at last!

D.H. Lawrence
Humming Bird

I CAN imagine, in some otherworld
Primeval-dumb, far back
In that most awful stillness, that only gasped and hummed,
Humming-birds raced down the avenues.

Before anything had a soul,
While life was a heave of Matter, half inanimate,
This little bit chipped off in brilliance
And went whizzing through the slow, vast, succulent stems.

I believe there were no flowers, then,
In the world where the humming-bird flashed ahead of creation.
I believe he pierced the slow vegetable veins with his long beak.

Probably he was big
As mosses, and little lizards, they say were once big.
Probably he was a jabbing, terrifying monster.
We look at him through the wrong end of the long telescope of
Time,
Luckily for us.

Percy Bysshe Shelley
A Dream of the Unknown

I DREAM'D that as I wander'd by the way
Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mix'd with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kiss'd it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearl'd Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets,
Faint oxlips, tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved, and that tall flower that wets—
Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cow-bind and the moonlight-colour'd may,
And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drain'd not by the day,
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray,
And flowers azure, black, and streak'd with gold,
Fairer than any waken'd eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple prank'd with white,
And starry river-buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light,
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprison'd children of the Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
I hasten'd to the spot whence I had come
That I might there present it—oh! to Whom?

Thomas Love Peacock
I dug beneath the cypress shade

I DUG, beneath the cypress shade,
What well might seem an elfin's grave,
And every pledge in earth I laid,
That erst thy false affection gave.

I pressed them down the sod beneath,
I placed one mossy stone above,
And twined the rose's fading wreath
Around the sepulchre of love.

Frail as thy love, the flowers were dead,
Ere yet the evening sun was set.
But years shall see the cypress spread,
Immutable as my regret.

Percy Bysshe Shelley
"I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden"

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,
Thou needest not fear mine,
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burthen thine.
I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
Thou needest not fear mine,
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

Sydney Thompson Dobell
The Orphan's Song

I HAD a little bird,
I took it from the nest,
I prest it, and blest it,
And nursed it in my breast.

I set it on the ground,
I danced round and round,
And sang about it so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And oh but I love thee dearly!'

I make a little feast
Of food soft and sweet,
I hold it in my breast,
And coax it to eat,

I pit, and I pat,
I call it this and that,
And sing about it so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly!'

I may kiss, I may sing,
But I can't make it feed,
It taketh no heed
Of any pleasant thing.

I scolded, and I socked,
But it minded not a whit,
Its little mouth was locked,
And I could not open it.

Tho' with pit, and with pat,
And with this, and with that,
I sang about it so cheerly,
And 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly.'

But when the day was done,
And the room was at rest,
And I sat all alone
With my birdie in my breast,

And the light had fled,
And not a sound was heard,
Then my little bird
Lifted up its head,

And the little mouth
Loosed its sullen pride,
And it opened, it opened,
With a yearning strong and wide.

Swifter than I speak
I brought it food once more,
But the poor little beak
Was locked as before.

I sat down again,
And not a creature stirred,
I laid the little bird
Again where it had lain,

And again when nothing stirred,
And not a word I said,
Then my little bird
Lifted up its head,
And the little beak
Loosed its stubborn pride,
And it opened, it opened,
With a yearning strong and wide.

It lay in my breast,
It uttered no cry,
'Twas famished, 'twas famished,
And I couldn't tell why.

I couldn't tell why,
But I saw that it would die,
For all that I kept dancing round and round,
And singing above it so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly!'

I never look sad,
I hear what people say,
I laugh when they are gay
And they think I am glad.

My tears never start,
I never say a word,
But I think that my heart
Is like that little bird.

Every day I read,
And I sing, and I play,
But thro' the long day
It taketh no heed.

It taketh no heed
Of any pleasant thing,
I know it doth not read,
I know it doth not sing.

With my mouth I read,
With my hands I play,
My shut heart is shut,
Coax it how you may.

You may coax it how you may
While the day is broad and bright,
But in the dead night
When the guests are gone away,

And no more the music sweet
Up the house doth pass,
Nor the dancing feet
Shake the nursery glass,

And I've heard my aunt
Along the corridor,
And my uncle gaunt
Lock his chamber door,
And upon the stair

All is hushed and still,
And the last wheel
Is silent in the square,

And the nurses snore,
And the dim sheets rise and fall,
And the lamplight's on the wall,
And the mouse is on the floor,

And the curtains of my bed
Are like a heavy cloud,
And the clock ticks loud,
And sounds are in my head,

And little Lizzie sleeps
Softly at my side,
It opens, it opens,
With a yearning strong and wide!

It yearns in my breast,
It utters no cry,
'Tis famished, 'tis famished,
And I feel that I shall die,
I feel that I shall die,
And none will know why,
Tho' the pleasant life is dancing round and round
And singing about me so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly!'

Dante Gabriel Rossetti **Sudden Light**

I HAVE been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell.
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before,—
How long ago I may not know;
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turned so,
Some veil did fall,—I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?
And shall not thus time's eddying flight
Still with our lives our love restore
In death's despite,
And day and night yield one delight once more?

Edward Thomas **Lights Out**

I HAVE come to the borders of sleep,
The unfathomable deep
Forest where all must lose
Their way, however straight,
Or winding, soon or late,
They cannot choose.

Many a road and track
That, since the dawn's first crack,
Up to the forest brink,
Deceived the travellers,
Suddenly now blurs,
And in they sink.

Here love ends,
Despair, ambition ends,
All pleasure and all trouble,
Although most sweet or bitter,
Here ends in sleep that is sweeter
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book
Or face of dearest look
That I would not turn from now
To go into the unknown
I must enter, and leave, alone,
I know not how.

The tall forest towers,
Its cloudy foliage lowers
Ahead, shelf above shelf,
Its silence I hear and obey
That I may lose my way
And myself.

Charles Lamb
The Old Familiar Faces

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays.
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies.
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a Love once, fairest among women:
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man:
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly,
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces,

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me: all are departed,
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

Alfred Lord Tennyson
from Maud (Part XVIII): I have led her Home,
my love, my only friend

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend,
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wished-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more,
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,

And looking to the South, and fed
With honeyed rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-frame,
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limbed Eve from whom she came.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seemed far better to be born
To labour and the mattock-hardened hand
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

Would die, for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass,
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

Not die, but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
Oh, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?

Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
"The dusky strand of Death invoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes love himself more dear."
Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And die to live, long as my pulses play,
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell

Among the fragments of the golden day,
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell,
It is but for a little space I go.
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell

Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendour that you look so bright?
I have climbed nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell.
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so,
Let all be well, be well.

Robert Bridges

I have loved flowers that fade

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,
Within whose magic tents
Rich hues have marriage made
With sweet unmemoried scents,
A honeymoon delight,
A joy of love at sight,
That ages in an hour
My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs that die
Before their charm is writ
Along a liquid sky
Trembling to welcome it.
Notes, that with pulse of fire
Proclaim the spirit's desire,
Then die, and are nowhere
My song be like an air.

Die, song, die like a breath,
And wither as a bloom,
Fear not a flowery death,
Dread not an airy tomb!
Fly with delight, fly hence!
'Twas thine love's tender sense
To feast, now on thy bier
Beauty shall shed a tear.

James Elroy Flecker

The Old Ships

I HAVE seen old ships like swans asleep
Beyond the village which men call Tyre,
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire,
And all those ships were certainly so old
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell-raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.
But now through friendly seas they softly run,
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
A drowsy ship of some yet older day,
And, wonder's breath indrawn,
Thought I - who knows - who knows - but in that same
(Fished up beyond Æcæa, patched up new -
Stern painted brighter blue -)
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,

And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship - who knows, who knows? -
And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
To see the mast burst open with a rose,
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge

The Witch

I HAVE walked a great while over the snow,
And I am not tall nor strong.
My clothes are wet, and my teeth are set,
And the way was hard and long.
I have wandered over the fruitful earth,
But I never came here before.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!

The cutting wind is a cruel foe.
I dare not stand in the blast.
My hands are stone, and my voice a groan,
And the worst of death is past.
I am but a little maiden still,
My little white feet are sore.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!

Her voice was the voice that women have,
Who plead for their heart's desire.
She came—she came—and the quivering flame
Sunk and died in the fire.
It never was lit again on my hearth
Since I hurried across the floor,
To lift her over the threshold, and let her in at the door.

James Stephens

I heard a bird at dawn

I HEARD a bird at dawn
Singing sweetly on a tree,
That the dew was on the lawn,
And the wind was on the lea,
But I didn't listen to him,
For he didn't sing to me.

I didn't listen to him,
For he didn't sing to me
That the dew was on the lawn
And the wind was on the lea,
I was singing at the time
Just as prettily as he.

I was singing all the time,
Just as prettily as he,
About the dew upon the lawn
And the wind upon the lea,
So I didn't listen to him
As he sang upon a tree.

William Wordsworth
Written in Early Spring

I HEARD a thousand blended notes
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran,
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trail'd its wreaths,
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd,
Their thoughts I cannot measure,
But the least motion which they made
It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
To catch the breezy air,
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from Heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

George Barker
Summer Song

I LOOKED into my heart to write
And found a desert there.
But when I looked again I heard
Howling and proud in every word
The hyena despair.

Great summer sun, great summer sun,
All loss burns in trophies,
And in the cold sheet of the sky
Lifelong the fishlipped lovers lie
Kissing catastrophes.

O loving garden where I lay
When under the breasted tree
My son stood up behind my eyes
And groaned: Remember that the price
Is vinegar for me.

Great summer sun, great summer sun,
Turn back to the designer.
I would not be the one to start
The breaking day and the breaking heart
For all the grief in China.

My one, my one, my only love,
Hide, hide your face in a leaf,
And let the hot tear falling burn
The stupid heart that will not learn
The everywhere of grief.

Great summer sun, great summer sun,
Turn back to the never-never
Cloud-cuckoo, happy, far-off land
Where all the love is true love, and
True love goes on for ever.

John Clare
I lost the love of heaven

I LOST the love of heaven above,
I spurned the lust of earth below,
I felt the sweets of fancied love,
And hell itself my only foe.

I lost earth's joys, but felt the glow
Of heaven's flame abound in me,
Till loveliness and I did grow
The bard of immortality.

I loved, but woman fell away,
I hid me from her faded flame.
I snatched the sun's eternal ray
And wrote till earth was but a name.

In every language upon earth,
On every shore, o'er every sea,

I gave my name immortal birth
And kept my spirit with the free.

John Clare
Autumn

I LOVE the fitful gusts that shakes
The casement all the day
And from the mossy elm tree takes
The faded leaf away
Twirling it by the window-pane
With thousand others down the lane

I love to see the shaking twig
Dance till the shut of eve
The sparrow on the cottage rig
Whose chirp would make believe
That spring was just now flirting by
In summers lap with flowers to lie

I love to see the cottage smoke
Curl upwards through the naked trees
The pigeons nestled round the coat
On dull November days like these
The cock upon the dung-hill crowing
The mill sails on the heath agoing

The feather from the ravens breast
Falls on the stubble lea
The acorns near the old crows nest
Fall pattering down the tree
The grunting pigs that wait for all
Scramble and hurry where they fall

William Blake
The Schoolboy

I LOVE to rise in a summer morn
When the birds sing on every tree,
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the skylark sings with me.
Oh, what sweet company!

But to go to school in a summer morn,
Oh! it drives all joy away,
Under a cruel eye outworn
The little ones spend the day
In sighing and dismay.

Ah! then at times I drooping sit,
And spend many an anxious hour,
Nor in my book can I take delight,
Nor sit in learning's bower,
Worn through with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing?
How can a child, when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring?

O, father and mother, if buds are nipped
And blossoms blown away,
And if the tender plants are stripped
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and care's dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy,
Or the summer fruits appear?
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,
Or bless the mellowing year,
When the blasts of winter appear?

Percy Bysshe Shelley **Ozymandias of Egypt**

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said:—Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains: round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Thomas Hood **Past and Present**

I REMEMBER, I remember
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily-cups—
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday,—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing,
My spirit flew in feathers then
That is so heavy now,

And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow.

I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high,
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky;
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy.

Charles Blunden **Sunlit Vale**

I SAW the sunlit vale, and the pastoral fairy-tale,
The sweet and bitter scent of the may drifted by,
And never have I seen such a bright bewildering green,
But it looked like a lie,
Like a kindly meant lie.

Charles Lamb **On an Infant Dying as Soon as Born**

I SAW where in the shroud did lurk
A curious frame of Nature's work.
A flow'ret crushed in the bud,
A nameless piece of Babyhood,
Was in a cradle-coffin lying,
Extinct, with scarce the sense of dying,
So soon to exchange the imprisoning womb
For darker closets of the tomb!
She did but ope an eye, and put
A clear beam forth, then strait up shut
For the long dark: ne'er more to see
Through glasses of mortality.
Riddle of destiny, who can show
What thy short visit meant, or know
What thy errand here below?
Shall we say, that Nature blind
Check'd her hand, and changed her mind,
Just when she had exactly wrought
A finish'd pattern without fault?
Could she flag, or could she tire,
Or lack'd she the Promethean fire
(With her nine moons' long workings sicken'd)
That should thy little limbs have quicken'd?
Limbs so firm, they seem'd to assure
Life of health, and days mature:
Woman's self in miniature!
Limbs so fair, they might supply
(Themselves now but cold imagery)
The sculptor to make Beauty by.
Or did the stern-eyed Fate descry,
That babe, or mother, one must die,
So in mercy left the stock,
And cut the branch, to save the shock
Of young years widow'd, and the pain,
When Single State comes back again
To the lone man who, 'reft of wife,
Thenceforward drags a maimed life?
The economy of Heaven is dark,
And wisest clerks have miss'd the mark,
Why Human Buds, like this, should fall,
More brief than fly ephemeral,
That has his day, while shrivel'd crones
Stiffen with age to stocks and stones,
And crabbed use the conscience sears
In sinners of an hundred years.

Mother's prattle, mother's kiss,
 Baby fond, thou ne'er wilt miss.
 Rites, which custom does impose,
 Silver bells and baby clothes,
 Coral redder than those lips,
 Which pale death did late eclipse,
 Music framed for infants' glee,
 Whistle never tuned for thee,
 Though thou want'st not, thou shalt have them,
 Loving hearts were they which gave them.
 Let not one be missing, nurse,
 See them laid upon the hearse
 Of infant slain by doom perverse.
 Why should kings and nobles have
 Pictured trophies to their grave,
 And we, churls, to thee deny
 Thy pretty toys with thee to lie,
 A more harmless vanity?

Warren de Tabley
Anticipation

I SET my heart to sing of leaves,
 Ere buds had felt the March wind blow.
 I laid my head and dreamt of sheaves,
 Ere seedsmen had the heart to sow.
 I fancied swallows at the eaves,
 And found old nests in pendent snow.

I dreamt a scent of daffodils,
 When frosty shone the village tiles.
 Of flowery perfume from the hills,
 When ice had bound the mere for miles.
 Of kingcups yellowing all the rills,
 When snowdrift silted up the stiles.

I found a barren bush of thorn,
 Where hung last year the sweet field-rose.
 I said, no hint of purple morn
 The chambers of the east disclose.
 Poor heart, poor song, poor pinions torn,
 Flutter and perish in the snows.

I said, a winter, huge and deep,
 Crawls on the bitter, hungry plain.
 Why should I dream, who cannot sleep,
 Or hope to understand the plain,
 Which rolls the doleful tears I weep,
 That Spring is dead, that Love is slain?

Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Grief

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

Elizabeth Barrett Browning
I thought once how Theocritus had sung

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung
 Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
 Who each one in a gracious hand appears
 To bear a gift for mortals, old or young.
 And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
 I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
 The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
 Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
 A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
 So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
 Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,
 And a voice said in mastery, while I strove, —
 'Guess now who holds thee?' — 'Death,' I said. But, there,
 The silver answer rang, — 'Not Death, but Love.'

William Wordsworth
"I travell'd among unknown men"

I TRAVELL'D among unknown men
 In lands beyond the sea,
 Nor, England! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time, for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire,
 And she I cherish'd turn'd her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings show'd, thy nights conceal'd
 The bowers where Lucy play'd,
 And thine too is the last green field
 That Lucy's eyes survey'd.

William Wordsworth
The Daffodils

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host of golden daffodils,
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the Milky Way,
 They stretch'd in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay:
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
 Outdid the sparkling waves in glee.—
 A poet could not but be gay
 In such a jocund company!
 I gazed, and gazed, but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth
Nature and the Poet
Suggested by a Picture of Peel Castle in a Storm,
painted by Sir George Beaumont

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee.
I saw thee every day, and all the while
Thy form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I look'd, thy image still was there,
It trembled, but it never pass'd away.
How perfect was the calm! It seem'd no sleep,
No mood, which season takes away, or brings;
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle things.

Ah! then, if mine had been the painter's hand
To express what then I saw, and add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream,—

I would have planted thee, thou hoary pile,
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile,
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

A picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife,
No motion but the moving tide—a breeze—
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such picture would I at that time have made,
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A steadfast peace that might not be betray'd.

So once it would have been—'tis so no more,
I have submitted to a new control.
A power is gone, which nothing can restore,
A deep distress hath humanized my soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been.
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old,
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the friend
If he had lived, of him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend,
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh 'tis a passionate work!—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here,
That hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear,

And this huge castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves—
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time—
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

—Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied, for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here,—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

Robert Burns
Fair Helen

I WISH I were where Helen lies,
Night and day on me she cries,
Oh that I were where Helen lies
On fair Kirconnell lea!

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me!

O think na but my heart was sair
When my Love dropt down and spak nae mair!
I laid her down wi' meikle care
On fair Kirconnell lea.

As I went down the water-side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirconnell lea,

I lighted down my sword to draw,
I hackéd him in pieces sma',
I hackéd him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

O Helen fair, beyond compare,
I'll make a garland of thy hair
Shall bind my heart for evermair
Until the day I die.
Oh that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries,
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, "Haste and come to me!"

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee I were blest,
Where thou lies low and takes thy rest
On fair Kirconnell lea.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding-sheet drawn ower my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirconnell lea.

I wish I were where Helen lies,
Night and day on me she cries,
And I am weary of the skies,
Since my Love died for me.

Lilian Bowes Lyon
A Shepherd's Coat

I WOKE from death and dreaming,
His absence be the child I carry,
All days, and all years.
Eternally and this night he will deliver me.
Come peace. For he is coming.

Time tells a marginal story,
Dilates with midsummer that less than leaf
A mute heart, light heart, blown along the pavement,
Then mortally wintry, sears
The implicit glade – oh universe enough!
Orchard in bloom bereaved beyond bereavement.
Yet peace! For now it is gloaming,
Simple and provident, folding the numbered lambs.

No spatial streams, no tears
Can melt the insensate piety of grief.
Adore instead the untold event still happening,
That miracle be the child I carry,
All days, and all years.
Come other south, come wise and holier thaws,
Enlarge me to inhale so ample a breath,
Come peace for he is coming.
Between the lily in bud and the lily opening
Love is, and love redeems.
Come haven, come your hush, horizoning arms.

I shall not want, I wake renewed by death,
A shepherd's coat drawn over me.

Robert Browning
Two in the Campagna

I WONDER do you feel to-day
As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

Help me to hold it! First it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin: yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles,—blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal: and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting nature have her way
While heaven looks from its towers!

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

I would that you were all to me,
You that are just so much, no more.
Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be?

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs,—your part my part
In life, for good and ill.

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

Already how am I so far
Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

