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POEMS

I/1725

2.178

BY

JOHN DRINKWATER

SELECTED BY THE AUTHOR FOR THE
TAUCHNITZ EDITION

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przy Uniwersytecie M. Kopernika
w Toruniu

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ
1928

NOTE

This selection from my poems, taken entirely from volumes published in England by Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson, is made specially for the Tauchnitz Edition and includes what I consider to be representative work from the time of my earlier publications down to the present day. I may add that the translations *From the German* have been published in volume form in America but have at present appeared in England only in a small specially printed edition.

1928. J. D.

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POEMS

1908—1914

SYMBOLS

I SAW history in a poet's song,
In a river-reach and a gallows-hill,
In a bridal bed, and a secret wrong,
In a crown of thorns: in a daffodil.

I imagined measureless time in a day,
And starry space in a waggon-road,
And the treasure of all good harvests lay
In the single seed that the sower sowed.

My garden-wind had driven and havened again
All ships that ever had gone to sea,
And I saw the glory of all dead men
In the shadow that went by the side of me.

A PRAYER

LORD, not for light in darkness do we pray,
Not that the veil be lifted from our eyes,
Nor that the slow ascension of our day
Be otherwise.

Not for a clearer vision of the things
Whereof the fashioning shall make us great,
Not for remission of the peril and stings
Of time and fate.

Not for a fuller knowledge of the end
Whereto we travel, bruised yet unafraid,
Nor that the little healing that we lend
Shall be repaid.

Not these, O Lord. We would not break the bars
Thy wisdom sets about us; we shall climb
Unfettered to the secrets of the stars
In Thy good time.

We do not crave the high perception swift
When to refrain were well, and when fulfil,
Nor yet the understanding strong to sift
The good from ill.

Not these, O Lord. For these Thou hast revealed;
We know the golden season when to reap
The heavy-fruited treasure of the field,
The hour to sleep.

Not these. We know the hemlock from the rose,
The pure from stained, the noble from the base,
The tranquil holy light of truth that glows
On Pity's face.

We know the paths wherein our feet should press,
Across our hearts are written Thy decrees,
Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless
With more than these.

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labour as we know,
Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,
To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou hast lent,
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need,
Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed.

EPILOGUE FOR A MASQUE

A LITTLE time they lived again, and lo!
Back to the quiet night the shadows go,
And the great folds of silence once again
Are over fools and kings and fighting-men.

A little while they went with stumbling feet,
With spears of hate, and love all flowery sweet,
With wondering hearts and bright adventurous wills,
And now their dust is on a thousand hills.

We dream of them, as men unborn shall dream
Of us, who strive a little with the stream
Before we too go out beyond the day,
And are as much a memory as they.

And Death, so coming, shall not seem a thing
Of any fear, nor terrible his wing.
We too shall be a tale on earth, and time
Shall shape our pilgrimage into a rhyme.

WED

I MARRIED him on Christmas morn,—
Ah woe betide, ah woe betide,
Folk said I was a comely bride,—
Ah me forlorn.

All braided was my golden hair,
And heavy then, and shining then,
My limbs were sweet to madden men,—
O cunning snare.

My beauty was a thing they say
Of large renown,—O dread renown,—
Its rumour travelled through the town,
Alas the day.

His kisses burn my mouth and brows,—
O burning kiss, O barren kiss,—
My body for his worship is,
And so he vows.

But daily many men draw near
With courtly speech and subtle speech;
I gather from the lips of each
A deadly fear.

As he grows sullen I grow cold,
And whose the blame? Not mine the blame;
Their passions round me as a flame
All fiercely fold.

And oh, to think that he might be
So proudly set, above them set,
If he might but awaken yet
The soul of me.

Will no man seek and seeking find
The soul of me, the soul of me?
Nay, even as they are, so is he,
And all are blind.

On Christmas morning we were wed,
Ah me the morn, the luckless morn;
Now poppies burn along the corn,
Would I were dead.

PIERROT

Pierrot alone,
And then Pierrette,
And then a story to forget.

Pierrot alone.

Pierrette among the apple boughs
Come down and take a Pierrot's kiss,
The moon is white upon your brows,
Pierrette among the apple boughs,
Your lips are cold, and I would set
A rose upon your lips, Pierrette,
A rosy kiss,
Pierrette, Pierrette.

And then Pierrette.

I've left my apple boughs, Pierrot,
A shadow now is on my face,
But still my lips are cold, and O
No rose is on my lips, Pierrot,
You laugh, and then you pass away
Among the scented leaves of May,
And on my face
The shadows stay.

And then a story to forget.
The petals fall upon the grass,
And I am crying in the dark,
The clouds above the white moon pass—
My tears are falling on the grass;
Pierrot, Pierrot, I heard your vows
And left my blossomed apple boughs,
And sorrows dark
Are on my brows.

THE MIRACLE

COME, sweetheart, listen, for I have a thing
Most wonderful to tell you—news of spring.

Albeit winter still is in the air,
And the earth troubled, and the branches bare,

Yet down the fields to-day I saw her pass—
The spring—her feet went shining through the grass.

She touched the ragged hedgerows—I have seen
Her finger-prints, most delicately green;

And she has whispered to the crocus leaves,
And to the garrulous sparrows in the eaves.

Swiftly she passed and shyly, and her fair
Young face was hidden in her cloudy hair.

She would not stay, her season is not yet,
But she has reawakened, and has set

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The sap of all the world astir, and rent
Once more the shadows of our discontent.

Triumphant news—a miracle I sing—
The everlasting miracle of spring.

THE CROWNING OF DREAMING JOHN

I

SEVEN days he travelled
Down the roads of England,
Out of leafy Warwick lanes
Into London Town.
Grey and very wrinkled
Was Dreaming John of Grafton,
But seven days he walked to see
A king put on his crown.

Down the streets of London
He asked the crowded people
Where would be the crowning
And when would it begin.
He said he'd got a shilling,
A shining silver shilling,
But when he came to Westminster
They wouldn't let him in.

Dreaming John of Grafton
Looked upon the people,
Laughed a little laugh, and then
Whistled and was gone.

Out along the long roads,
The twisting roads of England,
Back into the Warwick lanes
Wandered Dreaming John.

II

As twilight touched with her ghostly fingers
All the meadows and mellow hills,
And the great sun swept in his robes of glory—
Woven of petals of daffodils
And jewelled and fringed with leaves of the roses—
Down the plains of the western way,
Among the rows of the scented clover
Dreaming John in his dreaming lay.

Since dawn had folded the stars of heaven
He'd counted a score of miles and five,
And now, with a vagabond heart untroubled
And proud as the properest man alive,
He sat him down with a limber spirit
That all men covet and few may keep,
And he watched the summer draw round her beauty
The shadow that shepherds the world to sleep.

And up from the valleys and shining rivers,
And out of the shadowy wood-ways wild,
And down from the secret hills, and streaming
Out of the shimmering undefiled
Wonder of sky that arched him over,
Came a company shod in gold
And girt in gowns of a thousand blossoms,
Laughing and rainbow-aureoled.

Wrinkled and grey and with eyes a-wonder
And soul beatified, Dreaming John
Watched the marvellous company gather
While over the clover a glory shone;
They bore on their brows the hues of heaven,
Their limbs were sweet with flowers of the fields,
And their feet were bright with the gleaming
treasure
That prodigal earth to her children yields.

They stood before him, and John was laughing
As they were laughing; he knew them all,
Spirits of trees and pools and meadows,
Mountain and windy waterfall,
Spirits of clouds and skies and rivers,
Leaves and shadows and rain and sun,
A crowded, jostling, laughing army,
And Dreaming John knew every one.

Among them then was a sound of singing
And chiming music, as one came down
The level rows of the scented clover,
Bearing aloft a flashing crown;
No word of a man's desert was spoken,
Nor any word of a man's unworth,
But there on the wrinkled brow it rested,
And Dreaming John was king of the earth.

III

Dreaming John of Grafton
Went away to London,
Saw the coloured banners fly,
Heard the great bells ring,
But though his tongue was civil
And he had a silver shilling,
They wouldn't let him in to see
The crowning of the King.

So back along the long roads,
The leafy roads of England,
Dreaming John went carolling,
Travelling alone,
And in a summer evening,
Among the scented clover,
He held before a shouting throng
A crowning of his own.

THE VAGABOND

I KNOW the pools where the grayling rise,
  I know the trees where the filberts fall,
I know the woods where the red fox lies,
  The twisted elms where the brown owls call.
And I've seldom a shilling to call my own,
  And there's never a girl I'd marry,
I thank the Lord I'm a rolling stone
  With never a care to carry.

I talk to the stars as they come and go
  On every night from July to June,
I'm free of the speech of the winds that blow,
  And I know what weather will sing what tune.
I sow no seed and I pay no rent,
  And I thank no man for his bounties,
But I've a treasure that's never spent,
  I'm lord of a dozen counties.

IN LADY STREET

ALL day long the traffic goes
In Lady Street by dingy rows
Of sloven houses, tattered shops—
Fried fish, old clothes and fortune-tellers—
Tall trams on silver-shining rails,
With grinding wheels and swaying tops,
And lorries with their corded bales,
And screeching cars. "Buy, buy!" the sellers
Of rags and bones and sickening meat
Cry all day long in Lady Street.

And when the sunshine has its way
In Lady Street, then all the grey
Dull desolation grows in state
More dull and grey and desolate,
And the sun is a shamefast thing,
A lord not comely-housed, a god
Seeing what gods must blush to see,
A song where it is ill to sing,
And each gold ray despiteously
Lies like a gold ironic rod.

Yet one grey man in Lady Street
Looks for the sun. He never bent
Life to his will, his travelling feet

Have scaled no cloudy continent,
Nor has the sickle-hand been strong.
He lives in Lady Street; a bed,
Four cobwebbed walls.

But all day long
A time is singing in his head
Of youth in Gloucester lanes. He hears
The wind among the barley-blades,
The tapping of the woodpeckers
On the smooth beeches, thistle-spades
Slicing the sinewy roots; he sees
The hooded filberts in the copse
Beyond the loaded orchard trees,
The netted avenues of hops;
He smells the honeysuckle thrown
Along the hedge. He lives alone,
Alone—yet not alone, for sweet
Are Gloucester lanes in Lady Street.

Aye, Gloucester lanes. For down below
The cobwebbed room this grey man plies
A trade, a coloured trade. A show
Of many-coloured merchandise
Is in his shop. Brown filberts there,
And apples red with Gloucester air,
And cauliflowers he keeps, and round

Smooth marrows grown on Gloucester ground,
Fat cabbages and yellow plums,
And gaudy brave chrysanthemums;
And times a glossy pheasant lies
Among his store, not Tyrian dyes
More rich than are the neck-feathers;
And times a prize of violets,
Or dewy mushrooms satin-skinned
And times an unfamiliar wind
Robbed of its woodland favour stirs
Gay daffodils this grey man sets
Among his treasure.

All day long
In Lady Street the traffic goes
By dingy houses, desolate rows
Of shops that stare like hopeless eyes.
Day long the sellers cry their cries,
The fortune-tellers tell no wrong
Of lives that know not any right,
And drift, that has not even the will
To drift, toils through the day until
The wage of sleep is won at night.
But this grey man heeds not at all
The hell of Lady Street. His stall
Of many-coloured merchandise
He makes a shining paradise,

As all day long chrysanthemums
He sells, and red and yellow plums
And cauliflowers. In that one spot
Of Lady Street the sun is not
Ashamed to shine and send a rare
Shower of colour through the air;
The grey man says the sun is sweet
On Gloucester lanes in Lady Street.

AN EPILOGUE

COME tell us, you that travel far
  With brave or shabby merchandise,
Have you saluted any star
  That goes uncourtiered in the skies?

Do you remember leaf or wing
  Or brook the willows leant along,
Or any small familiar thing
  That passed you as you went along?

Or does the trade that is your lust
  Drive you as yoke-beasts driven apace,
Making the world a road of dust
  From market-place to market-place?

You traffic in the grain, the wine,
  In purple and in cloth of gold,
In treasure of the field and mine,
  In fables of the poets told,—

But have you laughed the wine-cups dry
  And on the loaves of plenty fed,
And walked, with all your banners high,
  In gold and purple garmented?

And do you know the songs you sell
  And cry them out along the way?

And is the profit that you tell
  After your travel day by day

Sinew and sap of life, or husk—
  Dead coffer-ware or kindled brain?
And do you gather in the dusk
  To make your heroes live again?

If the grey dust is over all,
  And stars and leaves and wings forgot,
And your blood holds no festival—
  Go out from us; we need you not.

But if you are immoderate men,
  Zealots of joy, the salt and sting
And savour of life upon you—then
  We call you to our counselling.

And we will hew the holy boughs
  To make us level rows of oars,
And we will set our shining prows
  For strange and unadventured shores.

Where the great tideways swiftliest run
  We will be stronger than the strong,
And sack the cities of the sun,
  And spend our booty in a song.

SWORDS AND PLOUGHSHARES

1915

A TOWN WINDOW

BEYOND my window in the night
  Is but a drab inglorious street,
Yet there the frost and clean starlight
  As over Warwick woods are sweet.

Under the grey drift of the town
  The crocus works among the mould
As eagerly as those that crown
  The Warwick spring in flame and gold.

And when the tramway down the hill
  Across the cobbles moans and rings,
There is about my window-sill
  The tumult of a thousand wings.

FOR CORIN TO-DAY

OLD shepherd in your wattle cote,
  I think a thousand years are done
Since first you took your pipe of oat
  And piped against the risen sun,
Until his burning lips of gold
  Sucked up the drifting scarves of dew
And bade you count your flocks from fold
  And set your hurdle stakes anew.

And then as now at noon you'ld take
  The shadow of delightful trees,
And with good hands of labour break
  Your barley bread with dairy cheese,
And with some lusty shepherd mate
  Would wind a simple argument,
And bear at night beyond your gate
  A loaded wallet of content.

O Corin of the grizzled eye,
  A thousand years upon your down
You've seen the ploughing teams go by
  Above the bells of Avon's town;
And while there's any wind to blow
  Through frozen February nights,
About your lambing pens will go
  The glimmer of your lanthorn lights.

MAMBLE

I NEVER went to Mamble
That lies above the Teme,
So I wonder who's in Mamble,
And whether people seem
Who breed and brew along there
As lazy as the name,
And whether any song there
Sets alehouse wits aflame.

The finger-post says Mamble,
And that is all I know
Of the narrow road to Mamble,
And should I turn and go
To that place of lazy token
That lies above the Teme,
There might be a Mamble broken
That was lissom in a dream.

So leave the road to Mamble
And take another road
To as good a place as Mamble
Be it lazy as a toad;
Who travels Worcester county
Takes any place that comes
When April tosses bounty
To the cherries and the plums.

OLTON POOLS

1916

BIRTHRIGHT

LORD RAMESES of Egypt sighed
  Because a summer evening passed;
And little Ariadne cried
  That summer fancy fell at last
To dust; and young Verona died
  When beauty's hour was overcast.

Theirs was the bitterness we know
  Because the clouds of hawthorn keep
So short a state, and kisses go
  To tombs unfathomably deep,
While Rameses and Romeo
  And little Ariadne sleep.

OLTON POOLS

(TO G. C. G.)

Now June walks on the waters,
And the cuckoo's last enchantment
Passes from Olton pools.

Now dawn comes to my window
Breathing midsummer roses,
And scythes are wet with dew.

Is it not strange for ever
That, bowered in this wonder,
Man keeps a jealous heart? . . .

That June and the June waters,
And birds and dawn-lit roses,
Are gospels in the wind,

Fading upon the deserts,
Poor pilgrim revelations? . . .
Hist . . . over Olton pools!

SUNRISE ON RYDAL WATER

(TO E. DE S.)

COME down at dawn from windless hills
  Into the valley of the lake,
Where yet a larger quiet fills
  The hour, and mist and water make
    With rocks and reeds and island boughs
    One silence and one element,
    Where wonder goes surely as once
    It went
      By Galilean prows.

Moveless the water and the mist,
  Moveless the secret air above,
Hushed, as upon some happy tryst
  The poised expectancy of love;
    What spirit is it that adores
    What mighty presence yet unseen?
    What consummation works apace
    Between
      These rapt enchanted shores?

Never did virgin beauty wake
  Devouter to the bridal feast
Than moves this hour upon the lake
  In adoration to the east;

Here is the bride a god may know,
The primal will, the young consent,
Till surely upon the appointed mood
Intent
The god shall leap—and, lo,

Over the lake's end strikes the sun,
White, flameless fire; some purity
Thrilling the mist, a splendour won
Out of the world's heart. Let there be
Thoughts, and atonements, and desires,
Proud limbs, and undeliberate tongue,
Where now we move with mortal oars
Among
Immortal dews and fires.

So the old mating goes apace,
Wind with the sea, and blood with thought,
Lover with lover; and the grace
Of understanding comes unsought
When stars into the twilight steer,
Or thrushes build among the may,
Or wonder moves between the hills,
And day
Comes up on Rydal mere.

HOLINESS

If all the carts were painted gay,
  And all the streets swept clean,
And all the children came to play
  By hollyhocks, with green
  Grasses to grow between,

If all the houses looked as though
  Some heart were in their stones,
If all the people that we know
  Were dressed in scarlet gowns,
  With feathers in their crowns,

I think this gaiety would make
  A spiritual land.
I think that holiness would take
  This laughter by the hand,
  Till both should understand.

ANTHONY CRUNDLE

HERE LIES THE BODY OF
ANTHONY CRUNDLE,
FARMER, OF THIS PARISH,
WHO DIED IN 1849 AT THE AGE OF 82.
"HE DELIGHTED IN MUSIC."
R.I.P.

AND OF
SUSAN,
FOR FIFTY-THREE YEARS HIS WIFE,
WHO DIED IN 1860, AGED 86.

ANTHONY CRUNDLE of Dorrington Wood
Played on a piccolo. Lord was he,
For seventy years, of sheaves that stood
Under the perry and cider tree;
Anthony Crundle, R.I.P.

And because he prospered with sickle and scythe,
With cattle afield and labouring ewe,
Anthony was uncommonly blithe,
And played of a night to himself and Sue;
Anthony Crundle, eighty-two.

The earth to till, and a tune to play,
And Susan for fifty years and three,
And Dorrington Wood at the end of day . . .
May providence do no worse by me;
Anthony Crundle, R.I.P.

TO THE LOVERS THAT COME AFTER US

LOVERS, a little of this your happy time
  Give to the thought of us who were as you,
That we, whose dearest passion in your prime
  Is but a winter garment, may renew
Our love in yours, our flesh in your desire,
  Our tenderness in your discovering kiss,
For we are half the fuel of your fire,
  As ours was fed by Marc and Beatrice.
Remember us, and, when you too are dead,
  Our prayer with yours shall fall upon love's spring
That all our ghostly loves be comforted
  In those yet later lovers' love-making;
So shall oblivion bring his dust to spill
On brain and limbs, and we be lovers still.

IMMORTALITY

I

WHEN other beauty governs other lips,
  And snowdrops come to strange and happy springs,
When seas renewed bear yet unbuilded ships,
  And alien hearts know all familiar things,
When frosty nights bring comrades to enjoy
  Sweet hours at hearths where we no longer sit,
When Liverpool is one with dusty Troy,
  And London famed as Attica for wit . . .
How shall it be with you, and you, and you,
  How with us all who have gone greatly here
In friendship, making some delight, some true
  Song in the dark, some story against fear?
Shall song still walk with love, and life be brave,
And we, who were all these, be but the grave?

II

No; lovers yet shall tell the nightingale
  Sometimes a song that we of old time made,
And gossips gathered at the twilight ale
  Shall say, "Those two were friends," or, "Unafraid
Of bitter thought were those because they loved
  Better than most." And sometimes shall be told
How one, who died in his young beauty, moved,
  As Astrophel, those English hearts of old.
And the new seas shall take the new ships home
  Telling how yet the Dymock orchards stand,
And you shall walk with Julius at Rome,
  And Paul shall be my fellow in the Strand;
There in the midst of all those words shall be
Our names, our ghosts, our immortality.

PETITION

O LORD, I pray: that for each happiness
My housemate brings I may give back no less
Than all my fertile will;

That I may take from friends but as the stream
Creates again the hawthorn bloom adream
Above the river sill;

That I may see the spurge upon the wall
And hear the nesting birds give call to call,
Keeping my wonder new;

That I may have a body fit to mate
With the green fields, and stars, and streams in spate,
And clean as clover-dew;

That I may have the courage to confute
All fools with silence when they will dispute,
All fools who will deride;

That I may know all strict and sinewy art
As that in man which is the counterpart,
Lord, of Thy fiercest pride;

That somehow this beloved earth may wear
A later grace for all the love I bear,
For some song that I sing;

That, when I die, this word may stand for me—
He had a heart to praise, an eye to see,
And beauty was his king.

TIDES

1917

A MAN'S DAUGHTER

THERE is an old woman who looks each night
Out of the wood.
She has one tooth, that isn't too white.
She isn't too good.

She came from the north looking for me,
About my jewel.
Her son, she says, is tall as can be;
But, men say, cruel.

My girl went northward, holiday making,
And a queer man spoke
At the woodside once when night was breaking,
And her heart broke.

For ever since she has pined and pined,
A sorry maid;
Her fingers are slack as the wool they wind,
Or her girdle-braid.

So now shall I send her north to wed,
Who here may know
Only the little house of the dead
To ease her woe?

Or keep her for fear of that old woman,
As a bird quick-eyed,
And her tall son who is hardly human,
At the woodside?

She is my babe and my daughter dear,
How well, how well.
Her grief to me is a fourfold fear,
Tongue cannot tell.

And yet I know that far in that wood
Are crumbling bones,
And a mumble mumble of nothing that's good,
In heathen tones.

And I know that frail ghosts flutter and sigh
In brambles there,
And never a bird or beast to cry—
Beware, beware,—

While threading the silent thickets go
Mother and son,
Where scrupulous berries never grow,
And airs are none.

And her deep eyes peer at eventide
Out of the wood,
And her tall son waits by the dark woodside
For maidenhood.

And the little eyes peer, and peer, and peer;
And a word is said.
And some house knows, for many a year,
But years of dread.

VENUS IN ARDEN

Now Love, her mantle thrown,
    Goes naked by,
Threading the woods alone,
    Her royal eye
Happy because the primroses again
Break on the winter continence of men.

I saw her pass to-day
    In Warwickshire,
With the old imperial way,
    The old desire,
Fresh as among those other flowers they went
More beautiful for Adon's discontent.

Those other years she made
    Her festival
When the blue eggs were laid
    And lambs were tall,
By the Athenian rivers while the reeds
Made love melodious for the Ganymedes.

And now through Cantlow brakes,
    By Wilmcote hill,

To Avon-side, she makes
    Her garlands still,
And I who watch her flashing limbs am one
With youth whose days three thousand years are
    done.

MAY GARDEN

A SHOWER of green gems on my apple-tree
  This first morning of May
Has fallen out of the night, to be
  Herald of holiday—
Bright gems of green that, fallen there,
Seem fixed and glowing on the air.

Until a flutter of blackbird wings
  Shakes and makes the boughs alive,
And the gems are now no frozen things,
  But apple-green buds to thrive
On sap of my May garden, how well
The green September globes will tell.

Also my pear-tree has its buds,
  But they are silver yellow,
Like autumn meadows when the floods
  Are silver under willow,
And here shall long and shapely pears
Be gathered while the autumn wears.

And there are sixty daffodils
  Beneath my wall. . . .
And jealousy it is that kills
  This world when all
The spring's behaviour here is spent
To make the world magnificent.

RECIPROCITY

I DO not think that skies and meadows are
Moral, or that the fixture of a star
Comes of a quiet spirit, or that trees
Have wisdom in their windless silences.
Yet these are things invested in my mood
With constancy, and peace, and fortitude,
That in my troubled season I can cry
Upon the wide composure of the sky,
And envy fields, and wish that I might be
As little daunted as a star or tree.

DREAMS

WE have our dreams; not happiness.
Great cities are upon the hill
To lighten all our dream, and still
We have no cities to possess
But cities built of bitterness.

We see gay fellows top to toe,
And girls in rainbow beauty bright—
'Tis but of silly dreams I write,
For up and down the streets we know,
The scavengers and harlots go.

Give me a dozen men whose theme
Is honesty, and we will set
On high the banner of dreams . . . and yet
Thousands will pass us in a stream,
Nor care a penny what we dream.

THE HOURS

THOSE hours are best when suddenly
The voices of the world are still,
And in that quiet place is heard
The voice of one small singing bird,
Alone within his quiet tree;

When to one field that crowns a hill,
With but the sky for neighbourhood,
The crowding counties of my brain
Give all their riches, lake and plain,
Cornland and fell and pillared wood;
When in a hill-top acre, bare
For the seed's use, I am aware
Of all the beauty that an age
Of earth has taught my eyes to see;

When Pride and Generosity
The Constant Heart and Evil Rage,
Affection and Desire, and all
The passions of experience
Are no more tabled in my mind,
Learning's idolatry, but find
Particularity of sense
In daily fortitudes that fall
From this or that companion,
Or in an angry gossip's word;

When one man speaks for Every One,
When Music lives in one small bird,
When in a furrowed hill we see
All beauty in epitome—
Those hours are best; for those belong
To the lucidity of song.

POLITICS

You say a thousand things,
Persuasively,
And with strange passion hotly I agree,
And praise your zest,
And then
A blackbird sings
On April lilac, or fieldfaring men,
Ghostlike, with loaded wain,
Come down the twilit lane
To rest,
And what is all your argument to me?

Oh yes—I know, I know,
It must be so—
You must devise
Your myriad policies,
For we are little wise,
And must be led and marshalled, lest we keep
Too fast a sleep
Far from the central world's realities.
Yes, we must heed—
For surely you reveal
Life's very heart; surely with flaming zeal
You search our folly and our secret need;
And surely it is wrong

To count my blackbird's song,
My cones of lilac, and my waggon team,
More than a world of dream.

But still
A voice calls from the hill—
I must away—
I cannot hear your argument to-day.

FOR A GUEST ROOM

ALL words are said,
And may it fall
That, crowning these,
You here shall find
A friendly bed,
A sheltering wall,
Your body's ease,
A quiet mind.

May you forget
In happy sleep
The world that still
You hold as friend,
And may it yet
Be ours to keep
Your friendly will
To the world's end.

For he is blest
Who, fixed to shun
All evil, when
The worst is known,
Counts, east and west,
When life is done,
His debts to men
In love alone.

THE GUEST

SOMETIMES I feel that death is very near,
And, with half-lifted hand,
Looks in my eyes, and tells me not to fear,
But walk his friendly land,
Comrade with him, and wise
As peace is wise.

Then, greatly though my heart with pity moves
For dear imperilled loves,
I somehow know
That death is friendly so,
A comfortable spirit; one who takes
Long thought for all our sakes.

I wonder; will he come that friendly way,
That guest, or roughly in the appointed day?
And will, when the last drops of life are spilt,
My soul be torn from me,
Or, like a ship truly and trimly built,
Slip quietly to sea?

COTSWOLD LOVE

BLUE skies are over Cotswold
  And April snows go by,
The lasses turn their ribbons
  For April's in the sky,
And April is the season
  When Sabbath girls are dressed,
From Rodboro' to Campden,
  In all their silken best.

An ankle is a marvel
  When first the buds are brown,
And not a lass but knows it
  From Stow to Gloucester town.
And not a girl goes walking
  Along the Cotswold lanes
But knows men's eyes in April
  Are quicker than their brains.

It's little that it matters,
  So long as you're alive,
If you're eighteen in April,
  Or rising sixty-five,
When April comes to Amberley
  With skies of April blue,
And Cotswold girls are briding
  With slyly tilted shoe.

THE COTSWOLD FARMERS

SOMETIMES the ghosts forgotten go
  Along the hill-top way,
And with long scythes of silver mow
  Meadows of moonlit hay,
Until the cocks of Cotswold crow
  The coming of the day.

There's Tony Turkletob who died
  When he could drink no more,
And Uncle Heritage, the pride
  Of eighteen-twenty-four,
And Ebenezer Barleytide,
  And others half a score.

They fold in phantom pens, and plough
  Furrows without a share,
And one will milk a faery cow,
  And one will stare and stare,
And whistle ghostly tunes that now
  Are not sung anywhere.

The moon goes down on Oakridge lea,
  The other world's astir,
The Cotswold farmers silently
  Go back to sepulchre,
The sleeping watchdogs wake, and see
  No ghostly harvester.

MOONLIT APPLES

At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,
And the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those
Apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes
A cloud on the moon in the autumn night.

A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scratches, and then
There is no sound at the top of the house of men
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

They are lying in rows there, under the gloomy beams;
On the sagging floor; they gather the silver streams
Out of the moon, those moonlit apples of dreams,
And quiet is the steep stair under.

In the corridors under there is nothing but sleep.
And stiller than ever on orchard boughs they keep
Tryst with the moon, and deep is the silence, deep
On moon-washed apples of wonder.

OUT OF THE MOON

MERELY the moonlight
Piercing the boughs of my may-tree,
Falling upon my ferns;
Only the night
Touching my ferns with silver bloom
Of sea-flowers here in the sleeping city—
And suddenly the imagination burns
With knowledge of many a dark significant doom
Out of antiquity,
Sung to hushed halls by troubadours
Who knew the ways of the heart because they had
seen
The moonlight washing the garden's deeper green
To silver flowers,
Falling with tidings out of the moon, as now
It falls on the ferns under my may-tree bough.

ELIZABETH ANN

THIS is the tale of Elizabeth Ann,
Who went away with her fancy man.

Ann was a girl who hadn't a gown
As fine as the ladies who walk the town.

All day long from seven to six
Ann was polishing candlesticks,

For Bishops and crapulous Millionaires
To buy for their altars or bed-chambers.

And youth in a year and a year will pass,
But there's never an end of polishing brass.

All day long from seven to six—
Seventy thousand candlesticks.

So frail and lewd Elizabeth Ann
Went away with her fancy man.

You Bishops and crapulous Millionaires,
Give her your charity, give her your prayers.

REVERIE

HERE in the unfrequented noon,
In the green hermitage of June,
While overhead a rustling wing
Minds me of birds that do not sing
Until the cooler eve rewakes
The service of melodious brakes,
And thoughts are lonely rangers, here,
In shelter of the primrose year,
I curiously meditate
Our brief and variable state.

I think how many are alive
Who better in the grave would thrive,
If some so long a sleep might give
Better instruction how to live;
I think what splendours had been said
By darlings now untimely dead
Had death been wise in choice of these,
And made exchange of obsequies.

I think what loss to government
It is that good men are content,
Well knowing that an evil will
Is folly-stricken too, and still

Itself considers only wise
For all rebukes and surgeries,
That evil men should raise their pride
To place and fortune undefied.

I think how daily we beguile
Our brains, that yet a little while
And all our congregated schemes
And our perplexity of dreams,
Shall come to whole and perfect state.
I think, however long the date
Of life may be, at last the sun
Shall pass upon campaigns undone.

I look upon the world and see
A world colonial to me,
Whereof I am the architect,
And principal and intellect,
A world whose shape and savour spring
Out of my lone imagining,
A world whose nature is subdued
For ever to my instant mood,
And only beautiful can be
Because of beauty is in me.
And then I know that every mind
Among the millions of my kind

Makes earth his own particular
And privately created star,
That earth has thus no single state,
Being every man articulate.
Till thought has no horizon then
I try to think how many men
There are to make an earth apart
In symbol of the urgent heart,
For there are forty in my street,
And seven hundred more in Greet,
And families at Luton Hoo,
And there are men in China, too.

And what immensity is this
That is but a parenthesis
Set in a little human thought,
Before the body comes to naught.
There at the bottom of the copse
I see a field of turnip tops,
I see the cropping cattle pass
There in another field, of grass,
And fields and fields, with seven towns,
A river, and a flight of downs,
Steeples for all religious men,
Ten thousand trees, and orchards ten,
A mighty span that curves away
Into blue beauty, and I lay

All this as quartered on a sphere
Hung huge in space, a thing of fear
Vast as the circle of the sky
Completed to the astonished eye;
And then I think that all I see,
Whereof I frame immensity
Globed for amazement, is no more
Than a shire's corner, and that four
Great shires being ten times multiplied
Are small on the Atlantic tide
As an emerald on a silver bowl . . .
And the Atlantic to the whole
Sweep of this tributary star
That is our earth is but . . . and far
Through dreadful space the outmeasured mind
Seeks to conceive the unconfined.

I think of Time. How, when his wing
Composes all our quarrelling
In some green corner where May leaves
Are loud with blackbirds on all eves,
And all the dust that was our bones
Is underneath memorial stones,
Then shall old jealousies, while we
Lie side by side most quietly,
Be but oblivion's fools, and still
When curious pilgrims ask—"What skill

Had these that from oblivion saves?"—
My song shall sing above our graves.

I think how men of gentle mind,
And friendly will, and honest kind,
Deny their nature and appear
Fellows of jealousy and fear;
Having single faith, and natural wit
To measure truth and cherish it,
Yet, strangely, when they build in thought,
Twisting the honesty that wrought
In the straight motion of the heart,
Into its feigning counterpart
That is the brain's betrayal of
The simple purposes of love;
And what yet sorrier decline
Is theirs when, eager to confine
No more within the silent brain
Its habit, thought seeks birth again
In speech, as honesty has done
In thought; then even what had won
From heart to brain fades and is lost
In this pretended pentecost,
This their forlorn captivity
To speech, who have not learnt to be
Lords of the word, nor kept among
The sterner climates of the tongue . . .

So truth is in their hearts, and then
Falls to confusion in the brain,
And, fading through this mid-eclipse
It perishes upon the lips.

I think how year by year I still
Find working in my dauntless will
Sudden timidities that are
Merely the echo of some far
Forgotten tyrannies that came
To youth's bewilderment and shame;
That yet a magisterial gown,
Being worn by one of no renown
And half a generation less
In years than I, can dispossess
Something my circumspecter mood
Of excellence and quietude,
And if a Bishop speaks to me
I tremble with propriety.

I think how strange it is that he
Who goes most comradely with me
In beauty's worship, takes delight
In shows that to my eager sight
Are shadows and unmanifest,
While beauty's favour and behest
To me in motion are revealed

That is against his vision sealed;
Yet is our hearts' necessity
Not twofold, but a common plea
That chaos come to continence,
Whereto the arch-intelligence
Richly in divers voices makes
Its answer for our several sakes.

I see the disinherited
And long procession of the dead,
Who have in generations gone
Held fugitive dominion
Of this same primrose pasturage
That is my momentary wage.
I see two lovers move along
These shadowed silences of song,
With spring in blossom at their feet
More incommunicably sweet
To their hearts' more magnificence,
Than to the common courts of sense,
Till joy his tardy closure tells
With coming of the curfew bells.
I see the knights of spur and sword
Crossing the little woodland ford,
Riding in ghostly cavalcade
On some unchronicled crusade.
I see the silent hunter go

In cloth of yeoman green, with bow
Strung, and a quiver of grey wings.
I see the little herd who brings
His cattle homeward, while his sire
Makes bivouac in Warwickshire
This night, the liege and loyal man
Of Cavalier or Puritan.
And as they pass, the nameless dead
Unsung, uncelebrate, and sped
Upon an unremembered hour
As any twelvemonth fallen flower,
I think how strangely yet they live
For all their days were fugitive.

I think how soon we too shall be
A story with our ancestry.

I think what miracle has been
That you whose love among this green
Delightful solitude is still
The stay and substance of my will,
The dear custodian of my song,
My thrifty counsellor and strong,
Should take the time of all time's tide
That was my season, to abide
On earth also; that we should be
Charted across eternity

To one elect and happy day
Of yellow primroses in May.

The clock is calling five o'clock,
And Nonesopretty brings her flock
To fold, and Tom comes back from town
With hose and ribbons worth a crown,
And duly at The Old King's Head
They gather now to daily bread,
And I no more may meditate
Our brief and variable state.

LOYALTIES

1919

HABITATION

HIGH up in the sky there, now, you know,
In this May twilight, our cottage is asleep,
Tenantless, and no creature there to go
Near it but Mrs. Fry's fat cows, and sheep
Dove-coloured, as is Cotswold. No one hears
Under that cherry-tree the night-jars yet,
The windows are uncurtained; on the stairs
Silence is but by tip-toe silence met.
All doors are fast there. It is a dwelling put by
From use for a little, or long, up there in the sky.

Empty; a walled-in silence, in this twilight of May—
A home for lovers, and friendly withdrawing, and sleep,
With none to love there, nor laugh, nor climb from the day
To the candles and linen. . . . Yet in the silence creep,
This minute, I know, little ghosts, little virtuous lives,
Breathing upon that still, insensible place,
Touching the latches, sorting the napkins and knives,

And such for the comfort of being, and bowls for
the grace,
That roses will brim; they are creeping from that
room to this,
One room, and two, till the four are visited . . .
they,
Little ghosts, little lives, are our thoughts in this
twilight of May,
Signs that even the curious man would miss,
Of travelling lovers to Cotswold, signs of an hour,
Very soon, when up from the valley in June will
ride
Lovers by Lynch to Oakridge up in the wide
Bow of the hill, to a garden of lavender flower. . . .

The doors are locked; no foot falls; the hearths
are dumb—
But we are there—we are waiting ourselves who
come.

BLACKBIRD

He comes on chosen evenings,
My blackbird bountiful, and sings
Over the gardens of the town
Just at the hour the sun goes down.
His flight across the chimneys thick,
By some divine arithmetic,
Comes to his customary stack,
And couches there his plumage black,
And there he lifts his yellow bill,
Kindled against the sunset, till
These suburbs are like Dymock woods
Where music has her solitudes,
And while he mocks the winter's wrong
Rapt on his pinnacle of song,
Figured above our garden plots
Those are celestial chimney-pots.

MYSTERY

THINK not that mystery has place
In the obscure and veilèd face,
Or when the midnight watches are
Uncompanied of moon or star,
Or where the fields and forests lie
Enfolded from the loving eye
By fogs rebellious to the sun,
Or when the poet's rhymes are spun
From dreams that even in his own
Imagining are half-unknown.

These are not mystery, but mere
Conditions that deny the clear
Reality that lies behind
The weak, unspeculative mind,
Behind contagions of the air
And screens of beauty everywhere,
The brooding and tormented sky,
The hesitation of an eye.

Look rather when the landscapes glow
Through crystal distances as though
The forty shires of England spread
Into one vision harvested,
Or when the moonlit waters lie

In silver cold lucidity;
Those countenances search that bear
Witness to very character,
And listen to the song that weighs
A life's adventure in a phrase—
These are the founts of wonder, these
The plainer miracles to please
The brain that reads the world aright;
Here is the mystery of light.

MRS. WILLOW

MRS. THOMAS WILLOW seems very glum.
Her life, perhaps, is very lonely and hum-drum,
Digging up potatoes, cleaning out the weeds,
Doing the little for a lone woman's needs.
Who was her husband? How long ago?
What does she wonder? What does she know?
Why does she listen over the wall,
Morning and noon-time and twilight and all,
As though unforgotten were some footfall?

"Good morning, Mrs. Willow." "Good morning, sir,"
Is all the conversation I can get from her.
And her path-stones are white as lilies of the wood,
And she washes this and that till she must be very good.
She sends no letters, and no one calls,
And she doesn't go whispering beyond her walls;
Nothing in her garden is secret, I think—
That's all sun-bright with foxglove and pink.
And she doesn't hover round old cupboards and shelves
As old people do who have buried themselves;
She has no late lamps, and she digs all day
And polishes and plants in a common way,

But glum she is, and she listens now and then
For a footfall, a footfall, a footfall again,
And whether it's hope, or whether it's dread,
Or a poor old fancy in her head,
I shall never be told; it will never be said.

CROCUSES

(TO E. H. C.)

DESIRES,
Little determined desires,
Gripped by the mould,
Moving so hardly among
The earth, of whose heart they were bred,
That is old; it is old,
Not gracious to little desires such as these,
But apter for work on the bases of trees,
Whose branches are hung
Overhead,
Very mightily, there overhead.

Through the summer they stirred,
They strove to the bulbs after May,
Until harvest and song of the bird
Went together away;
And ever till coming of snows
They worked in the mould, for undaunted were those
Swift little determined desires, in the earth
Without sign, any day,
Ever shaping to marvels of birth,
Far away.

And we went
Without heed

On our way,
Never knowing what virtue was spent,
Day by day,
By those little desires that were gallant to breed
Such beauty as fortitude may.
Not once in our mind
Was that corner of earth under trees,
Very mighty and tall,
As we travelled the roads and the seas,
And gathered the wage of our kind,
And were laggard or trim to the call
Of the duties that lengthen the hours
Into seasons that flourish and fall.

And blind,
In the womb of the flowers,
Unresting they wrought,
In the bulbs, in the depth of the year,
Buried far from our thought;
Till one day, when the thrushes were clear
In their note it was spring—and they know—
Unheeding we came into sight
Of that corner forgotten, and lo,
They had won through the meshes of mould,
And treasuries lay in the light,
Of ivory, purple, and gold.

CHARACTER

If one should tell you that in such a spring
The hawthorn boughs into the blackbird's nest
Poured poison, or that once at harvesting
The ears were stony, from so manifest
Slander of proven faith in tree and corn
You would turn unheeding, knowing him forsworn.

Yet now, when one whose life has never known
Corruption, as you know: whose days have been
As daily tidings in your heart of lone
And gentle courage, suffers the word unclean
Of envious tongues, doubting you dare not cry—
"I have been this man's familiar, and you lie."

RUPERT BROOKE

(DIED APRIL 23, 1915)

TO-DAY I have talked with old Euripides;
  Shakespeare this morning sang for my content
Of chimney-sweepers; through the Carian trees
  Comes beating still the nightingales' lament;
The Tabard ales to-day are freshly brewed;
  Wordsworth is with me, mounting Loughrigg
    Fell;
All timeless deaths in Lycid are renewed,
  And basils blossom yet for Isabel.

Quick thoughts are these; they do not pass; they
    gave
  Only to death such little, casual things
As are the noteless levies of the grave,—
  Sad flesh, weak verse, and idle marketings.
So my mortality for yours complains,
While our immortal fellowship remains.

HISTORY

SOMETIMES, when walls and occupation seem
A prison merely, a dark barrier
Between me everywhere
And life, or the larger province of the mind,
As dreams confined,
As the trouble of a dream,
I seek to make again a life long gone,
To be
My mind's approach and consolation,
To give it form's lucidity,
Resilient form, as porcelain pieces thrown
In buried China by a wrist unknown,
Or mirrored brigs upon Fowey sea.

Then to my memory comes nothing great
Of purpose, or debate,
Or perfect end,
Pomp, nor love's rapture, nor heroic hours to spend—
But most, and strangely, for long and so much have I seen,
Comes back an afternoon
Of a June
Sunday at Elsfield, that is up on a green
Hill, and there,

Through a little farm parlour door,
A floor
Of red tiles and blue,
And the air
Sweet with the hot June sun cascading through
The vine-leaves under the glass, and a scarlet fume
Of geranium flower, and soft and yellow bloom
Of musk, and stains of scarlet and yellow glass.

Such are the things remain
Quietly, and for ever, in the brain,
And the things that they choose for history-making
pass.

THE PATRIOT

SCARCE is my life more dear to me,
  Brief tutor of oblivion,
Than fields below the rookery
  That comfortably looks upon
  The little street of Piddington.

I never think of Avon's meadows,
  Ryton woods or Rydal mere,
Or moon-tide moulding Cotswold shadows,
  But I know that half the fear
  Of death's indifference is here.

I love my land. No heart can know
  The patriot's mystery, until
It aches as mine for woods ablow
  In Gloucestershire with daffodil,
  Or Bicester brakes that violets fill.

No man can tell what passion surges
  For the house of his nativity
In the patriot's blood, until he purges
  His grosser mood of jealousy,
  And comes to meditate with me

Of gifts of earth that stamp his brain
  As mine the pools of Ludlow mill,
The hazels fencing Trilly's Lane,
  And Forty Acres under Brill,
  The ferry under Elsfield hill.

These are what England is to me,
  Not empire, nor the name of her
Ranging from pole to tropic sea.
  These are the soil in which I bear
  All that I have of character.

That men my fellows near and far
  May live in like communion,
Is all I pray; all pastures are
  The best beloved beneath the sun;
  I have my own; I envy none.

DEER

SHY in their herding dwell the fallow deer.
They are spirits of wild sense. Nobody near
Comes upon their pastures. There a life they live,
Of sufficient beauty, phantom, fugitive,
Treading as in jungles free leopards do,
Printless as evelight, instant as dew.
The great kine are patient, and home-coming sheep
Know our bidding. The fallow deer keep
Delicate and far their counsels wild,
Never to be folded reconciled
To the spoiling hand as the poor flocks are;
Lightfoot, and swift, and unfamiliar,
These you may not hinder, unconfined
Beautiful flocks of the mind.

PASSAGE

WHEN you deliberate the page
Of Alexander's pilgrimage,
Or say—"It is three years, or ten,
Since Easter slew Connolly's men,"
Or prudently to judgment come
Of Antony or Absalom,
And think how duly are designed
Case and instruction for the mind,
Remember then that also we,
In a moon's course, are history.

THE COMMON LOT

WHEN youth and summertime are gone,
And age puts quiet garlands on,
And in the speculative eye
The fires of emulation die,
But as to-day our time shall be
Trembling upon eternity,
While, still inconstant in debate,
We shall on revelation wait,
And age as youth will daily plan
The sailing of the caravan.

TO ONE I LOVE

As I walked along the passage, in the night, beyond
the stairs,
In the dark,
I was afraid,
Suddenly,
As will happen you know, my dear, it will often
happen.
I knew the walls at my side,
Knew the drawings hanging there, the order of
their placing,
And the door where my bed lay beyond,
And the window on the landing—
There was even a little ray of moonlight through it—
All was known, familiar, my comfortable home;
And yet I was afraid,
Suddenly,
In the dark, like a child, of nothing,
Of vastness, of eternity, of the queer pains of
thought,
Such as used to trouble me when I heard,
When I was little, the people talk
On Sundays of "As it was in the Beginning,
Is Now, and Ever Shall Be. . . ."
I am thirty-six years old,
And folk are friendly to me,

And there are no ghosts that should have reason
to haunt me,
And I have tempted no magical happenings
By forsaking the clear noons of thought
For the wizardries that the credulous take
To be golden roads to revelation.
I knew all was simplicity there,
Without conspiracy, without antagonism,
And yet I was afraid,
Suddenly,
A child, in the dark, forlorn. . . .
And then, as suddenly,
I was aware of a profound, a miraculous under-
standing,
Knowledge that comes to a man
But once or twice, as a bird's note
In the still depth of the night
Striking upon the silence . . .
I stood at the door, and there
Was mellow candle-light,
And companionship, and comfort,
And I knew
That it was even so,
That it must be even so
With death.
I knew
That no harm could have touched me out of my fear,

Because I had no grudge against anything,
Because I had desired
In the darkness, when fear came,
Love only, and pity, and fellowship,
And it would have been a thing monstrous,
Something defying nature
And all the simple universal fitness
For any force there to have come evilly
Upon me, who had no evil in my heart,
But only trust, and tenderness
For every presence about me in the air,
For the very shadow about me,
Being a little child for no one's envy.
And I knew that God
Must understand that we go
To death as little children,
Desiring love so simply, and love's defence,
And that he would be a barren God, without humour,
To cheat so little, so wistful, a desire,
That he created
In us, in our childishness . . .
And I may never again be sure of this,
But there, for a moment,
In the candle-light,
Standing at the door,
I knew.

SEEDS OF TIME

1921

THRIFT

(TO F. L.)

No beauty beauty overthrows
But every joy its season knows,
And all enchanted hours prepare
Enchantment for to-morrow's wear.

Who in the just society
That walks with him this hour can see
But shadows of another bliss
Loses both that delight and this.

Grieve not the parting day, for soon
The nightingales will sing the moon
Climbing the track that now the sun
Leaves when the songs of day are done.

And grieve not when her beauty pales,
And silence keeps the nightingales,
For that eclipse again will bring
The sun with all his birds to sing.

THE DYING PHILOSOPHER TO HIS FIDDLER

COME, fiddler, play one tune before I die.
Philosophy is barren, and I lie
Untouched now by the plagues of all the schools,
And only silly fiddlers are not fools.

Bring then your bow, and on the strings let be,
In this last hour, merely the melody
Of waves and leaves and footfalls hazardous,
Where crafty logic shall not keep with us.

The patient fields of knowledge did I sow;
I have done with knowledge—for I nothing know.
Wisdom and folly set their faces hence,
And in their eyes a twin-intelligence.

Only your notes may quick again the keen
Tree-shadows cut upon the paddock's green,
The pools where mirrored branches are at rest,
The heron lifting to her windy nest.

And these are things that know not argument;
Come, fiddler, play; philosophy is spent.
Out of my thought the chiding doctors slip,
And you are now the only scholarship.

TO AND FRO ABOUT THE CITY

SHAKESPEARE is dust, and will not come
To question from his Avon tomb,
And Socrates and Shelley keep
An Attic and Italian sleep.

They will not see us, nor again
Shall indignation light the brain
Where Lincoln on his woodland height
Tells out the spring and winter night.

They see not. But, O Christians, who
Throng Holborn and Fifth Avenue,
May you not meet, in spite of death,
A traveller from Nazareth?

FAIRFORD NIGHTINGALES

THE nightingales at Fairford sing
As though it were a common thing
To make the day melodious
With tones that use to visit us
Only when thrush and blackbird take
Their sleep nor know the moon's awake.

These nightingales they sing at noon,
Not lyric lone, but threading June
With songs of many nightingales,
Till the meridian summer pales,
And here by day that spectral will
Is spending its enchantment still.

Nor shyly in far woodland bowers
But walled among the garden flowers,
The Fairford nightingales are free,
That so the fabled melody
Is from the haunted groves of Thrace
Falling on Fairford market-place.

O nightingales that leave the night
To join the melodists of light,
And leave your coppiced gloom to dare
The fellowship forsaken there,
Fresh hours, fresh leaves can dispossess
Nor spoil your music's loneliness.

SAMPLERS

In praise of love, upon my mind
  Samplers I'll make to be,
As lovers long ago designed
  Emblems of courtesy,
Threading in warm and frosty wools
Their wisdom's calendars and rules.

He errs to think those hands were set
  All spinster-like and cold,
Who spelt a scarlet alphabet,
  And birds of blue and gold,
And made immortal garden-plots
Of daisies and forget-me-nots.

The bodkins wove an even pace,
  Yet these are lyrics too,
Breathing of spectral lawn and lace,
  Old ardours to renew,
For in the corners love would keep
His fold among the little sheep.

So I will samplers make as well,
  Nor shall the colours lack
In shining characters to tell
  Your lovely Zodiac,
And all your kisses there and words
Shall spring again as flowers and birds.

NUNC DIMITTIS

I HAVE seen the plover's wing,
And the grey willow bough,
The sandy bubbling spring,
The hawk over the plough,
  And now, instructed so,
  I am content to go.

Songs of the lake and wood,
Of water and wind I have heard,
And I have understood
According to Thy word.
  What then is now to learn?
  Seaward, O soul, return.

Though I shall walk again
Nor spring nor winter field,
Yet surely in my brain
Are spring and winter sealed.
  Earth you have shown me all,
  I am ready for the call.

PERSUASION

Then I asked: "Does a firm persuasion that a thing is so, make it so?"

He replied: "All Poets believe that it does, and in ages of imagination this firm persuasion removed mountains; but many are not capable of a firm persuasion of anything."

BLAKE's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell.*

I

AT any moment love unheralded
Comes, and is king. Then as, with a fall
Of frost, the buds upon the hawthorn spread
Are withered in untimely burial,
So love, occasion gone, his crown puts by,
And as a beggar walks unfriended ways,
With but remembered beauty to defy
The frozen sorrows of unsceptred days.
Or in that later travelling he comes
Upon a bleak oblivion, and tells
Himself, again, again, forgotten tombs
Are all now that love was, and blindly spells
His royal state of old a glory cursed,
Saying "I have forgot," and that's the worst.

II

If we should part upon that one embrace,
And set far courses ever, each from each,
With all our treasure but a fading face
And little ghostly syllables of speech,
Should beauty's moment never be renewed,
And moons on moons look out for us in vain,
And each but whisper from a solitude
To hear but echoes of a lonely pain,—
Still in a world that fortune cannot change
Should walk those two that once were you and I,
Those two that once when moon and stars were
strange
Poets above us in an April sky,
Heard a voice falling on the midnight sea,
Mute, and for ever, but for you and me.

III

This nature, this great flood of life, this cheat
That uses us as baubles for her coat,
Takes love, that should be nothing but the beat
Of blood for its own beauty, by the throat,
Saying, you are my servant and shall do
My purposes, or utter bitterness
Shall be your wage, and nothing come to you
But stammering tongues that never can confess.
Undaunted then in answer here I cry,

"You wanton, that control the hand of him
Who masquerades as wisdom in a sky
Where holy, holy, sing the cherubim,
I will not pay one penny to your name
Though all my body crumble into shame."

IV

WOMAN, I once had whimpered at your hand,
Saying that all the wisdom that I sought
Lay in your brain, that you were as the sand
Should cleanse the muddy mirrors of my thought;
I should have read in you the character
Of oracles that quick a thousand lays,
Looked in your eyes, and seen accounted there
Solomons legioned for bewildered praise.
Now have I learnt love as love is. I take
Your hand, and with no inquisition learn
All that your eyes can tell, and that's to make
A little reckoning and brief, then turn
Away, and in my heart I hear a call,
"I love, I love, I love"; and that is all.

V

WHEN all the hungry pain of love I bear,
And in poor lightless thought but burn and burn,
And wit goes hunting wisdom everywhere,
Yet can no word of revelation learn,

When endlessly the scales of yea and nay
In dreadful motion fall and rise and fall,
When all my heart in sorrow I could pay
Until at last were left no tear at all,
Then if with tame or subtle argument
Companions come and draw me to a place
Where words are but the tappings of content,
And life spreads all her garments with a grace,
I curse that ease, and hunger in my heart
Back to my pain and lonely to depart.

VI

NOT anything you do can make you mine,
For enterprise with equal charity
In duty as in love elect will shine,
The constant slave of mutability.
Nor can your words for all their honey breath
Outsing the speech of many an older rhyme,
And though my ear deliver them from death
One day or two, it is so little time.
Nor does your beauty in its excellence
Excel a thousand in the daily sun,—
Yet must I put a period to pretence,
And with my logic's catalogue have done,
For act and word and beauty are but keys
To unlock the heart, and you, dear love, are these.

VII

NEVER the heart of spring had trembled so
As on that day when first in Paradise
We went afoot as novices to know
For the first time what blue was in the skies,
What fresher green than any in the grass,
And how the sap goes beating to the sun,
And tell how on the clocks of beauty pass
Minute by minute till the last is done.
But not the new birds singing in the brake,
And not the buds of our discovery,
The deeper blue, the wilder green, the ache
For beauty that we shadow as we see,
Made heaven, but we, as love's occasion brings,
Took these, and made them Paradisal things.

VIII

THE lilacs offer beauty to the sun,
Throbbing with wonder as eternally
For sad and happy lovers they have done
With the first bloom of summer in the sky,
Yet they are newly spread in honour now,
Because, for every beam of beauty given
Out of that clustering heart, back to the bough
My love goes beating, from a greater heaven.
So be my love for good or sorry luck

Bound, it has virtue on this April eve
That shall be there for ever when they pluck
Lilacs for love. And though I come to grieve
Long at a frosty tomb, there still shall be
My happy lyric in the lilac tree.

IX

WHEN they make silly question of my love,
And speak to me of danger and disdain,
And look by fond old argument to move
My wisdom to docility again,
When to my prouder heart they set the pride
Of custom and the gossip of the street,
And show me figures of myself beside
A self diminished at their judgment seat,
Then do I sit as in a drowsy pew
To hear a priest expounding th' heavenly will,
Defiling wonder that he never knew
With stolen words of measured good and ill,
For to the love that knows their counselling,
Out of my love contempt alone I bring.

X

NOT love of you is most that I can bring,
Since what I am to love you is the test,
And should I love you more than any thing
You would but be of idle love possessed,

A mere love wandering in appetite,
Counting your glories and yet bringing none,
Finding in you occasions of delight,
A thief of payment for no service done.
But when of labouring life I make a song
And bring it you, as that were my reward,
To let what most is me to you belong,
Then do I come of high possessions lord,
And loving life more than my love of you
I give you love more excellently true.

XI

WHAT better tale could any lover tell
When age or death his reckoning shall write
Than thus, "Love taught me only to rebel
Against these things,—the thieving of delight
Without return; the gospellers of fear
Who, loving, yet deny the truth they bear,
Sad-suited lusts with lecherous hands to smear
The cloth of gold they would but dare not wear.
And love gave me great knowledge of the trees,
And singing birds, and earth with all her flowers,
Wisdom I knew and righteousness in these,
I lived in their atonement all my hours;
Love taught me how to beauty's eye alone
The secret of the lying heart is known."

XII

THIS then at last; we may be wiser far
Than love, and put his folly to our measure,
Yet shall we learn, poor wizards that we are,
That love chimes not nor motions at our pleasure.
We bid him come, and light an eager fire,
And he goes down the road without debating,
We cast him from the house of our desire,
And when at last we leave he will be waiting.
And in the end there is no folly but this,
To counsel love out of our little learning,
For still he knows where rotten timber is,
And where the boughs for the long winter burning,
And when life needs no more of us at all,
Love's word will be the last that we recall.

PRELUDES

1921—1922

PRELUDE

THOUGH black the night, I know upon the sky,
A little paler now, if clouds were none,
The stars would be. Husht now the thickets lie,
And now the birds are moving one by one,—
A note—and now from bush to bush it goes—
A prelude—now victorious light along
The west will come till every bramble glows
With wash of sunlit dew shaken in song.
Shaken in song; O heart, be ready now,
Cold in your night, be ready now to sing.
Dawn as it wakes the sleeping bird on bough
Shall summon you to instant reckoning,—
She is your dawn, O heart,—sing, till the night
Of death shall come, the gospel of her light.

DAVID AND JONATHAN

And Jonathan too had honour in his heart,
Jonathan who with an armour-bearer went
Alone by Michmash to the Philistines,
And met a spray of swords because of courage
That made him single greater than a host.
Jonathan too had known his battles, dared
At any hour the coming of death, because
In twilight silence he had walked with God,
Read Him in blossoms and the mountain brooks,
And learnt that death, well known, can alter
nothing.
He was a brown man, burnt with love of summer,
His young beard curled, and russet as the eyes
That looked on life, and feared it, yet were master,
Because they knew the tyranny they feared,
Measured it, learnt it, gazed it into nothing.

. . . . .

And now he watched the boy, the son of Jesse,
David with hair like maples in October,
And skin that women loving coveted,
David with eyes that often by the sheepfolds
Had looked through leaves up to the folds of
heaven,
And seeing them crammed with golden fleece of
stars,

Had known how the blood can run because of
beauty.
Jonathan watched him take the armour off
Given by Saul, and choose the bright smooth
pebbles,
And walk out from the Israelitish throng
Into the field against the Philistine giant.
Watching, he snatched his sword and cried to
Saul,
"Bid him come back. This murder must not
be."
And as he spoke, he knew the words were
treason,
His heart alone in all the world was sure
That David was the Lord's appointed arm,
To meet this bulk of dirt, this giant fear
Brandishing out of the loathly camps of evil.
And before Saul could answer, he put down
The sword, and said, "I love him. Let him go."

. . . . .

But the words, I love him, were not for his father
Saul,
Hardly Jonathan knowing he spake them out.
But as he looked on David love was there,
Waking from that in David that he himself
A little was, and always greatly shaping
Himself towards, so that his name was spoken

Famously in Saul's kingdom. It was courage,
The clean heart, undivided in its doing,
The purpose that, being bodied in the brain,
Thenceforth knew every trickling argument
That fell from tongues of persuading circumstance,
As lures of evil ever threatening life,
That Jonathan loved above all enterprise.
He knew, or the rarer man within him knew,
That once your yea in holy meditation
Had shaped itself in the perfect syllable,
Thenceforth no nay from any other tongue
Or wise or passionate or masterful,
Could be listened to without the shame of sin
Corrupting all your constancy for ever.
He knew the curse of good betraying good,
Till both in bleak irresolution fall.
And all his years was Jonathan's anguish only
To keep this tillage of his wisdom clean.

. . . . .

Since boyhood he had known Philistia
For the black thing it was, a plague opposed
Always against the loveliness of Israel,
And when his father Saul was anointed king
By Samuel in Ramah, then Jonathan knew
How all the lessons of his youth had been
To fit him for the striking of the men

Who profaned beauty and let the soul be blind.
And he was diligent in bronze and arms,
And kept his body supple, and his eye
Keen, and the coming of his hooves was thunder,
Wherever battle fell. He bore a flame,
Zealous and pure, in the heavens of his mind,
To serve and to instruct. Aye, to instruct—
There was the biting blemish, as we shall see.

. . . . .

Philistia was foul, and Jonathan knew,
And the voice of God within him was plain and constant
To strike and strike unwearying to the end.
And then the poor, precise, infirmity
That loads good minds with ever seeming virtue,
Until they cast their treasure to the dust,
Crept on him, wound about the gleaming truth
That was his one foundation. Day by day
He was resolved, and then the grain of doubt
Would come to hurt the riding of his thought,
And break the level balance that it had.
Was then the Philistine mere black? That day
Jonathan's arm half paused upon the blow,
And evil went a little scatheless off.
Surely the worst even of adversaries
Had somewhere beams that pointed to salvation,

And hasty judgment might not be the will
Of an all-seeing Lord? Then would the vengeance
Falter, and stay, and Jonathan's battle failed.
And always then was bitterness and reproach
In the night watches when upon his couch
He looked on the stars studding his little window
Before sleep came. Then he would speak again
The word that single was his valiance,
His only truth, his warrant as a man,
And once again Philistia was doomed.
Then for a season clean the stroke and sure
That Jonathan drove, and black was known for black,
Till slowly as before would mount and mount
Scruple on scruple, as was not he himself
A little black sometimes, or plainly wicked?
And should the wicked man not be redeemed?
Merely destruction surely was no answer,
Since yet the wickedness must wander somewhere?
How should he say, I, Jonathan of Israel
Am good, and you the Philistine are cursed,
Since in that face was something that had been
Learnt from the buds and corn and frozen hills
That he himself had known for seals of God?
And would not his power on Israel increase,

Take on a loftier authority,
If to his famous arms he could add a tale
Of counsel working in the hearts of men,
Moving them to a finer charity,
A little pity for offence? And so
Instruction like a worm was at his roots,
And pride of virtue made Jonathan forget.
Then sometimes as he knew himself betrayed
He would cry upon his spirit in the night—

I, Jonathan, who know
The processes of God
Moving within me,
Turn aside to my idols of desire.
He has taught me the ways
Of Philistine cruelty. He
Shows me the bad man toiling to the ruin
Of beauty and the free spirit on earth,
And has equipped me for the establishment
Of His will in this battle, and I fail.
I am a leaf spinning about the wind,
Who have been shown the ways of stedfastness.
O Israel, I have heard
My dedication made
To your sweet service by the voice of Him,

And I betray
That wisdom, that great simpleness of wisdom,
Inventing in my brain
Fantastic argument
As though God's mind
Had missed the brighter pools
That I alone could visit and gaze into.
He tells me, and I hear
Voices not His.
Knowing, I question. And I am ashamed.
So Jonathan saw walking at his side
Always a shadow that was his own denial.

. . . . .

And now was April mirrored in the plumes
Of ravens and the green of the young wheat,
And dusky ewes with white lambs in the sun
Lay in the valley plain between the hosts
Of Israel and Philistia. And on this day
Jonathan learnt utter reproach, and love.
There on the plain Goliath stood alone,
Poised in his mighty bulk, with black locks flowing,
A handsbreadth taller even than Saul the king
Who shouldered it above the men of Israel,
And beat his words of sure defiance out,
Ringing across the windless noon. And all

Israel heard, and fear was on them, knowing,
If thus the issue, how it should prevail.
And Jonathan in the tent of Saul his father,
Watched, and his blood was quick, and in his mind
He strove against the last of doubt. And then
The young man David stood before them, bidden
By Saul, who heard one say, "There is a boy
New come from tending sheep in Bethlehem,
And seeks the king." And David stood before them,
And asked no leave, but said, "There was a cause.
It bade me come, and I will fight with him."
And Saul denied, but David did not hear
Denial, saying, "The wild beasts of the field
I with my hand have slain at the fold's gate,
And this is mine to do." And David stood,
Greater than argument while Saul armed him there.
And Jonathan saw the purpose that he was not,
Glowing and bodied, and his love was born.

. . . . .

Then David flung the armour off, and said,
"I am David, and I know not these strange arms.
I must go out as I have always been,

Not girt with new occasion. It is I,
David the shepherd that am David still,
And I know nothing of your spears and plate.
A sheepskin have I worn, and in my hand
A sling, and pebbles taken from the brook.
Now shall I go, content that God has watched me
So habited and armed through all my youth.
Should I pretend another David now,
I should meet this man with neither honour nor hope.
If I am sent against the Philistine
Out of God's anger, and I know it is so,
It is not one the chosen of Saul's hosts,
But I, David of Bethlehem must go,
The son of Jesse, and keeper of his flocks."

. . . . .

Almost the tears were seen in Jonathan's eyes,
Because of David's words, of which he knew
The poor ghosts hiding somewhere in his own heart.
And then he spoke his fear, and then the words,
Resting his sword, "I love him. Let him go."
And David stept out of the emerald light
That played up from the grass floor of the tent,
Into the full flood of the April noon,
And walked a little way, and those two stood
Parted a hundred paces, the man of terror,

Hewn massy and with shock of builded limbs,
And David moulded like a sea boy risen
From caves of music where the water spins
Wet sand into the shapes of flowing flowers;
David with limbs all bright with the sun's tones,
And ruddy locks curling with youth and light,
His body all alert on steady loins,
Clean spun of flesh that knew the winter snows,
And mellow pools of summer, and the dews
Dropping among the crocuses of dawn.
His sandle-straps bound ankles as a girl's,
And fluttering to his knees the sheepskin hung,
Cloaking one shoulder, while the other gleamed.
And there he paused, the sling in his right hand,
His left hand fingering the pouch of pebbles,
While Israel fearing murmured, and the hosts
Of Philistine derision rocked the noon.
Then did Goliath cry, "Am I a dog,
For a boy's whipping? Have you not a man,
That you would send a cleaner up of crumbs
From the queen's table? Come then, and be broken,
For birds to find you and the dogs at night."
And Jonathan heard Philistia shout again,
And David, like a flame unwinded, stood
Quivering at the cry, and laid a stone
In the sling's fold, and cast his staff, and ran,

Fleet as the king bird gliding under leaves,
Towards Goliath. And a giant spear
Swung from the Philistine hand, and forty paces
Sang in the air and brushed the flying sheepskin,
And sudden David's feet were planted firm,
Locked on the earth, and circling in the sun
The tight thong flashed and loosened, and the stone
Smote the Philistine wrath above the eyes,
And the day was clouded from him, and he fell.

. . . . .

Then Israel spared not. And, when night was
come,
Jonathan sent for David to his tent,
And those two sat while the yellow torches burned,
And Jonathan spoke and said, "David, my brother,
To-day you have made a story that shall be
For ever fruitful in the heart of man.
This day is David's. But of this day I too
Share, not in the honour, but in the harvesting,
Or the harvesting I think is wholly mine,
Shall I speak on?" And David said, "Speak on."
Then Jonathan—"This morning there was a man,
And it was Jonathan, who many years
Had gone snared in a purpose not his own,
That is, not truly mine. Always I knew,
Walking by that self I said was honest,
Another self, the true self, in a shadow,

Or at an angle that my eyes refused.
I was a proud man, David, very virtuous,
Or, in fairness to myself, desiring virtue,
Truly desiring it, I may say that.
And yet even in that desire there moved
A lie, for I knew the virtue of my desire
Was something tainted. No—I knew it not,
But that other self walking beside me knew it,
And whispered, I knew, a thing that I would not
hear.
Always it whispered, as I stood alone,
I said, in subtle thought among all Israel.
God had spoken to me, David, that the Philistine
Was evil, evil, that was all God said,
And bade me strike as a man by God assured.
But the man to whom God spoke I put aside,
The still self walking, whispering, in the shadow.
And I, the Jonathan of daily light,
Tempered the word of God, I tempered it —
I who should be God's outcast doing so.
I counted evil twenty different ways,
And none of them plain evil. I diced with God,
And the dice fell as often to my hand,
It seemed, as His, but falling so the whisper
Was ever shadowed at my ear, unheard.
And ever as this new intelligence,
This pride of thought, crept over me and filled

My dawn and noon and sleep, a hunger grew,
A dreadful hunger for that self denied,
And every word I spoke for righteousness
Turned bitter on my lips, because I knew
That every word was righteousness undone.
Such was the man this morning when you came,
Who from the king's tent watched you, David.
    Then
Change and completion and I know not what
Of heavenly fulfilment fell upon me.
Not from myself, nor of my own devising,
But marvellously spoken in a space
Of golden light that glowed about the form
Of a boy standing in my father's tent.
Quite suddenly the thing I lacked was there,
The shadow whispering at my side had gone
And stood there bodied in you, David, brother,
O dear young shepherd from your sheepfolds
    called—
Nay Jonathan myself it was there standing,
Or barren branches of myself in flower,
My jailored thought flooded with light of song.
And in that moment nothing was between
Your soul and mine, and knowing you, I loved,
Since love is understanding, and must come
When mind looks on the presence of very mind.
I loved you, David, and I love, and ever—

Because my mind, even in one day's passing,
Has learnt you as no years could better learn—
My love is fixed upon you. And, moreover,
Since from this hour I must for ever know
Some element of me lodged sole in you,
Some certainty in you alone to be
Among my weeds the patient husbandman,
I must in your love prosper or not at all.
Now therefore, David, let a covenant be
Between us from this day, for the heart knows."

. . . . .

David and Jonathan under the long torches
Were silent then. And David's eyes were fixed
Long upon Jonathan, as eyes may sometimes look
On eyes, and see no face, looking beyond
Into unimaged life, into the brain
Moving behind the circumstance of flesh,
Eyes that to-morrow passing might hardly know
The mere face that to-night they gaze upon.
And Jonathan having spoken, waited there
While David searched him slowly with still eyes.
Then David rose, and drew the tent-fold back,
And looked upon the stars of Palestine
Long, and a mallow moon; and Jonathan waited.
Then David came again, and spoke, "I too,
Standing this morning in your father's tent,
Knew that a life unwonted was near me there.

And now you have spoken, and the love you say,
I know, and as your will is so is mine.
Something I am for you that none can be.
Let it be so, but all is not then said.
This morning when I smote the Philistine,
I was God's purpose, that I must believe.
But purpose only is not all of God,
Hearing you now, I know it is not all.
When first I saw you I did not know it then—
Only, facing the Philistine, something new
A moment marked me, and unnoted went,
No touch of it upon my will. But now
I have heard you speak, and what it was I know.
You loved me, Jonathan, seeing, as I stood,
That shadowy self of you of which you tell me
Suddenly living fearless in the sun.
That is your reaping of my field, and I
Glory to give it you. But were that all,
Proud to be loved, I should not love again.
But now I know for me is too a reaping.
Your shadow to my living purpose leaps,
And that is wonderful. But as you spoke
Some David hidden from the man that slew
Goliath listened also, and is now
With us for ever. And he that wrought this life
Is you, Jonathan of doubts and speculation,
The man who sits there plainly now, the mere

Jonathan when the shadow is forgotten.
Now do I know my purpose magnified,
Sure as of old, but learning in its flight,
Of pity and the sad heart of man from you,
And how the jealous and unmerciful,
Being stricken down, are but poor sorrows too.
So, Jonathan my brother, as you take,
So do you give, and in us now shall be
The perfect whole of purpose and compassion,
And resolution without pride of heart.
Now therefore will I make the covenant,
Knowing that never more can you or I
Without this love be better than a tale
Of corrupting seed and fallow-lands unsown."

. . . . .

Now Jonathan rose and put the torches out,
And a grey beam of dawn was on those two.
And Jonathan took his outer garment off,
Which was the king's son's, and robed David there,
And he took the sword that Saul had given him,
Belted in gold and cased in figured steel,
And it hung on David's loins. And Jonathan said,
"Who fails in this, that is the last betrayal,
The quenching of the holy spirit of God."
And David said, "So be it." And they embraced,
And kissed. And David went into the dawn.
And Jonathan watched until the day was full.

THE MAID OF NAAMAN'S WIFE

THAT was the proud woman, Naaman's wife,
Basking at noon under the Syrian fans,
While Naaman, the leprous mighty captain,
Proud glowing flesh now silver-skinned and tainted,
Walked in contagion here and there, apart.
His wife, the unblemished Naaman in her mind,
The man who, coming with the spoils and shouts,
Had made a hundred triumphs hers, when all
The Syrian women courted her for that,
Now saw in the pestilent limbs shame and reproach,
Some treachery that made her, who was mate
Of Syria's pride, bondwoman of a leper.
She must nurse her blame, since he was Naaman still,
With an old honour paid by stedfastness,
The mark of Syria's compassion. Black
Thoughts were her only payment for betrayal,
But in secret she could play them without pity,—
Let the fans beat, they could not beguile her from that.

. . . . .

And Naaman had loved her, but not now,
Knowing the uses that his love had been,
How given for her to squander it in pride.

. . . . .

Syria out of Israel had brought
Captives, and among them one, a maid,
A little maid, just troubled with the touch
Of womanhood upon her body and thought,
And she served Naaman's wife, a lonely girl,
To answer bidding, and covet little tones
Of kindness that she heard go to and fro,
But not for her. She trembled as she stood
At the proud woman's couch, because a fault
In orders done meant scolding and even rods.
And she had but two joys. One, to remember
A Galilean town, and the blue waters
That washed the pebbles that she knew so well,
Yellow in sunlight, or frozen in the moon,
A little curve of beach, where she would walk
At any hour with an old silver man,
Her father's father, her sole companion,
Who told her tales of Moses and the prophets
That lived in the old days. And of that time
She had but now poor treasuries of the mind,
Little seclusions when, the day's work done,
She made thought into prayer before she slept;
These, and a faded gown that she had brought
Into captivity, patterned with sprigs of thyme,
And blades of wheat, and little curling shells,
And signs of heaven figured out in stars,
Made by a weaver that her grandsire knew,

A gift on some thanksgiving. She might not
wear it,
Being suited as became a slave, but often
At night she would spread it in her loneliness,
And think how finely she too might be drest,
As finely as any proud woman of them all,
If the God of Israel had not visited her
Surely for sin, though she could not remember.
Thus one joy was. And then the Lord Naaman,
This wonder soiled, this pitiful great captain
Forbidden all that he had so proudly been—
To worship him, that was her other joy.
When the dusk came, and the city fell to silence,
And out of his poor banishment he would walk,
She followed him, knowing the very hour,
And all her heart was flooded through with pity,
Because she knew the leprosy left still
A Naaman untainted and lovely.
Then in her mind was the proud woman a loathing,
Who dared to waste a marvel such as this,
The right in the world's knowledge so to love.
O pitiful evil blasting so great a flesh,
Walling a spirit so governing itself
In spite of desolation. A maid's thought thus
Knew how the frames of mastery can suffer.

. . . . .

Sometimes at night when not even lepers walked,

Solitary in the Syrian meadows she
Would wander in the old perplexity
That the moon makes of love. Never, she knew,
Could any adoration that she brought
Touch even the Lord Naaman's banishment,
The Naaman fallen from the time when even
Great ladies dare not speak the thing they felt.
She was nothing, or the world could never know
If she was more than nothing; a maid to bind
Tresses for beauty that was not her own.
And yet she knew that she had beauty too,
A little hermit beauty that might spend
Royally if it dare and a man would speak,—
Royally, Naaman, but he could not hear.
But still for all the silence of her lips,
And heart with promise nothing known, she loved—
Loved the sad leper walking in the dusk,
Loved the great lord, loved even his leprosy,
Since by it he came a little down to her,
Loved him, and knew that her love was the sum
Of all that loving, and must be. But even so,
She knew her love an honester thing than any
That the proud woman had. O moon, she thought,
Could you not make me truly tell this love,
This love pulsing along my blood and brain,

As midnight surges going through the sky?
And long she pondered how she best might serve.

. . . . .

Then one day when the fans moved, and she stood
Ministering with her perfumes at the couch,
Her mistress, with eyes that meant the thought
was nothing,
Said, "Is it not grievous that my lord goes thus?"
And the maid felt the colour at her throat
Flow round her neck and flood up to her temples,
But knowing, feared not, or put her fear aside,
And said, "Would God my lord were in Samaria,
To seek Elisha there, a prophet, lady,
Whom God hath taught to cure whom he will
cure."
She spoke, and the bright bowl trembled in her
hands,
And fear because of her words made the tongue dry
As the woman looked with still cold eyes upon her.
But the word passed from lip to lip, and the king
Heard it, and sent for Naaman and said,
"A girl among the slaves that you brought in
From Israel has spoken a strange thing,
Of one Elisha, a prophet whom they obey,
Saying that he could bid the blemish off
That is cheating Syria of her proudest man.
Now therefore journey to him, and I will send

Word to Israel's king, that he shall bless
Favours from us in whom his fortune lies,
Bidding him call this prophet to your cause.
Go, and the love of Syria go with you."

. . . . .

Then Naaman with his servants went at dawn,
And Naaman's wife saw how again might come
Her mastery among the women of Syria.
Yet was the little maid her hatred now,
Lest of her word should come this resurrection.
And Naaman went, and Israel's king was glad,
Because of Syria's favour, and sent down
The hill to where Elisha lived among
Farmers of flax and goatherds and a few
Unhappy men who brought their sorrow to God,
Asking his mercy on the Syrian lord.
And Naaman stood before the prophet of Israel,
And told his grief. And Elisha looked upon him,
Measured his faith, and bade him bathe his body
Seven times in the river of Jordan, and be
Whole. And Naaman questioned, and was wrath,
As was not any river of Damascus
Purer than Jordan, and in more virtue flowing?
But, little, his servants said, was this to do,
And, as persuasion led him, he went down
And seven times let Jordan cover him,
And came with a clean body as of old,

A strong man with the tides of blood before him,
With equal limbs for all the spirit could dare,
And into Syria he sang upon his riding.

. . . . .

And tidings came to the Syrian king of this,
Heralding a Naaman mightier than ever,
With clean flesh and a wisdom all matured,
And all the city rang upon his coming,
The king and his estate, people and priests,
And soldiers glad of their old captain again,
And matrons with their girls, and the rich merchants,
All shouted Naaman, Naaman, through the streets.
And Naaman's wife stood at the king's right hand,
Her slave-borne canopy coloured and spangled,
While the great fans beat upon her pride again,
And Naaman in plumes and plate and mail
Again was master of the Syrian hosts.

. . . . .

Afar, beyond the barriers of the streets,
Pressing among the crowd for a moment's seeing,
The Israelitish maid, between her duties,
Watched with a proud flush beating down her limbs.
And shyly she had on a faded gown,
Patterned with sprigs of thyme and blades of wheat,
And paling stars and little curling shells.

And as the shouting rose, she watched in silence,
With trembling lips, and Naaman passed by her,
And her hands moved towards him, and fell down,
Then stole upon her bosom, as they would ease
The aching beauty of her loneliness.
And there unnoted as he passed she stood,
With not a thought from all that world upon her.
Only, when service came again, she saw
A glowing hatred in the proud woman's eyes.
And in the night she thought of it, and wept,
But not for any hatred were her tears.

LAKE WINTER

FULL summer dusk was round him as he stood
On the hill-top, over the calling sheep
Drifting along the pastured downs. The moon
Far off was rising from the Sussex sea.
Above him, building up into the sky,
Black, and with pointing sails now skeletoned,
A windmill gathered strays of evening wind
Whispering through the splitting timbers. Still
The setting sun washed with a fuller gold
The golden sheaves patterned upon a cone
Of downland by him farther from the sea.
So still, he seemed a thing woven of earth,
A life rooted and fixed as were the oaks
Locked in the soil, their bases webbed with fleece
Of sheltering ewes, he watched across the valley,
And the hour passed, and the black mill grew and
grew,
And then a light came in a far window
Of a grey farm cresting the hill beyond,
And sudden tides beat on him as he saw
A white dress moving in the distant pines.

. . . . .

Lake Winter, a five hundred acre man,
Was English, bred far back, a part of England,
With South and North and Midland in his blood,

And somewhere Devon, somewhere Suffolk too.
He had been born of love. They had been lovers,
Who made him, and no more, but they were lovers.
She of a proud house, proud to make it prouder
With wit and beauty, and a young brain glowing,
And a swift body fearless and pitiful;
And he a Cotswold yeoman, thrift and power,
And mastery of earth and herds and flocks,
And knowledge of all seasons and their fruits,
And a heart of meditation, all his birthright;
Ten generations deep from Gloucester stone.
And those two met, and loved, and of their love
Came a new purity of blood and limb,
As of a purpose slowly moulding them.
And long they waited, and then one summer noon,
He, coming northward from his Cotswold home,
Found her by Rydal as she had bidden him,
And proudly stride to stride they took the road,
Sure youth by youth, and to Helvellyn's foot
They came, and climbed up to the brighter air,
And into the wind's ardour still went on,
Until upon the mountain top they stood,
And lake by lake was fading in the dusk.
Out of the plains they saw the moon move up
And over them the deeper blue came on,
The faint stars glowing into mastery.
And in that splendour of a summer hill,

Amid the mellow-breathing night, where yet
The poppies of the valley could not come,
There was conceived a boy. . . .
And sorrow came
Upon their love. Before the moon again
Was full upon Helvellyn, the Cotswold lover
With a great elm was blasted in a storm,
And lay, a burnt thing, in a Cotswold grave.
And she went out, took her inheritance,
And lived apart, and the man-child was born.
She called him Lake, for those fading lakes of dusk,
And gave him her own name. And twenty years
She tended him, and died; and from her substance
Lake Winter now for fifteen years had kept
His Sussex acres in fertility.
Such was the man, so born, so passionately made,
So knit of English earth and generations,
Who now upon the summer evening watched—
His manhood full upon his middle years—
A white dress moving in the distant pines.

. . . . .

Down to the valley from their hills they came,
Lake Winter and the woman that he loved.
He waited by a long brown garden wall,
Mottled with moss and lichen, where in the dusk
Like a great moth a late flycatcher wove,
And watched her coming down a rutted path,

Towards him. And the flowing of her body,
Sure step through fugitive cadences of limb,
Up to the little golden arch of hair,
Was lovely as a known yet wanted tale.

. . . . .

Zell Dane, the wife of Martin Dane, who held
Tollington Manor farm, was ten years wed.
Dane was an honest man by groom and horse,
Paid pew-rent and his losing wagers, thought
The British Empire lived at Westminster,
Stood by the State and rights of property,
Drank well, and knew the barmaids of a county.
He married Zell, and neither could have said
Why it was done. Ten years had gone since then,
And he was now a half-forgotten habit,
She, some queer porcelain stuff beyond his knowing.

. . . . .

Lake Winter came and went at Tollington,
As other neighbours, a little in Dane's mind
Suspect for certain rumours of his birth,
But known for a straight rider and plain speaker,
Who meant his words and had words for his meaning.
And Lake and Zell, between the jests at table,
Where they could match the best wits of the room,

Would talk of things that Dane and the rest counted
As pointing ways not good for level minds.
Why pose about Beethoven, and Debussy,
Or these French fellows Degas and Picasso,
When there were Marcus Stone, and *A Long, Long Trail,*
And *A Little Grey Home in the West,* that common folk
Could understand? And, however the truth might be,
It wasn't decent openly to say
That William Wordsworth was a better poet—
Though more or less in a poet was no matter—
Because it seemed that once in his flaming youth
He had loved gloriously in France. . . .

. . . . .

Dane heard and saw,
And was a little troubled that clear heads
Should cloud and squander thus, a little scornful.
Still if it gave them pleasure, and it but meant
Mind with mind idling together so,
Winter could come and go for all he cared,
He wouldn't grudge . . . and then the doubt began,
A thought that somewhere under all this play
And nimbleness was crouching the true thing,

Lust, plain lust. There was between man and
woman,
So Dane had learnt, two several conditions,
A compact to keep smooth the day's affairs,
That, and plain lust. This mind play was a
sham. . . .
Winter and Zell were lusting, that was all . . .
Then let them . . . damn it, let the matter be . . .
Time would show all, and there were crops and
hounds.

. . . . .

They stood together by the dusky wall.
And long their lips met, in a hushed world fading,
A night of beauty fading in their own.
And then "I made a rhyme for you to-day,
When the last sheaves were binding I made it,
thus——"

I have no strange or subtle thought,
And the old things are best,
In curious tongues I am untaught,
Yet I know rest.

I know the sifting oakleaves still
Upon a twilit sky,
I hear the fernowl on the hill
Go wheeling by.

I know my flocks and how they keep
Their times of field and fold,
My scholarship can sow and reap,
From green to gold.

The circled stars from down to sea
I reckon as my gains,
The swallows are as dear to me
As loaded wains.

Yet these were ghosts and fugitive,
Until upon your step they came
By revelation's lips to live
In your dear name.

I saw you walking as dusk fell,
And leaves and wains and heaven and birds
Were miracles my blood may tell,
And not my words.

"And yet I would not lose the tidings come
On so dear words, though the blood knows it all,
As the song says." She spoke; and from the valley
Slowly towards the mill, by ghostly flocks
That stole about the meadows of the moonrise,
They walked, and made this argument of love.

Lake. How shall they stand for wisdom, who forbid
The body's love, which is so small a thing,
Yet let the souls, or minds, or what you will
Be mated, as though spirit were the drudge,
For no-one's heed, and limbs alone to be,
As though clay were the gold, inviolate?
If I could grudge love coming anywhere,
Falling even on whom I loved in all,
I think the body at least should have no share
Of jealousy from me, which should be spent
Rather on minds meeting above my own,
Myself an exile from their understanding.
Beloved, in the mating of our minds
I am all peace to walk thus in your presence,
And in that peace your body of my desire,
And all my earth, as passionate as any,
Seem snares to tempt us to the loss of all,
Since by them the world threatens this our peace,
Which else we may so gather, undenied.
Then is not flesh merely the trouble of love,
When love goes thus, as love between us now?

. . . . .

Zell took his hand, and her life was in his veins,
And his words beat back upon him as she spoke.

. . . . .

Zell. Dear, you are wise of all your books, and speech

Of windy downs, and polities of men,
And the old passions weaving history,
And strong and gentle things of sea and earth,
And the poor passing of the life of man,
But not in this. You have your great-heart courage
For all such ardours as might make you seem
Some fabled hero standing against fate,
But not in this. In sifting vanity
From the right honour, and building from ambition,
You have a vision constant as the tides,
But not in this. They may look Sussex over
For any man who found a crooked word
Ever upon your lips, and vainly look,
Because, dear, truth is an old habit in you,
But not in this. Here in the night enchanted,
With not an ear to catch the whispered truth,
Let nothing but the truth between us be—
I love you, Lake; I love the fair mind moving
In equal joy among men's praise or censure;
I love the courage of its lonely flight,
Here in a land of light convenience.
I love you for the years that you have given
To Sussex plough and pasture till they are grown
Surer and richer in your wit than any.
I love you for the love in which you gather

My mind that from youth on has gone unmated,
And then I love you for the bearing kept
In you when slight occasions something royal
Take on because you silently are there.
I know you, Lake, for a man worthy honour,
And well to honour is well to delight.
But, dear, with all this giving of my love,
Great and unmeasured giving, sending back
In joy the worship that you bring to me,
I love your glowing body, and you love mine.
No words, or thrift of philosophic thought,
Can put that love out of the love we are.
At night, alone, when the dark covers me,
I ache for you, body for body I ache.
And then I know that over you as well
The dear, forlorn, resistless pain is full.
We may persuade, virtuously persuade,
That this is but an accident of love,
Not of love's very being, a thing to bind
In brave captivity at the world's bidding,
But I know, as you know it, that persuasion
So made is outcast in the house of truth.
I love you, and the thing I love is made
All wonderful of flesh and spirit both,
Body and mind inseparably one,
And I must spend my love on all or nothing.
Should I but love those limbs so rightly planned

By ancestry so wise of English earth,
It were a simple harlotry in me.
But, Lake, to love the life and not the house,
The living house so admirably built
Of tissue flawless as the material stars,
Wherein the life I love is manifest,
Were harlotry no less I know than that.
You, the dear Lake of my idolatry,
For I am something near it, as you are,
Are one life, whereto pilgrim thought conspires
With all the cunning moulding of the flesh,
And of my brain and body is my love,
Dream to your dream, desire to your desire.
If you should die, my memory of you
Would be no tale of the mere mind conceiving,
Of contemplation thriving thus or thus,
In trance of spaces where not even wings nor breath
Recall the moving of substantial things.
Rather in me for ever should be glowing
The imaging mind mated in equal limbs,
Thought visible in lines of the athlete,
Wisdom persuading in the lover's clasp.
And how should thought know thought until the whole
Of body's beauty is by body learnt?
Until the trial of that most dear seclusion
Is past, and all the dangers of mere lust

Disproved, when in possession is no stale
Regret and disillusion, how should be known
That the still hours of thought with thought are
    stable
Against the wearing of dissolving time?
Dear, we must love by all the tokens of love,
Before the presence of love beyond dispute
Is between us and for ever fixed.

. . . . .

Lake heard, and knew that answer could be none,
Then by the sheep-tracks on the silver downs
Silent they walked, and midnight came apace,
And by the bases of the mill they went,
Close moving, arm by arm, and down again
Towards the valley, where again they stood,
And let their lives beat out upon the night.
And as they waited on farewell, a form
Came up before them, and Martin Dane stood there,
And "by your leave," he murmured, and went on.
Then Zell, "To-morrow, when the moon is full,
Meet me beside the mill mound. Martin goes
To Farnham for the otter hunting." Lake
Took her and kissed, and with no word they parted
Where the light still looked from the hill-side farm
Over the valley to his home. And he
As dreaming passed again by the mill to sleep.

. . . . .

Firmer the mould, surer the flight of boughs,
Familiar move the bright plains of the air,
And newly stedfast the gospel he had known
Year by year written on his Sussex life,
Now seemed to Lake this day. Among his men,
All day he drew and pegged the rickyard straw,
And piled the barn from floor to the swallows' beam,
Brown throated and brown armed, the golden rose
Of summer wind glowing upon his face,
And all the phrasing of his body good.
And twilight fell on the full harvest home,
And the barn doors were closed, and painted waggons
Stood empty by the ricks, with sunken wheels
Smeared with the fallen husks, and voice was none,
And silence with the moon was over all.

. . . . .

Lake through the eve walked his familiar paths,
Counting the labour of his years; the shed
Where morn and night the cattle came to stall,
Empty and still now but for the timbering rats;
The low smooth paven dairy, where the moon
Now sent a shaft on one full yellow bowl;
The barn so happily at teeming time again,
The rickyard stacked with hurdles by the fence,
The long loft over plough and waggon teams.
Among the heavy apple-trees he passed,
By ledgy sheep-track, over the new stubble,

Across the valley, and in the shadow kept
Of Martin Dane's home hop-yard, and again
Back to his own hill-side. And in the south,
Beyond the moon, over the midnight sea,
Came up a cloud all heavy with black wind.

. . . . .

Zell by the mill was standing when he came,
Now darkly gowned so that she seemed a shadow,
Black by the black mill, save for the white face,
And gold hair and white hands that caught the
moonlight.
Together the wide wooden steps they climbed,
By broken treads and splitting rail, and he
Lifted the rusted latch, and there within
Were folded sacks perished along the seam,
Forgotten with the dust, and the bare walls,
Now weather-broken. Above them a dim light
Showed them a laddered way still up. They came
Into the high roof chamber, and a rent
In the top timbers let the moonlight in,
Half moulding to their vision spars and beams,
The mill's old ghostly life, and sail-cloth piled
From the use of generations. A window space
Just from their towery refuge let them look
Over familiar earth now tranced. And Lake
Saw yet again his roofs and acres loved,
Tenderly, as though interpreters

Of his long care and their good yielding hours
Freshly upon his senses ministered; Zell
Across the valley saw a lone slumbering light,
While from the south the mounting darkness crept,
And the wind gathered, moaning upon the mill,
Filling its frame with a low pulsing breath.

. . . . .

And over love the heavenly figures went
In their unchanging change. No longer now
The moonlight shafted through the torn roof-
timbers,
And star by star crossed the small field of sky,
And in those hours of peace that only comes
With passion mated and of passion born,
Lake knew within him stirring that far beauty
Of an old starry still Helvellyn night.
And Zell made all the wisdom of her words
Wisdom of life, so simple and unclouded,
Leaving no fume of trouble in the dark,
Ending for ever the brain's captivity.

. . . . .

They slept. And still the south wind gathered up,
Gust upon gust to a full swelling tide,
And the great sail-timbers groaned, and blackness
fell
Over the mill that trembled as in pain
Of age now nearly with all quarrels done.

Along the ridges of the downs it swept,
Beating the boughs of ash and elm, a flood
Of storm exulting in deliverance.
And fury up and down the valleys played
And rose and spilt and sank upon the hills,
And to and fro the thunder bayed, till sudden
The world about the sleeping lovers shook
With sounding doom. And Zell, waking, cried out,
And he beside her stood, and folded her
A moment as from fear, and kissed her, and they turned
To go, when from the bases of the mill
A shrieking as of life being crushed and torn
Clanged out upon the beating elements,
And the hurt timbers, whipped and wrencht, sent up
A last fierce wail, and for a moment swayed,
Then gave the life up of a hundred years,
And to the earth the mill plunged in defeat.

. . . . .

Sleepers along the hill-top in the night
Stirred as a ruin above the thunder broke,
And slept again. And dawn upon a world
Of leaves and downs and sheep washed into brightness
Came on that Sussex out of a clear sky,
And on the sea the little ships went on

With sails just filled with a small virgin wind.
And slowly one by one the village came
To see the old mill that their sires had known,
And sires beyond them, blasted in a world
Where peace was lord as in immortal mood.
They stood and silence kept them until one
Saw suddenly upon the dawn breeze blown,
Out from a mound of split and twisted timber
A strand of golden hair. And strong arms worked
Until upon the grass unheeding lay
Those two dear bodies locked in a love that now
Was beyond malice and denial and fear.

. . . . .

And Martin Dane home from his hunting came,
And heard, and saw them lying side by side,
And wondered how could folly pay so much
For so unsound and gossipy an end,
Gave his instructions for a decent grave,
And found a tap-room topic to his mind.

. . . . .

That night the promise of the dawn was full,
And on the broken mill a clear moon shone,
Silvering all the ways the lovers knew.
And by the wreck a shadowy figure watched,
Half Lake, and half that old Helvellyn lover,
And on the night a whispered cadence fell—

Again in the world a story has been made,
These looked upon beauty unafraid,
O these were lovely, these were the great ones, they dared,
And denied not, but upon love's bidding fared.

Pity them not; they would scorn that as your hate,
They knew the voices, they knew the hours that mate
With hours beyond all judgment of mankind,
These were the proud adventurers of the mind.

Kindled for ever because of them shall be
A wiser freedom. The long lanes of the sea,
The golden acres of Sussex shall holy keep
Their names, their love, their ending. Let them sleep.

GOLD

THERE is a castle on a hill,
  So far into the sky,
That birds that from the valley-beds
  Up to the turrets fly,
Climbing towards the sun can feel
  The clouds go tumbling by.

But always far above the clouds
  The sun is shining there,
It shines for ever on those walls;
  And the great boughs that bear
Harvests of never fading fruit
  Are golden everywhere.

Who journeys to that castled crest
  Finds, with his journey done,
All ages and all colours in
  Cascades of light that run
Over the broad weirs of the air
  For ever from the sun.

Two things are silver: flower of plum
  When April yet is cold;
And willowed floods that of the moon

Quiet leases hold.
That castle in the sky alone
Of living things is gold.

Between unfathomable blue
And the bright belts of green,
Midway the plains of heaven and earth,
Rock-borne it stands between
Woods and the sky, a golden world
Where only gold is seen.

Old carvers in the stone have cut
Forests and wraths and herds,
And these are gold: the dials tell
The sun in golden words;
The very jackdaws, from the towers
Wheeling, are golden birds.

The minting of the sun is on
The gravel everywhere,
The yellow walls are fleeces washed
In pools of sunny air,
That coming to that castle place
All men are Jasons there.

Trancelike to stand upon that hill
When the deep summer sings,

Gold-clad, gold-hearted, and gold-voiced,
  And sings and sings and sings,
Is as to wait a rising world
  In flight of golden wings.

And I have walked with love that way,
  And on that golden crest
The sun was happy for my love,
  For she is golden-tressed,
Red gold, that of all golden things
  The great sun marks for best.

O golden castle of the sky
  Hereafter gold can be
Only your image when the sun
  Transfigured her for me,
Till she was golden-clouded Jove,
  And I her Danäe.

Hereafter in the chambered night
  When linkèd love is told,
One thought shall spare to climb that hill
  Into the sunbright fold,
For a great summer noon when love
  Was gold, and gold, and gold.

BURNING BUSH

FROM babyhood I have known the beauty of earth—
I learnt it, I think, in the strange months before
birth,
I learnt it passing and passing by each moon
From the harvest month into my natal June.
My mother, the dear, the lovely I hardly knew,
Bearing me must have walked and wandered through
Stubble of silver or gold, as moon or sun
Lit earth in the days when my body was begun.
And then October with leaves splendid and blown
She watched with my little body a little grown,
And winter fell, and into our being passed
Firm frost and icy rivers and the blast
Of winds that on the iron clods of plough
Beat with an unseen charging. Then the bough
Of spring came green, and her glad body stirred
With a son's wombèd leaping, and she heard
Songs of the air and woods and waterways,
And with them singing the coming of my days.
And nesting time drew on to summer flowers,
And me unborn she taught through patient hours.
Then on that first June day, with spices blown
Of roses over clover crops unmown,
And grey wind-lifted leaves and blossom of bean,
She gave her dear white beauty to the keen

Anguish of women, and brought my body to birth
Already skilled in the sculptures of the earth.

Then in the days when her breasts nourished me,
Daily she walked, that happy girl, to see
How summer prospered to bring the harvest on,
And how the gardens and how the orchards shone
With scarlet and blue and yellow flowers and fruit,
And hear with equal love the lonely flute
Of legendary satyrs in the wood,
Or the still voice of Christ in bachelorhood.
And she would come I know to me her son
With lovely secret gossip of journeys done
In fields where some day my own feet should go.
It was not gossip in words that I could not know,
Mere ease and pleasure for her mother wit,
But such as I could feel the joy of it
Beating about my baby blood and sense,
Maternal tending of intelligence
In the unwhispered rites of bosom and lip,
Divinings worded in bodily fellowship.
And every shape and colour and scent she knew,
Were intimations winding, folding, through
My infancies of flesh and thought, each one
To find its unblemished record and copy done
In little moods drawn from the suckling-breast . . .
That now, in manhood, when I find the nest

Of the chaffinch moulded in the elder-tree,
And looking on that lichen cup can see
The images of eternity and space
Lavished upon a small bird's dwelling-place:
Or when from some blue passage of the sky
I know that also colour can prophesy:
Or, ghosted on the brushing tides of wheat,
The gossip of a Galilean street,
So many Sabbaths gone, I hear again,
And his hands plucking that immortal grain:
Or when by spectral ancestries I pass
Again to Eden, as the orchard grass
Gives out the scent of mellow apples blown
From windy boughs—all these, I know, were known
By that dear mother when the boy to come
Was the zeal and gospel of her martyrdom.
Then came the time when I could walk with her,
We pilgrims of the fields, with everywhere
Strange leaves, and spreading of earth, and hedge-
row themes,
And mossy walls, and bubbling of the streams,
And the way of clouds, and the full moon to
wane,
The bird-song in the lilacs after rain,
And month by month the coming of the flowers,
For me to learn in speech, as had been ours
Knowledge unspoken while she fashioned me . . .

And then she died; and I went on to be
Through lonely boyhood her disciple still,
A wanderer by many a Berkshire hill,
By water-meadows of the Oxford plain,
By the thick oaks of Avon, with the strain
Of an old yeoman wisdom dreaming on
New beauty ever following beauty gone,
Until I knew my earth and her raiment fair
In every difference of the seasons' wear,
Long years her scholar, with learning of her ways
To slip unleasht all singing into praise
Should learning yet by some enchantment be
Bidden to passion's better husbandry.
And the enchanted bidding fell. And you,
O Love, it was that spelt the earth anew.

O Love, you silent wayfarer,
How many years all unaware
By blackthorn hedge, and spinney green
With larch, I wandered, while unseen
You in my shadow walked, nor made
Even a whisper in the shade.

O Love, on many an evening hill
I watched the day go down, the still
Dark woods, the far great rivers wind,
Thin threads of light. And I was blind,

Or seeing knew not, for you were
Beside me still, yet hidden there.

O Love, as year by year went on,
And budding primroses were gone,
And berries fell, and still the bright
Crocuses came in the night,
You left me to my task alone,
O Love, so near me and unknown.

O Love, though she who bore me set
Earth's love for ever on me, yet
Some word withheld still troubled me,
Some presence that I could not see,
Till you, dear alien, should come,
And doctrine be no longer dumb.

O Love, one April night I heard
The doctrine's everlasting word,
And you beneath that starry sky,
Unknown, were with me suddenly,
Yet there was no new meeting then,
But some old marriage come again.

O Love, and now is earth my friend,
Telling me all, until the end
When I shall in the earth be laid

With all my maps and fancies made,
And you, Love, were the secret earth
Of my blind following from birth.

O Love, you happy wayfarer,
Be still my fond interpreter,
Of all the glory that can be
As once on starlit Winchelsea,
Finding upon my pilgrim way
A burning bush for every day.

TO MY SON

(AGED SIXTEEN)

DEAR boy unborn: the son but of my dream,
  Promise of yet unrisen day,
Come, sit beside me; let us talk, and seem
  To take such cares and courage for your way,
  As some year yet we may.

As some year yet, when you, my son to be,
  Look out on life, and turn to go,
And I, grown grey, shall wish you well, and see
  Myself imprinted as but she could know
  To make amendment so.

I see you then, your sixteen years alight
  With limbs all true and golden hair,
And you, unborn, I will, this April night,
  Tell of the faith and honour you must wear
  For love, whose light you bear.

Beauty you have; as, mothered so, could face
  Or limbs or hair be otherwise?
Years gone, dear boy, there was a virgin grace
  Worth Homer's laurel under western skies
  To wander and devise.

Beauty you have. Cherish it as divine,
  Wash it with dews of diligence,
Not vainly, but because it is the sign
  Of inward light, the spirit's excellence
  Made visible to sense.

Athlete be you; strong runner to the goal,
  Glad though the game be lost or won:
Fleet limbs that chronicle a fleeter soul,
  In every winter valiantly to run,
  Till the last race be done.

Love wisdom that is suited in a rhyme,
  And be in all your learning known
Old minstrels chanting out of faded time,
  Since he who counts all years gone by alone
  Makes any year his own.

And when one day you are a lover too,
  Come back to her who bore you, dear,
Tell out your tale; you shall the better woo
  For every word that from her lips you hear,
  For she made love most clear.

Most clear for him who sits beside you now;
  There was a certain frost that fell

Before its time upon a summer bough,—
And how at last that reckoning was well,
She for your love shall tell.

Labour to build your house, but ever keep
That greater garden fresh in mind,
That England with its bird-song buried deep
In cool great woods where chivalry can find
The province of its kind.

Be great or little your inheritance,
Know there shall number in that dower
No treasure from the treasuries of chance
So rare as that you came the perfect flower
Of love's most perfect hour.

Go now, my son. Be all I might have been.
(Ask her. She knows, and none but she.)
Her beauty and her wisdom weathered clean
Some part of me in you, that you might be
Her own eternity.

INTERLUDE

WHAT love is; how I love; how builders' clay
By love is lit into a golden spending;
How love calls beautiful ghosts back to the day;
How life because of love shall have no ending—
These with the dawn I have begun to sing,
These with the million-budded noon that's rising
Shall be a theme, with love's consent, to bring
My song to some imperishable devising.
And may the petals of this garland fall
On every quarrel, and in fragrance bless
Old friendship; and a little comfort all
The weary loves that walk the wilderness,
While still my song I consecrate alone
To her who taking it shall take her own.

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

1924

THE WITCH-BALL

In some country places they hang up a blue glass ball as a charm against Witches.

NEVER, oh, never came
Witch in this garden,
We would not pardon
Would we, dear, anyone
Who should say things were done,
Such as in hell they name,
Here in our garden?
Never was poison-root
In this Hesperides
Girdled by gentle trees;
Mould that our lilies made
Mothered no nightshade;
Never passed Endor's foot
Over so smooth a green
Lawn as is laid between
Borders that virtue
Only can print,
Of pansies and mint,
With no herb to hurt you.
Here where the thrush and jay,
Robin and linnet,
Find through the longest day
Songs for each minute,
No path or plantation

Ever has heard
Vext incantation
With song of the bird;
Never a muttered spell
Learnt in the writ of hell,
Psalter obscene,
On warlock or witch's lip
Whispered in stewardship
Curst and unclean.
The day and the night
Are holy, all hours,
With heaven alight
Again in the flowers;
All blossoms by day
Flashing back to the sun
Many beams to repay
The succour of one;
All blossoms, when sweet
Stars of even have birth,
Lying orbed at our feet,
Pale planets of earth,
And, chaste beyond whisper
Of sorcerer's rune,
Moon-virgin when Hesper
Is lost in the moon.
Go comrade, go lover,
Go, pass through the portal,

Laugh and rest, till your mortal
Date falls as it must
To the gospel of dust,
And the dark wing shall cover
The sun from our portal.
Till then laugh and rest,
While the garden shall keep
All charms that are best
For fortune and sleep;
Clean rites to deliver
Roof-timber and stair
And hearthstone for ever
From plagues of the air.
No witch may come nearer
Than pass down the lane,
A fugitive peerer,
An impotent bane;
No kirtle of devil
May dip from the night,
Our lintel with evil
To brush in its flight.
Here melody lives,
The spirit burns purely,
And what the year gives
We harvest securely.
Still shall the blue witch-ball
Hang from the parlour-beam,

Catching the garden-gleam
Globed from the window-pane,
Marking our steps again
As in the room they fall;
A far little world of dream,
Still it shall hang by day,
Still it shall hang by night,
Just for the eye's delight,
Just as a story told,
Just as a fear of old,
Gathered away;
And never shall haunted
Breath cloud in the glass
The little enchanted
Long alleys of grass,
And birds of sweet lustres,
And gathering bees,
And blossoms in clusters,
And orcharded trees,
All mirrored in flame
From our acre of light
Where witch never came
From fogs of the night.

CHRISTMAS EVE

On Christmas Eve I lay abed,
  With the still night more still
For all the pluming snows that spread
  Along our sparkling hill;
And while again to Jesu' stall
  Walked wisdom from afar,
I heard another shepherd call
  Under the Christmas star.

Along the lane his carol came,
  But not of Bethlehem,
A burning boy, he knew a flame
  But not the flame of them:
"This Christmas Eve from courting home
  I am a bachelor,
But soon the snows again will come,
  And I'll be wed before."

All one with kings from Bible-page,
  And holy shepherds old,
Went yeoman love in pilgrimage
  Across the Christmas wold.
"Goodwill," he sang, "Goodwill, Goodwill,"
  Or seemed to me to sing,
While some glad girl beyond the hill
  Dreamt of a new-born king.

DISTANT MUSIC

FAR now from you, dear love, I know
  How well you build from bow and strings,
Framing the melodies that flow
  From your beloved minstrel kings.

But now the strings are mute, your hands
  Are still, the bow is laid aside:
I see you searching out the lands
  Whence love beats back to you full-tide.

And standing so you are the birth
  Of all the themes that you rewake;
Brahms and Beethoven bade the earth
  Blossom in music for your sake.

Now falls your phrasing from afar,
  Telling how they divined of old—
You cease, and on the moment are
  The cause of all that you have told.

FELICITY

"FELICITY, come stay awhile,
  And talk with me, you pretty maid."
She glanced at me, a girl of guile,
  And she went running down the glade.

I stirred the embers on the stone,
  I sprinkled rushes on the floor,
I took my pen to write alone,—
  And she was tapping on the door.

A GHOST SPEAKS ON THE STYX

I COULD not think that Time was old,
  So freshly did he wear
His colours as the years were told,
  When I was walking there.

He knew no sad mortality
  Of promise or regret,
Forever in virginity
  Of joy Time's times were set.

Now on your river from the shades,
  Boatman, a rumour comes
Of one whose garland never fades,
  For all his martyrdoms.

They call him Love; they chant his rhyme
  Even in Acheron;
They call him Love—but he and Time,
  You ferryman are one.

THE HERESY OF AN ELDER ON NOT BELIEVING IN FAIRIES

I DON'T believe in fairies;—
  I've something else to do,
Believing that behind the clouds
  The sky is always blue,
That every day at half-past one
  It's nearly half-past two.

I don't believe in fairies,
  Because my Uncle James
Transcendentalised about them,
  And told me of their games,
While he never saw the flying birds,
  And didn't know their names.

I don't believe in fairies;
  I think that lazy men
Who think the sunshine commonplace
  Invented them, and then
Forgot that it is wonderful
  That five and five make ten.

I saw the lambs at Whitsuntide,
  And a bullfinch in a tree,
I saw a mushroom in the mist

And the dolphins in the sea,—
I don't believe in fairies,
But these are faith for me.

Clear are the stars and the thrushes' eggs
For tidy hearts to find,
And I think that fays and lepracauns
Are slatterns of the mind,
And if I ever meet one
I shall know that I am blind.

THE ATOM OF GOD: A VISION

(TO G. C. D.)

SUPPOSE that God, being a busy God,
With myriad-million acres to be trod
Hourly in tending his vast globed estate,
Globe upon globe, convolved, immensurate,
Old crumbling worlds for pardon, or repair,
Or dissolution; new worlds on the air
Cooling from vapour, nebulous cores to bind
With solid zones; new balances to find
In his dominion where the long tides go
Of spheres through space in endless ebb and flow,
Matter now locked, congealing, and now free
To range again fields of infinity;
New rhythms to win from the uncompassed void,
New surmise in the task to be employed
Of moulding chaos, and setting with sure hand
Amid the multitudes of his command
The thing so moulded; say that, as he went,
This God so throned with far omnipotent
Affairs, one aeon'd morning, to fulfil
His starry missions, caught, as poets will,
A sudden brooding fancy of some far
Dim secret locked, unguessed, in every star
That knew him, nor revolted, yet, so played
God's fancy on the host that he had made,

Might own some law, some nature, that his mind,
Rapt in creation, had not stayed to find,
Though he of all commanding had the source
Devised, the mass, the nature, and the course.
Intent upon his task, he let the mood
Go by, and still the labour was renewed
Of crowded mind on teeming circumstance,
And law to quell the mutinies of chance.
But when God rested, then the thought returned,
And beat upon his mind, and something burned
Of curious will to fathom what might be
Deep, deep in universal power. "I see
World upon world obedient, as I bid
Cast in huge balance on my space, amid
Motion of worlds I yet must number, given
One time, one order, and one way through heaven.
I set my seasons, fixt in their control
Of moving patterned light upon the whole
Body of being under me. I hear
Sweet sounds of mighty volume spun from sphere
To axled sphere harmoniously scaled.
Beauty is ever with me, and unstaled.
And so my enterprise, my dreams of still
Process more proud to magnify my will,
More song, worlds vaster, laws more excellent,
Numbers for my delighted government
Yet in their starry millions multiplied.

All this is well; I made it, and I guide
Its various motion, happy. But I leave
Too long one cause uncertain while I weave
My story out. This matter that I bring
Into so sure a shape and compassing,
What is it? How in central atom framed?
How built the energy that I have tamed
Into this chiming order? What the might
Gathered from swarming chaos to the light,
And infinitely banded to fulfil
The unbounded time of my creating will?"
Stars beckoned, and God's speculation stayed.
But, pausing first, he lent a seven-day'd
Labour to fetch the answer that he sought
For this perplexed brief interval. He wrought
Earth, and the things of earth, and man; and swung
This little globe appointedly among
The globes of his uncounted industry,
Declared its orbit, gendered it to be
Active and tided by the common flow
Of inescapable law, and, leaving so
This moment of invention universed
In destiny among the stars, he first
On man so moulded laid his bidding thus—
"Go, child of God, in one thing prosperous,
That of my good, unveiled, purpose, one
Thing hidden is for your unveiling. Sun

And moon and friendly stars are with you set
For knowledge, and sweet climes and foliage met
And fellowships for comfort on your way;
And that you shall not fail in sloth, this day
Have I made sorrow in your shadow, friend,
To keep you fresh in constancy, and lend
Ardour and indomitable power
To this your quest, my quest. Answer my hour
Of speculation for me. Still, with mind
Established in the beauty you shall find
Aiding on earth, go on till all is told
Of this that even from me my atoms hold,
Secret, unmeasured."
So, our fable tells,
The mood ordained when earth so dawned, that dwells
Still at the centre of man's enterprise,
"Till all is told." Not less than in God's eyes
The congregated systems of his plan,
Is earth dominioned mightily to man.
And as God's vision broods upon the whole
Design innumerably spread, the soul
Of man is rapt upon the earth that glides,
His habitation, through the stellar tides.
Nor is man's bounded consecration less
Than God's unbounded. And as all things confess
Through firmamental space God's mastery

In moulding, so man fixes his decree
On grain and mass and season and sap of earth,
Framing fresh lovely argosies from birth
Till death; great bridges flung astride
Loud waters; swift and lonely ships to ride
Waste oceans, towers and bells, altars and tombs,
Engines of flight, and wheels, and windowed rooms
With hearths, and beds, and beams—all at his
will
Shaping from forge and crucible and mill,
Matter no less commanded than by God.
And as the long and difficult paths are trod
Of all his labour, ever, for a sign
Of his dominion, on his annals shine,
All pure, all uncommitted, things of art:
Music and verse; orisons of the heart
Figured in stone and marble; shapes that sing,
Dropt from the brush, their coloured gospelling.
And grief, and loss, and doubt, and bitter change
Are with him, that his purpose shall not range
In mere delight irresolute, content
To fade from thought into an indolent
Drifting of nebulous mood; and still to keep
His diligence firm, establisht, he must reap
His patient year, nursed on to festival,
Or to his body's shame untimely fall.
So labours man, and even as God compels

His starry textures, man the master dwells
On earth, compelling also in his kind.
But as that fleeting fancy of God's mind
In the beginning of man was fixt to be
In man his urge, his aim, his constancy,
So ever in his faring as he goes,
Unwearied in discovery, he knows
One fierce complaining clarion of desire,
One siege unresting; moulding earth and fire,
Leading the waters, harnessing the wind,
Bringing the unperceived, the undefined,
To scale and measurement, he seeks, he seeks
The last arcanum; still the challenge speaks
Over the vast of years, and still he broods,
Not as God, walking in his solitudes,
A moment, once, but age by kindling age,
Unceasing, incorruptible, his wage
But lonely consecrations of the soul—
Crying, "This heat, this might that I control,
This matter that I bind, this fluid speed
Obedient to my rod, this planted seed
That knows my husbandry, this blood and bone
That of my generation come and own
My governance of spirit—what are these?
What life in the far central fastnesses
Lies poised in huge momentum? What the word,
The touch, the lodestar of release? Come, gird

Your resolution, Man, on with the quest,
Your quest, of God's commanding."

. . . . .

Manifest
Little by little on the ages grew
The knowledge of man's dedication. New
Process on process dwindled or prevailed.
Old alchemies went by, old prophets failed,
Old revelation to denial bowed,
While patient and undaunted still the proud
Brain to its last fulfilment laboured on,
Fulfilment and unfolding. Aeons gone,
And aeons, came the long, the appointed day;
God's thought, arrested on his starry way,
A moment earthward turned, and there beheld
Man's lifted finger fall, and from the cell'd
Centre of being strike the primal beam;
And, sounding through the universe, a gleam
Shot volted, blinding all the multitude
Of stars, that even God trembled where he stood,
As the unfolded mystery, divined
Of man, was gathered to the eternal mind.
And where earth was, now, drifting into space,
A smear of dust was all. God turned his face,
And moved again creating, through the wide
Realms of almighty purpose, satisfied.

. . . . .

So runs the fable out. The hearth is cold,
The lamp is flickering with our story told,
The candle on the stair calls us to sleep,
To-morrow shall have other tales to keep.
Let dreams be as they may, the dawn will bring
Again the bright, the happy birds to sing,
Fresh flowers unfolded, friendship at the gate,
Old faith for pilot on the tides of fate.

FROM THE GERMAN

1924

NOTE

THESE verses were the footing I paid for a summer holiday in Southern Germany, when for the first time I found in being the towns of the fairy-tales, one of the literary forms in which the modern world seeks in vain to rival the old. Also, in Stuttgart and Heidelberg and Frankfort and Marbach I was in the land that gave birth to much of the best German poetry. This, in mere carelessness, I had always vaguely supposed to be eloquent and rather heavily thoughtful, such as the French critic had in mind when he said that thoughtful poetry didn't make him think, it made him sweat. Now, under friendly guidance, I discovered how mistaken I was; that the German lyric, even when it is on a philosophical errand, can move with as light and distinguished a grace as any French *madame* or English cavalier. The German muse, in short, was the very companion for holiday humour, and made a most agreeable fifth to our party of two Australians, an Austrian and an Englishman.

The friendly guide was Dr. Eduard Reichmann, who would read a German poem over to me and explain it, until I had got its sense and sound into my mind. If I then found it attractive

for my purpose, he would supply me with a word for word translation, I being careful not to let him exploit his knowledge of English too freely, being anxious to get from him nothing but crude pointers, leaving the search for exact words until I was writing my verses. After the literal meaning had been made clear, we worked over the precise metrical form, and then I was left to myself. The principles I worked on were these.

A translation of a poem should, it seems to me, have one clear aim; to produce such a work as the original poet would have written in the same mood and with the same thought if his language had been that of the translator's purpose instead of his own. Above all, the translation of a poem should be a poem.

First, as to the content matter. Clearly, the essential significance of this must be preserved; clearly, also, this significance must be presented by the same general device as is employed in the original. But the detail of this device may, it seems to me, sometimes be modified without offence. For example, in Uhland's lovely little masterpiece of witty sentiment, the literal meaning of the German in my third line of the second stanza is "No-one bit my cheeks. . . ." Liberties of this kind as to the sense of the poems I have

allowed myself, but no others that I am aware of; beyond an occasional redistribution of the meaning into different lines of a poem, as in Goethe's *Night Song,* where the sense of my first four lines covers that of the first five of the original, and of my last four lines that of the last three of the original. These renderings mean poetically, I believe, precisely in English what their models mean in German, but I have made no concessions to the pedantry that greets every translation of the classics, for example, with an exhibition of classic nonsense.

Secondly, as to the form. I have nothing here to do with the angry problem of matching languages that have radically different metrical geniuses. I have not to decide, as Pope had, whether the proper English equivalent for Homeric hexameters is blank verse; though I think he was right. The forms of German verse correspond for the most part with our own. I think that once or twice I have substituted one common arrangement of line length for another, which I could do without apology, since every poet knows that his choice between one and another of these is more often than not arbitrary. Also I have discarded the German light ending rhymes when it was convenient, because the natural practice of German in this matter becomes tiresome if freely indulged

in English; moreover, their light ending is not the same thing as ours. But I have generally been scrupulous as to the reproduction of form, as of meaning; and particularly so when the form is unusual and closely personal, as in the Goethe piece already mentioned and Eduard Mörike's intricate philosophical lyrics.

In conclusion, I cannot refrain from giving myself the pleasure of saying that Dr. von Hofmannsthal, who is the only living poet represented in this little collection, and who knows English with almost idiomatic intimacy, has been generous enough to give a more than cordial approval to my version of his poem, and leave to use it as I like.

Hungerford—London,
September 21, 1924.

PRELUDE

THE POET

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

(1759–1805)

STILL fragrant of the spring for ever,
While times and generations fade,
The wreath of laureate endeavour
Blooms in the song the initiate poet has made;
Ancestral virtue still unsleeping
He tends for kingdoms yet to be,
And incorruptibly is keeping
The gates of immortality;
And through the poet still is given
The rarest recompense of heaven.

Stuttgart, September 5, 1924

SPRING

JOHANN CHRISTIAN GÜNTHER
(1695-1723)

SHY little one, Elysium's here,
So rest; the west wind in the lime
Is musical; no care is near
These woods and meadows of the prime;
Where garlands of our solitude
Back to the pebbled water sing,
No peering malice may intrude
Upon the happy rites of spring.

Your discipline of cloistered youth,
The virgin promise of your breast,
Are pretty snares whereby in truth
I am love's minion confessed;
Fear not the touch of my desire,
But in your bosom let it play,
Till you, sweet novice, shall aspire
To yet more absolute a sway.

Why is the colour in your cheeks?
Nay, nay, I wrong you not, I swear;
Love has his paradise, and seeks
Your innocence and beauty there;

In faith, your captive though I be,
Follow my wit, and you shall find
How prodigal a lord is he
In resolution to be kind.

The earth is all fertility,
Her paramours your doctrines are,
Your parables to profit by,
How love is joy's familiar;
Why are we met beneath our lime?
How was the purpose of our birth?
Who tells the processes of time
Elected us for lover's mirth.

Stuttgart, August 25–26, 1924

BELINDA

JOHANN LUDWIG WILHELM GLEIM
(1719-1803)

THE last seduction of her dress
Was loosed. Behold! Belinda's maiden treasure
Naked and lovely to the breezes' pleasure,
Refiguring Ida's wantonness.

Ah me, from that divine caress,
My sudden joy, my tribulation's leisure,
From all that secret loveliness,
My term of Eden's torment must I measure.

Weak with desire, bemused, (ah, woe to hear!)
In one bright summer noon of admiration
I took the wage of many a wrathful year.
You that a little care for your salvation,
Never (alas! I tell you) let the dear
The fatal venom be your youth's temptation.

Stuttgart, August 27-28, 1924

ROSETTE

HEINRICH CHRISTIAN BOIE
(1744–1806)

STILL upon her glances waiting,
Still desiring, supplicating,
Vainly to Rosette I plead—
"Must I in eternal trial
Know the fury of denial?
Pity my so constant need!"

Still austerely, still unbending,
Nothing my occasion mending,
Cold and fair Rosette replies—
"I would clasp in sweet submission,
But that hope is love's condition,
And in conquest passion dies."

Stuttgart, August 26–27, 1924

WANDERER'S NIGHT SONG

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE

(1749–1832)

PEACE, on the hills forsaken,
Is deep;
The leaves unshaken
Are asleep;
By twilit nest
Stilled is the wood-bird's tune;
Hush, heart! You soon,
You too, shall rest.

Stuttgart, August 31, 1924

MY CHASTE MISTRESS

AUGUST BÜRGER

(1748–1794)

WHEN I too sweet an ardour press
  Upon my saint's condition,
So pitiful is her distress,
  I straight am all contrition.

If suddenly within me move
  The angels of temptation,
She tells me lust is lack of love
  And weeps for my salvation.

So in the difference of kind
  Our young delight must smother—
O Love, some sweet conversion find
  At least of one or t'other.

Hereafter my desires be cold
  With saints and gospel-spinners,
Or let the time in her behold
  Its paragon of sinners.

Stuttgart, August 25, 1924

DEPARTURE

LUDWIG UHLAND

(1787–1862)

So am I from the town departed
  Where long it was my lot to dwell,
And I am on my way stout-hearted
  Though none were met to say farewell.

No surging crowd with fond caresses
  Has torn (thank God) the coat I wear,
Nor are my lips bruised by the kisses
  Of inconsolable despair.

The townsmen did not turn in sleeping
  As I went out at crack of day—
Well, let them damn well sleep—my weeping
  Is but for one who stayed away.

Stuttgart, September 5–6, 1924

TO HIS ABSENT MISTRESS

NIKOLAUS LENAU
(1802–1850)

THIS rose I pluck in exile, dear,
Ah, would that I might be
But now the happy messenger
To carry it to thee.

But ere my zealous touch were laid
Upon thy latchet far,
My little gathered rose would fade,
For thus the roses are.

Alas that any lover knows
A wearier way to meet,
Than he might bear a gathered rose
Still virginal and sweet,—

Than for her sprigs the nightingale
Goes on her nesting flight,
Or sends upon the wind her tale
Of sorrow through the night.

Stuttgart, August 30, 1924

THE NEW LOVE

EDUARD MÖRIKE

(1804-1875)

Is man unto another wholly given,
Though man should will it so?
In watchful nights I sought the word, and still
the word was no.

By none possessed, and as a stranger driven
From hearts I could not know—
Lamenting thus, a sudden sign was on my lips,
and lo!

I said "May God and I not go,
In daily tenderness to grow,
As lovers from this moment even?"

Ah! fearful joy to gather, and bestow,—
A waif of love no more to travel to and fro,
But walk with God on earth, foretasting heaven.

Stuttgart, August 31, 1924

PRAYER

EDUARD MÖRIKE
(1804–1875)

LORD, as thou wilt, bestow,
Light ease or heavy bearing,
Still shall my day be sharing
Thy bounty's overflow.

Thy mercy oppress me;
Thy temperance bless me;
Lord, sternly or sweetly,
Employ me discreetly,
That peace may possess me.

Heidelberg, August 30, 1924

THE LAST TREE

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL
(1813–1863)

On heaven's rim, when day is done,
  There is a lone last tree,
That gathers from the setting sun
  A morning memory.

And when at night my dues I pay
  For sunny hours, I find
The tree that held the dying day
  Transfigured in my mind.

So you renew my glory gone,
  And as I turn to age
My youth in you sets out upon
  Eternal pilgrimage.

Stuttgart, September 2–3, 1924

TO HIS DEAD WIFE

THEODOR STORM

(1817–1888)

HERE is too black a grief for bearing,
That still the sun makes golden time,
And day to night is still a-wearing,
That as when you with us were faring
The clocks tick and the steeples chime;

That when the candle-time is here
We gather still in household grace,
And nothing seems to miss you, dear,
Though where you sat so many a year
Another chair is in the place;

While I know the moon is weaving
Now her thin and lonely beams
To the vault of my bereaving,
Desolate, as is my grieving,
On a tomb of ghostly dreams.

Stuttgart, September 1–3, 1924

A WOMAN'S HAND

THEODOR STORM
(1817–1888)

NEVER, I know, complaining word
  Will soil your lips of steadfastness,
But what so bravely is unheard,
  Your hand in silence will confess;

Your hand, poor witness of your pain,
  Its fragile motion telling me
Of weary nights when it has lain
  Upon your heart's adversity.

Reutlingen, September 2, 1924

HEART'S PROVING

GOTTFRIED KELLER
(1819–1890)

Do not my undesigning heart disdain
That it so many hearts has fellowed,
In this it is but as a fiddle mellowed
Long by a master in desire and pain;

And year by year under his cunning hand
Its common price has interest taken,
For now the strings to deeper tones will waken
For any player who may understand.

So, many a mistress on my heart has spent
Instruction of her fancy's choosing,
Till it is worthy your diviner using—
Fail not its music to our discontent.

Stuttgart, September 3, 1924

CONTENT WAS FULL

DETLEV VON LILIENCRON

(1844–1909)

WHEN softly to my arms you came,
Your even pulse unbroken,
Till on your sleeping lips my name
In sunny peace was spoken,
Content was full.

And when at eve you snared away
My discontent and sorrow,
While I within your bosom lay,
All guarded from the morrow,
Content was full.

Stuttgart, September 1, 1924

SONG

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

(b. 1874)

My lady said, "I'll be no chain,
  You are not sworn to me,
To pledge the faith of men is vain,—
  They are inconstancy."

"My friend, go on your way," she said,
  "Divining many a land,
Taking your ease in many a bed,
  Caressing many a hand."

"If bitter wine your cup may fill,
  Then try the Malvoisie,
But if my lips are sweeter still,"
  She said, "come back to me."

Stuttgart, August 31, 1924

EPILOGUE

THE GERMAN MUSE

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

(1759–1805)

HERE no age Augustan flourished,
No Medician bounty nourished
Children of the German muse;
Still by privilege unfriended
Her unfolding flower was tended
By no princely beams or dews.

In the pride of German story
See her, scant of wage or glory,
Turning from great Frederick's throne;
So the German muse may pride her—
When the sceptred world denied her
By her soul she sang alone.

Mounting thence a higher passion,
Tided in a deeper fashion,
Sweeps the German muse along,
And singing that she may inherit
But her own abundant spirit,
Mocks the servitude of song.

Stuttgart, September 4, 1924

Seminarium Filologii Angielskiej przy Uniwersytecie M. Kopernika w Toruniu

THE END

BIBLIOTEKA W TORUNIU UNIWERSYTECKA