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# Nature Poems

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Nature Poems

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Songs of Joy

The Soul's Destroyer

The Hour of Magic and other Poems

# Nature Poems

and others    *♣*    *♣*    *♣*

by W. H. Davies



Jonathan Cape

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# Nature Poems

## And Others

### The Muse

**I** HAVE no ale,  
No wine I want;  
No ornaments,  
My meat is scant.

No maid is near,  
I have no wife ;  
But here's my pipe  
And, on my life:

With it to smoke,  
And woo the Muse,  
To be a king  
I would not choose.

But I crave all,  
When she does fail—  
Wife, ornaments,  
Meat, wine and ale.

## The Rain

**I** HEAR leaves drinking rain ;  
I hear rich leaves on top  
Giving the poor beneath  
Drop after drop ;  
'Tis a sweet noise to hear  
These green leaves drinking near.

And when the Sun comes out,  
After this rain shall stop,  
A wondrous light will fill  
Each dark, round drop ;  
I hope the Sun shines bright ;  
'Twill be a lovely sight.

## A Life's Love

**H**OW I do love to sit and dream  
Of that sweet passion, when I meet  
The lady I must love for life !  
The very thought makes my Soul beat  
Its wings, as though it saw that light  
Silver the rims of my black night.

## Robin Redbreast

9

I see her bring a crimson mouth  
To open at a kiss, and close ;  
I see her bring her two fair cheeks,  
That I may paint on each a rose ;  
I see her two hands, like doves white,  
Fly into mine and hide from sight.

In fancy hear her soft, sweet voice ;  
My eager Soul, to catch her words,  
Waits at the ear, with Noah's haste  
To take God's message-bearing Birds ;  
What passion she will in me move—  
That Lady I for life must love !

## Robin Redbreast

**R**OBIN on a leafless bough,  
Lord in Heaven, how he sings !  
Now cold Winter's cruel Wind  
Makes playmates of poor, dead things.

How he sings for joy this morn !  
How his breast doth pant and glow !  
Look you how he stands and sings,  
Half-way up his legs in snow !

If these crumbs of bread were pearls,  
And I had no bread at home,  
He should have them for that song ;  
Pretty Robin Redbreast, Come.

## Tyrants

**P**EACE makes more slaves than savage War,  
Since tyrants, backed by their Land's Law—  
Needing no deadly armament—  
Can force a people to consent  
To toil like slaves for little pay,  
In shops and factories all day ;  
Make human moles, that sweat and slave  
In dark, cold, cheerless rooms; who have  
No blood, to make them well again,  
If foul Disease should give them pain.  
The cold, proud rich they, without cares,  
In comfort live; like surly bears  
That eat and sleep in caves of ice  
The Heavenly Sun has painted nice;  
Tyrants that would, to have their rent,  
Turn tenants' Christmas into Lent,  
For fast instead of feast. What, free !  
When masters, who hate Liberty,  
Can in their height of power and greed  
Force weaker men to serve their need ?  
Dogs may rear cats, the cat a rat,  
And wolves stay hunger, loving what  
They could devour—so masters may  
Make men their care instead of prey.  
The Fly has many eyes : I guess  
A Spider can see more with less:  
One Tyrant, though not right, is strong  
To punish thousands for no wrong.

## The Milkmaid's Call II

To a Butterfly

**W**E have met,  
You and I;  
Loving man,  
Lovely Fly.

If I thought  
You saw me,  
And love made  
You so free

To come close—  
I'd not move  
Till you tired  
**O**f my love.

## The Milkmaid's Call

**A**S I walked down a lane this morn,  
I heard a sweet voice cry, Come, Come !  
And then I saw ten dull, fat cows  
Begin to race like horses home ;  
Like horses in their pace,  
Though lacking horses' grace.

That voice, which did uplift those feet  
Of cows, uplifted mine likewise ;  
For, with a heart so light, I walked  
Until the sweat did blind my eyes;  
And all the way back home,  
I heard her cry, Come, Come !

## The Wind

**S**OMETIMES he roars among the leafy trees  
 Such sounds as in a narrow cove, when Seas  
 Rush in between high rocks; or grandly roll'd,  
 Like music heard in churches very old.  
 Sometimes he makes the children's happy sound,  
 When they play hide and seek, and one is found.  
 Sometimes he whineth like a dog in sleep,  
 Bit by the merciless, small fleas; then deep  
 And hollow sounds come from him, as starved men  
 Oft hear rise from their empty parts; and then  
 He'll hum a hollow groan, like one sick lain,  
 Who fears a move will but increase his pain.  
 And now he makes an awful wail, as when  
 From dark coal-pits are brought up crushed, dead  
     men  
 To frantic wives. When he's on mischief bent,  
 He breeds more ill than that strange Parliament  
 Held by the witches, in the Hebrides;  
 He's here, he's there, to do what'er he please.  
 For well he knows the spirits' tricks at night,  
 Of slamming doors, and blowing out our light,  
 And tapping at our windows, rattling pails,  
 And making sighs and moans, and shouts and wails.  
 'Twas he no doubt made that young man's hair  
     white,  
 Who slept alone in a strange house one night,  
 And was an old man *in* the morn and crazed,  
 And all who saw and heard him were amazed.

## Jenny

**N**OW I grow old, and flowers are weeds,  
I think of days when weeds were flowers;  
When Jenny lived across the way,  
And shared with me her childhood hours.

Her little teeth did seem so sharp,  
So bright and bold, when they were shown,  
YouM think if passion stirred her she  
Could bite and hurt a man of stone.

Her curls, like golden snakes, would lie  
Upon each shoulder's front, as though  
To guard her face on either side—  
They raised themselves when Winds did blow.

How sly they were ! I could not see,  
Nor she feel them begin to climb  
Across her lips, till there they were,  
To be forced back time after time.

If I could see an Elm in May  
Turn all his dark leaves into pearls,  
And shake them in the light of noon—  
That sight had not shamed Jenny's curls.

And, like the hay, I swear her hair  
Was getting golder every day ;  
Yes, golder when 'twas harvested,  
Under a bonnet stacked away.

Ah, Jenny's gone, I know not where ;  
 Her face I cannot hope to see ;  
 And every time I think of her  
 The world seems one big grave to me.

## Sweet Youth

**A**ND art thou gone, sweet Youth ? Say Nay !  
 For dost thou know what power was thine,  
 That thou couldst give vain shadows flesh,  
 And laughter without any wine,  
 From the heart fresh ?

And art thou gone, sweet Youth ? Say Nay !  
 Not left me to Time's cruel spite ;  
 He'll pull my teeth out one by one,  
 He'll paint my hair first grey, then white,  
 He'll scrape my bone.

And art thou gone, sweet Youth ? Alas !  
 For ever gone ! I know it well ;  
 Earth has no atom, nor the sky,  
 That has not thrown the kiss Farewell—  
 Sweet Youth, Good-Bye!

## Nature's Friend

SAY what you like,  
All things love me !  
I pick no flowers—  
That wins the Bee.

The Summer's Moths  
Think my hand one—  
To touch their wings—  
With Wind and Sun.

The garden Mouse  
Comes near to play ;  
Indeed, he turns  
His eyes away.

The Wren knows well  
I rob no nest;  
When I look in,  
She still will rest.

The hedge stops Cows,  
Or they would come  
After my voice  
Right to my home.

The Horse can tell,  
Straight from my lip,  
My hand could not  
Hold any whip.

## 16 A Maiden and her Hair

Say what you like,  
All things love me !  
Horse, Cow, and Mouse,  
Bird, Moth and Bee.

### A Maiden and her Hair

**H**ER cruel hands go in and out,  
Like two pale woodmen working there,  
To make a nut-brown thicket clear—  
The full, wild foliage of her hair.

Her hands now work far up the North,  
Then, fearing for the South's extreme,  
They into her dark waves of hair  
Dive down so quick—it seems a dream.

They're in the light again with speed,  
Tossing the loose hair to and fro,  
Until, like tamed snakes, the coils  
Lie on her bosom in a row.

For wise inspection, up and down  
One coil her busy hands now run ;  
To screw and twist, to turn and shape,  
And here and there to work like one.

And now those white hands, still like one,  
Are working at the perilous end ;  
Where they must knot those nut-brown coils,  
Which will hold fast, though still they'll bend.

Sometimes one hand must fetch strange tools,  
The other then must work alone ;  
But when more instruments are brought,  
See both make up the time that's gone.

Now that her hair is bound secure,  
Coil top of coil, in smaller space,  
Ah, now I see how smooth her brow,  
And her simplicity of face.

## Sweet Music

**A**H, Music ! it doth sound more sweet  
Than rain on crisped leaves j or when  
Beauty doth stroke a kitten rose,  
And screams, to feel her fingers then  
Scatched by its little claws.

Drowned, Music, in thy waves, I saw  
My whole long Past before me go ;  
Now, rouse me with a merry shout—  
Such as charm children, when Winds blow  
The light they love clean out.

Laugh thee, sweet Music, like those girls,  
 When each was fit, but none were wed;  
 As they did banter a shy boy,  
 Who could not raise on high his head  
 And face their wicked joy.

## Early Morn

**W**HEN I did wake this morn from sleep,  
 It seemed I heard birds in a dream ;  
 Then I arose to take the air—  
 The lovely air that made birds scream ;  
 Just as a green hill launched the ship  
 Of gold, to take its first clear dip.

And it began its journey then,  
 As I came forth to take the air ;  
 The timid Stars had vanished quite,  
 The Moon was dying with a stare;  
 Horses, and kine, and sheep were seen  
 As still as pictures, in fields green.

It seemed as though I had surprised  
 And trespassed in a golden world  
 That should have passed while men still slept  
 The joyful birds, the ship of gold,  
 The horses, kine and sheep did seem  
 As they would vanish for a dream.

## The Battle

**T**HERE was a battle in her face,  
Between a Lily and a Rose :  
My Love would have the Lily win  
And I the Lily lose.

I saw with joy that strife, first one,  
And then the other uppermost;  
Until the Rose roused all its blood,  
And then the Lily lost.

When she's alone, the Lily rules,  
By her consent, without mistake :  
But when I come that red Rose leaps  
To battle for my sake.

## A Beggar's Life

**W**HEN farmers sweat and toil at ploughs,  
Their wives give me cool milk and sweet j  
When merchants in their office brood,  
Their ladies give me cakes to eat,  
And hot tea for my happy blood;  
This is a jolly life indeed,  
Tp do no work and get my need.

I have no child for future thought,  
 I feed no belly but my own,  
 And I can sleep when toilers fail;  
 Content, though sober, sleeps on stone,  
 But Care can't sleep with down and ale;  
 This is a happy life indeed,  
 To do no work and get my need.

I trouble not for pauper's grave,  
 There is no feeling after death ;  
 The king will be as deaf to praise  
 As I to blame—when this world saith  
 A word of us in after days ;  
 It is a jolly life indeed,  
 To do no work and get my need.

### The Moth

**S**AY, silent Moth,  
 Why thou hast let  
 The midnight come,  
 And no dance yet.

Man's life is years,  
 Thy life a day ;  
 Is thine too Idng  
**To** be all play ?

Man's life is long,  
He lives for years ;  
So long a time  
Breeds many fears.

Thy life is short:  
What'er its span,  
Life's worth seems small  
Be't Moth or Man.

## Day's Black Star

**I**S it that small black star,  
Twinkling in broad daylight,  
Upon the bosom of  
Yon clouds so white—  
Is it that small black thing  
Makes earth and all Heaven ring !

Sing, you black star ; and soar  
Until, alas ! too soon  
You fall to earth in one  
Long singing swoon;  
But you will rise again  
To heaven, from this green plain.

Sing, sing, sweet star ; though black,  
Your company's more bright  
Than any star that shines  
With a white light;  
Sing, Skylark, sing; and give  
To me thy joy to live.

## Go, Angry One

**G**O, angry **One**, and let tears cold  
 Put out the fires thine eyes now hold ;  
 Let those dark clouds, that make my pain,  
 Clear themselves pure with thine eyes' rain ;  
 Let Thy cheeks' roses, that once stood  
 Unblemished by wild Passion's blood,  
 Be washed by thee in penance dew,  
 To gain back their first happy hue ;  
 Recover thy voice, sweet and low,  
 That has such little music now.  
 But let not anger frost, and kill  
 The trembling flowers of Love that will  
 Come pleading unto you for me—  
 Which would for both great pity be.  
 Go, angry Beauty, and get calm ;  
 And, when thou art all spent of harm,  
 Look how I come with greater love ;  
 And anger once again will move  
 Thee, my wild Pet—but not so strong  
 That you will think my kisses wrong.

## Dead Born

**A** PERFECT child, with hands and feet,  
 With heart and bones ;  
 Which no man's hand could fashion out  
 Of clay or stones.

## The Change

23

Yet this, Alas ! is but cold clay ;  
The mortal breath  
Is lacking, for this perfect child  
Is born in death.

Oft have I seen its mother's joy—  
A new-made wife;  
And knew she fed on secret hope  
For her child's life.

And now her heart breaks; she can hear  
No sweet cries wild ;  
There needs no joyful soothing for  
Her dead-born child.

## The Change

**N**OW Winter's here ; he and his ghostly Winds  
That day and night swing on the branches  
bare.

There's February, with his weak, running eyes,  
And dog-like nose, that's always damp and cold.  
November, who doth make Heaven like one cloud ;  
And, if he shines at all, his sunsets are  
A ghastly white; no sound of birds—save, now  
And then, a pheasant hiccups like a child.  
There's cold December too; he takes the Brook,  
And lodges him in a strong tomb of ice—

The last sweet voice that Nature charms us with.  
I cannot help but think of Autumn now,  
Ere any leaves begin to fall, and when  
He made the dark and sullen forest smile,  
And gave the trees gold tresses for their dark;  
And was, as I have heard, so generous  
That men could feed their pigs on his rich fruit.  
And I go farther back: how Spring did clothe  
The aged Oak—whose four tremendous arms  
Might well be bodies of still noble trees.  
And how Spring's sparkling meadows stormed the  
    Clouds  
With little black balls that went singing up ;  
And how rain-arrows struck the earth so hard,  
Giving no wound to little Leaves and Buds,  
But only tickling them to laugh and dance.  
And I think too of Summer in her prime—  
The tidal wave of Summer's yellow fields;  
And her gold tresses, cut and loose on earth,  
With merry men and women there all day  
Laughing and combing them; when Swallows  
    made  
Bewildering dives of forty feet and more;  
And Winds sang only loud enough in trees  
To give Love confidence for whispering.  
And now the world's so bare and cold by day:  
It seems but yesterday I welcomed Night  
That she hung out her silver orb so cool,  
In place of Day's red danger-lamp, which forced  
Me into shade all day.

## A Richer Freight

**Y**OU Nightingales, that came so far,  
From Afric's shore;  
With these rich notes, unloaded now  
Against my door;

Most true they are far richer freight  
Than ships can hold ;  
That come from there with ivory tusks,  
And pearls, and gold.

But you'll return more rich, sweet birds,  
By many notes ;  
When you take my Love's sweeter ones  
Back in your throats,

And Afric's coast will be enriched  
By how you sing !  
What ! you'll bring others back with you,  
To learn—next Spring.

## School's Out

**G**IRLS scream,  
Boys shout;  
Dogs bark,  
School's out.

## A Happy Life

Cats run,  
Horses shy;  
Into trees  
Birds fly.

Babes wake  
Open-eyed ;  
If they can,  
Tramps hide.

Old man,  
Hobble home;  
Merry mites,  
Welcome.

## A Happy Life

**O** WHAT a life is this I lead,  
Far from the hum of human greed ;  
Where Crows, like merchants dressed in black,  
Go leisurely to work and back;  
Where Swallows leap and dive and float,  
And Cuckoo sounds his cheerful note;  
Where Skylarks now in clouds do rave,  
Half mad with fret that their souls have  
By hundreds far more joyous notes  
Than they can manage with their throats.

## The Sweetest Dream 27

The ploughman's heavy horses run  
The field as if in fright—for fun,  
Or stand and laugh in voices shrill;  
Or roll upon their backs until  
The sky's kicked small enough—they think ;  
Then to a pool they go and drink.  
The kine are chewing their old cud,  
Dreaming, and never think to add  
Fresh matter that will taste—as they  
Lie motionless, and dream away.

I hear the sheep a-coughing near ;  
Like little children, when they hear  
Their elders' sympathy—so these  
Sheep force their coughs on me, and please;  
And many a pretty lamb I see,  
Who stops his play on seeing me,  
And runs and tells his mother then.  
Lord, who would live in towns with men,  
And hear the hum of human greed—  
With such a life as this to lead.

### The Sweetest Dream

**N**AY, no more bitterness from me;  
The past is gone, so let it be;  
And I will keep smiles softer than  
The sad smiles of a dying man  
For a child comforter—to give  
My sweetest dream, that still must live.

## 28            City and Country

My sweetest dream, that comes more bold ;  
Of one sweet, simple child of old ;  
Who, though a queen, and a great one,  
Would wear her jewels like a nun ;  
When miser leaves unlocked his door,  
I may forget her—not before.

### City and Country

**T**HE City has dull eyes,  
    The City's cheeks are pale;  
The City has black spit,  
    The City's breath is stale.

The Country has red cheeks,  
    The Country's eyes are bright;  
The Country has sweet breath,  
    The Country's spit is white.

Dull eyes, breath stale ; ink spit  
    And cheeks like chalk—for thee ;  
Eyes bright, red cheeks ; sweet breath  
    And spit like milk—for me.

The One Real Gem

**W**EALTH, Power, and Fame—aye, even Love,  
Are but an hour's delight, and go ;  
But Sleep's a blessing to hold fast  
Till her warm dew becomes Death's snow ;  
All men that scorned Sleep in the past,  
For any thing beneath the Sun,  
Will rue it ere their life be done.

Much it perplexed of late to know  
What made my heart with joy so light;  
Until I thought of how sweet Sleep  
Did, for so many hours each night,  
Keep me in her delicious deep :  
Charmed me each night with her sweet powers,  
In one unbroken stretch of hours.

All-powerful Sleep, thou canst give slaves  
Kings for attendants; and their straw  
Becomes in thy soft hands like down ;  
Thou one real gem, without a flaw,  
That purely shineth in Life's crown ;  
For Wealth, and Power, and Fame are paste,  
That into common ashes waste.

## 30 Joy and Pleasure

### Joy and Pleasure

**N**OW, Joy is born of parents poor,  
And Pleasure of our richer kind ;  
Though Pleasure's free, she cannot sing  
As sweet a song as Joy confined.

Pleasure's a Moth, that sleeps by day  
And dances by false glare at night ;  
But Joy's a Butterfly, that loves  
To spread its wings in Nature's light.

Joy's like a Bee that gently sucks  
Away on blossoms its sweet hour ;  
But Pleasure's like a greedy Wasp,  
That plums and cherries would devour.

Joy's like a Lark that lives alone,  
Whose ties are very strong, though few ;  
But Pleasure like a Cuckoo roams,  
Makes much acquaintance, no friends true.

Joy from her heart doth sing at home,  
With little care if others hear ;  
But Pleasure then is cold and dumb,  
And sings and laughs with strangers **near.**

## A Merry Hour

**A**S long as I see Nature near,  
I will, when old, cling to life dear:  
E'en as the old dog holds so fast  
With his three teeth, which are his last.  
For Lord, how merry now am I !  
Tickling with straw the Butterfly,  
Where she doth in her clean, white dress,  
Sit on a green leaf, motionless,  
To hear Bees hum away the hours.  
I shake those Bees too off the Flowers,  
So that I may laugh soft to hear  
Their hoarse resent and angry stir.  
I hear the sentry Chanticleer  
Challenge each other far and near,  
From farm to farm, and it rejoices  
Me this hour to mock their voices;  
There's one red Sultan near me now,  
Not all his wives make half his row.  
Cuckoo ! Cuckoo ! was that a bird,  
Or but a mocking boy you heard ?  
You heard the Cuckoo first, 'twas he;  
The second time—Ha, ha ! 'twas Me.

## Love's Birth

**I** HEARD a voice methought was sweet;  
 Skylark, I mused, thy praise is done ;  
 That voice I'd rather hear than thine  
 With twenty songs in one.

And she, in sooth, is fair, thought I,  
 Looking at her with cold, calm eyes—  
 As the Lily at May's feet, or Rose  
 That on June's bosom lies.

I heard one day a step ; a voice,  
 Heard in a room next door to mine;  
 And then, I heard long, laughing peals,  
 For *him!* from Rosaline.

Again she laughs ; what, mocking me ?  
 I shook like coward in the night—  
 Who fears to either lie in dark  
 Or rise to make a light.

For weeks I cursed the day I met  
 That fair sleep-robber, Rosaline ;  
 Till Love came pure from smoke and flame—  
 I swore she should be mine.

And in her house I, held her firm,  
 She closed her eyes and lay at 'rest;  
 But still she laughed, as if a bird  
 Should sing in its warm nest.

## Nature's Moods

I LIKE the showers that make the grass so fresh,  
And birds' notes fresher too; and like the Mist,  
Who makes thin shadows of those heavy hills,  
That carried in the light a hundred fields,  
A score of woods, and many a house of stone.  
Or see the jealous Sun appear, and make  
That Mist, Morn's phantom lover, go;  
And drive him to the farthest hill in sight,  
On which he'll make his last and dying stand ;  
A lover, he ? Ah, no ; a vampire, who  
Comes out of Night's black grave to suck Morn's  
blood.

I like to see the Sun appear at last,  
To meet the Clouds, Clouds armed with arrow-  
rain ;

And see him lift his rainbow banner high.  
Or see upon a misty night how Stars  
Half ope their eyes and close, as if in doubt  
To keep awake or not; how sometimes they  
Do seem so far and faint, I almost think  
My eyes play false, and they are Fancy's stars.

I welcome Nature in her every mood :  
To see a hundred crows toss wild about,  
Blowing in Heaven's face like balls of soot,  
As they make their delirious cries, sure signs  
Of coming storm—not half a one, I hope.

## Truly Great

**M**Y walls outside must have some flowers,  
My walls within must have some books  
A house that's small; a garden large,  
And in it leafy nooks.

A little gold that's sure each week ;  
That comes not from my living kind,  
But from a dead man in his grave,  
Who cannot change his mind.

A lovely wife, and gentle too;  
Contented that no eyes hut mine  
Can see her many charms, nor voice  
To call her beauty fine.

Where she would in that stone cage live,  
A self-made prisoner, with me ;  
While many a wild bird sang around,  
On gate, on bush, on tree.

And she sometimes to answer them,  
In her far sweeter voice than all;  
Till birds, that loved to look on leaves,  
Will doat on a stone wall.

With this small house, this garden large.  
This little gold, this lovely mate,  
With health in body, peace at heart—  
Show me a man more great.

## A Familiar Voice

**A**H, what fond memories that voice doth bring !  
Even to strangers sweet: no others sing  
Their common speech, like men of Cambria's race ;  
How much more sweet to me then was that voice !  
It filled me with sweet memories; as when  
I heard one hum the March of Harlech Men,  
Dying, five thousand miles from home ! Now we  
Lived in a city dark, where Poverty,  
More hard than rocks, and crueller than foam,  
Keeps many a great Ulysses far from home,  
With neither kings nor gods to help him forth.  
Tell me, sweet voice, what part of that dear earth  
Thou callest thine ? I asked, to please my whim :  
His answer could not cool my pride in him.  
For Wales is Wales; one patriotic flame  
From North to South, from East to West the same;  
There is no difference in our Cymric breed  
Of Highlander and Lowlander; no creed  
Can enter there to make their hearts divide;  
Nay, Wales is Wales throughout, and of one pride.  
So, in that city, by stone walls confined,  
We of our native land spake with one mind.  
We could breathe in vast spaces there : the eye  
Could lead proud Fancy in captivity  
Mile after mile adown the valleys long,  
The kindest hearts in all the world among.  
One woman's tears could moisten all the land,  
As in that very hour was known : band upon band  
Of Cymry swarming from their collieries  
To search the hills, in hours of sleep and ease,

## 36      A Summers Noon

For one lost child ; a woman's grief could claim  
The fiery hearts that tyrants ne'er could tame.  
The noblest hearts on earth are in those hills,  
For they make national their local ills ;  
Theirs are the hearts of oak, in truth they are,  
So soft in peace, yet knotted hard in war ;  
Of such an oak as, smoothed down by Pain,  
Shows flowers of Pity deep in its clear grain.  
We did compare this City dame with neat  
And simple Jenny Jones, with her charms sweet  
As are shy berries under shady leaves,  
Hiding from light to sweeten of themselves ;  
This City dame, with plumes and satin trail—  
An empty craft that carries finer sail  
Than one whose hull is full of pearls and gold ;  
For, save in song, our Jenny is not bold.  
And so we talked till, with an oath, we swore  
We would return and never wander more.

### A Summer's Noon

**W**HITE lily clouds  
    In violet skies ;  
The Sun is at  
    His highest rise.

The Bee doth hum,  
    Every bird sings ;  
The Butterflies  
    Full stretch their wings.

The Brook doth dance  
To his own song ;  
The Hawthorn now  
Smells sweet and strong.

The green Leaves clap  
Their wings to fly ;  
Like Birds whose feet  
Bird lime doth tie.

Sing all you Birds,  
Hum all you Bees ;  
Clap your green wings,  
Leaves on the trees—

I'm one with all,  
This present hour:  
Things-far-away  
Have lost their power.

## Life

**A**LONE beneath Heaven's roof I stand;  
It is a cold and frosty night;  
Big, spider stars, with many legs,  
Upon Heaven's ceiling spin in sight;  
I hear afar the homeless Wind,  
Carrying abroad her wailing child  
That, when she hurries faster, screams  
The louder and more wild.

## In Dap Gone

Now thoughts of Life make me feel sick;  
 No other joy on earth, it seems,  
 Than to pursue our quest for some  
 False Eldorado of our dreams ;  
 Pale P'ear doth like a spider pull,  
 Sucking my heart; it seems I grow  
 A man of feathers and light down,  
 And cold winds through me blow.

For Life seems empty of all worth ;  
 No wisdom in the morning shows  
 The day its duty ; yet each night  
 Is wise to show us its vain close.  
 Time's hours are precious—What! To whom ?  
 Is there one man has faith at night  
 That he has bought true worth with them,  
 And spent his day aright ?

## In Days Gone

**I** HAD a sweet companion once,  
 And in the meadows we did roam;  
 And in the one-star night returned  
 Together home.

When Bees did roar like midget bulls,  
 Or quietly rob nodding Flowers—  
 We two did roam the fields so green,  
 In Summer hours.

She like the Rill did laugh, when he  
Plays in the quiet woods alone ;  
She was as red as Summer's rose—  
The first one blown.

Her hair as soft as any moss  
That running water still keeps wet;  
And her blue eye—it seemed as if  
A Violet

Had in a Lily's centre grown,  
To see the blue, and white around—  
'Twas tender as the Glowworm's light  
On a lost mound.

And, like the face of a sweet well  
Buried alive in a stone place—  
So calm, so fresh, so soft, so bright  
Was that child's face.

## March

**T**HERE'S not one leaf can say to me  
It shines with this year's greenery.  
A stoat-like Wind, without a sound,  
Doth creep and startle from the ground  
The brown leaves, and they fly about,  
And settle, till again found out.  
But Spring, for very sure, is born :  
E'en though I see, this misty morn,

The face of Phoebus cold and white,  
 As hers who sits his throne at night;  
 For I can hear how birds—not bold  
 Enough to sing full songs—do scold  
 Their timid hearts to make a try.  
 The unseen hand of Spring doth lie  
 Warm on my face ; the air is sweet  
 And calm ; it has a pleasant heat  
 That makes my two hands swell, as though  
 They had gloves on. Spring makes no show  
 Of leaves and blossoms yet, but she  
 Has worked upon this blood in me ;  
 And everything of flesh I meet  
 Can feel, it seems, her presence sweet.

### The Laughers

**M**ARY and Maud have met at the door,  
 Oh, now for a din ; I told you so :  
 They're laughing at once with sweet, round mouths,  
 Laughing for what ? does anyone know ?

Is it known to the bird in the cage,  
 That shrieketh for joy his high top notes,  
 After a silence so long and grave—  
 What started at once those two sweet throats ?

Is it known to the Wind that he takes  
 Advantage at once and comes right in ?  
 Is it known to the cock in the yard,  
 That crows—the cause of that merry din ?

Is it known to the babe that he shouts ?  
 Is it known to the old, purring cat ?  
 Is it known to the dog, that he barks  
 For joy—what Mary and Maud laugh at ?

Is it known to themselves ? It is not,  
 But beware of their great shining eyes ;  
 For Mary and Maud will soon, I swear,  
 Find a cause to make far merrier cries.

## The Thieves

**T**HIEVES, Death and Absence, come  
 No more to my heart's home:  
 Behold my chambers bare,  
 I make no thing my care.

As fast as I aught bring  
 In place of stolen thing,  
 One of ye two doth come  
 Again to my heart's home.

Henceforth I'll leave it bare,  
 Cold winds shall enter there ;  
 For nothing keep I can—  
 Of plant, or beast, or man.

## Solitude

**Y**ES, Solitude indeed : for I can see  
Trees all around and, to the west of me—  
So near I could almost throw there a stone—  
A mountain and a forest stand in one !  
I've watched that mountain-top an hour and more,  
To see some bird-discoverer sail o'er  
That mighty wave of earth and settle here—  
For to go back that way he would not dare.  
And, did I see that bird, 'twould give such joy  
As in days gone, when I, a little boy,  
Saw lying in a dock the ten-foot boat  
That did across the deep Atlantic float;  
With one old man, who strapped himself fast down  
Three days and nights, knowing that he must drown,  
If once a Wind or Wave could lift him free.  
Yes, this is Solitude, for I can see  
Nothing around but mountains and their trees,  
And all the sweet flowers close, and birds, and bees.  
The bees, that drink from tankards every size,  
Colour and shape, do heave no feeble sighs,  
But murmur loud their praise ; and every bird  
Sang sweet—till but a moment since they heard  
A Blackbird's startled shriek, when suddenly  
He saw me motionless beneath a tree,  
And made them dumb in leaves and out; and made  
Even tame Robin look around, afraid.  
I see a house or two adown the lane,  
But no sign there of human life ; in vain  
The Cuckoo makes his strange but cheerful note,  
To get an answer sweet from Childhood's throat.

In this green valley, deep and silent, roam  
Cattle that seem to have no other home,  
Nor dream of any from their open vale.  
And now I see a wall and gate, so stale  
And old—black without paint; which seems to me  
Could tell some sweet, half dreadful history.  
And then I walked and saw a field close by,  
And what was seen there opened wide my eye;  
A man with a white horse and, this I swear,  
Both of them in their sleep were ploughing there.  
Then home I went and, till I reached that place,  
I never saw another mortal's face.  
A week here now ; not one hard living tramp,  
Of England's many, finds this quiet camp,  
To cheat with ready lies and solemn looks  
Me, when a dreamer I come straight from books;  
And still I would with gladness, now and then,  
Be cheated by those happy, wandering men.

## Australian Bill

**A**USTRALIAN BILL is dying fast,  
For he's a drunken fool:  
He either sits in an alehouse,  
Or stands outside a school.

He left this house of ours at seven,  
And he was drunk by nine;  
And when I passed him near a school  
**H**e nods his head to mine.

## The Boy

When Bill took to the hospital,  
 Sick, money he had none—  
 He came forth well, but lo ! his home,  
 His wife and child had gone.

< I'll watch a strange school every day,  
 Until the child I see ;  
 For Liz will send the child to school—  
 No doubt of that,' says he.

And ' Balmy' Tom is near as bad,  
 A-drinking ale till blind :  
 No absent child grieves he, but there's  
 A dead love on his mind.

But Bill, poor Bill, is dying fast,  
 For he's the greater fool ;  
 He either sits in an alehouse  
 Or stands outside a school.

## The Boy

**G**O, little boy,  
 Fill thee with joy ;  
 For Time gives thee  
 Unlicensed hours,  
 To run in fields,  
 And roll in flowers.

## A Swallow, that Flew 45

A little boy  
Can life enjoy ;  
If but to see  
The horses pass,  
When shut indoors  
Behind the glass.

Go, little boy,  
Fill thee with joy ;  
Fear not, like man.  
The kick of wrath,  
That you do lie  
In some one's path.

Time is to thee  
Eternity,  
As to a bird  
Or butterfly;  
And in that faith  
True joy doth lie.

## A Swallow that flew into the room

**I** GIVE thee back thy freedom, bird,  
But know, I am amazed to see  
These lovely feathers, which thou hast  
Concealed so many years from me.

## 46      A Lovely Woman

Oft have I watched thee cut the name  
Of Summer in the clear, blue air,  
And praised thy skilful lettering—  
But never guessed thou wert so fair.

It is, maybe, thou hast no wish  
For praise save for thy works of grace:  
Thou scornest beauty, like the best  
And wisest of our human race.

### A Lovely Woman

**N**OW I can see what Helen was:  
Men cannot see this woman pass  
And be not stirred ; as Summer's Breeze  
Sets leaves in battle on the trees.  
A woman moving gracefully,  
With golden hair enough for three,  
Which, mercifully ! is not loose,  
But lies in coils to her head close;  
With lovely eyes, so dark and blue,  
So deep, so warm, they burn me through.  
I see men follow her, as though  
Their homes were where her steps should go  
She seemed as sent to our cold race  
For fear the beauty of her face  
Made Paradise in flames like Troy—  
I could have gazed all day with joy.  
In fancy I could see her stand  
Before a savage, fighting band,

And make them, with her words and looks,  
Exchange their spears for shepherds' crooks,  
And sing to sheep in quiet nooks;  
In fancy saw her beauty make  
A thousand gentle priests uptake  
Arms for her sake, and shed men's blood.  
The fairest piece of womanhood,  
Lovely in feature, form and grace,  
I ever saw, in any place.

## Money

**W**HEN I had money, money, O !  
I knew no joy till I went poor;  
For many a false man as a friend  
Came knocking all day at my door.

Then felt I like a child that holds  
A trumpet that he must not blow  
Because a man is dead ; I dared  
Not speak to let this false world know.

Much have I thought of life, and seen  
How poor men's hearts are ever light;  
And how their wives do hum like bees  
About their work from morn till night.

So, when I hear these poor ones laugh,  
And see the rich ones coldly frown—  
Poor men, think I, need not go up  
So much as rich men should come down.

When I had money, money, O !  
 My many friends proved all untrue;  
 But now I have no money, O !  
 My friends are real, though very few.

## The Cheat

**Y**ES, let the truth be heard,  
 Bacchus, you rosy cheat:  
 That you do rob this world  
 Of pictures and songs sweet;  
 You give men dreams, 'tis true,  
 But take their will to do.

You send them sleep as kings—  
 They wake as trembling slaves;  
 Sent singing to their beds,  
 They rise like ghosts from graves;  
 They drink to get will power—  
 Then wait a sober hour.

They shake, like leaves with stems  
 Part broken on a tree;  
 As bees from flower to flower,  
 Men go from spree to spree;  
 Until their days are run,  
 \nd not one sweet task done.

Where we differ

**T**O think my thoughts all hers,  
Not one of hers is mine ;  
She laughs—while I must sigh ;  
She sings—while I must whine.

She eats—while I must fast ;  
She reads—while I am blind ;  
She sleeps—while I must wake ;  
Free—I no freedom find.

To think the world for me  
Contains but her alone,  
And that her eyes prefer  
Some ribbon, scarf, or stone.

When I returned

**W**HEN I returned to that great London Town,  
And saw Old Father Thames, one August  
night,  
Looking at me with half a thousand eyes ;  
When I at morn saw how the Heavenly light  
Could burnish that dull gold on dome and spire—  
I lost all instinct, like a horse near fire.

No thought of ragged youths, and ghastly girls  
 Whose metal laughter oft had pained my ear,  
 For many a pleasant hour ; but soon, Alas !  
 So shaken was my mind by Traffic's stir,  
 I felt an impulse mad to shriek out loud,  
 As if my voice could quiet that vast crowd.

Soon saw how false that empty glitter was,  
 For men did drop of hunger there, and die;  
 There I saw many a homeless man, with death  
 The silver lining to his cloud—then I  
 Saw woolly sheep, fat cows in meadows green,  
 In place of such men ragged, pale and lean.

## The Daisy

**I** KNOW not why thy beauty should  
 Remind me of the cold, dark grave—  
 Thou Flower, as fair as Moonlight, when  
 She kissed the mouth of a black Cave.

All other Flowers can coax the Bees,  
 All other Flowers are sought but thee :  
 Dost thou remind them all of Death,  
 Sweet Flower, as thou remindest me ?

## A Vagrant's Life 51

Thou seemest like a blessed ghost,  
So white, so cold, though crowned with gold;  
Among these glazed Buttercups,  
And purple Thistles, rough and bold.

When I am dead, nor thought of more,  
Out of all human memory—  
Grow you on my forsaken grave,  
And win for me a stranger's sigh.

A day or two the lilies fade ;  
A month, aye less, no friends are seen :  
Then, claimant to forgotten graves,  
Share my lost place with the wild green.

### A Vagrant's Life

**W**HAT art thou, Life, and what am I ?  
Here, every day that passes by  
Doth prove an idle, empty cheat;  
And hint at some false scheme to meet  
The coming day and get more mirth—  
Which will pass by with no more worth,  
I fear to give one thing my heart,  
That Death or Absence may us part;  
And 'tis a misery to live  
Alone, and have much love to give.  
I envy oft that vagrant poor:  
He has no landlady next door;

For beauty he has ne'er a care—  
 More happy bald than with much hair;  
 He has no child to save gold for,  
 No patriot's love calls him to war;  
 No house to burn, no ship to sink,  
 No wish for fame ; no cause to think  
 Of landlord, rent, or decent cloth ;  
 No wish for Pleasure's hall: in sooth,  
 With a plain crust, the Sun o'erhead,  
 Some straw at night to make his bed,  
 And drinking water, on his knee,  
 That is the life for him—and me.

### A Luckless Pair

**P**OOOR, luckless Bee, this sunny morn;  
 That in the night a Wind and Rain  
 Should strip this Apple-tree of bloom,  
 And make it green again.

You, luckless Bee, must now seek far  
 For honey on the windy leas;  
 No sheltered garden, near your hive,  
 To fill a bag with ease.

My Love was like this Apple-tree,  
 In one sweet bloom, all yesterday;  
 But something changed her too, Alas I  
 And I am turned away.

## The Trickster

**W**HEN first I left a town,  
And lived in Nature's parts,  
I heard the march of men,  
And whistles, horses, carts ;  
And it to me did seem  
Nature was but a dream.

I heard blows struck outside,  
And bodies fall all day,  
And laughter, shrieks, and groans;  
And who, think you, did play  
These mad pranks on my mind ?  
It was the merry Wind.

He blubbered oft near by,  
Against the corner stone ;  
Like sulking child, who'll not  
Come in, nor yet be gone—  
To whom full well 'tis known  
His mother's home alone.

## The Two Lives

**Y**OUTH thinks green apples sweet,  
Age thinks red cherries sour ;  
Age calls a flower a weed,  
Youth calls a weed a flower.

## Beauty's Danger

Youth thinks the world is large,  
 But Age doth think it small;  
 Youth walks on stilts, but Age  
 Fears, on his feet, to fall.

Youth claims eternal life,  
 With hours, too long to sum ;  
 Age counts his few hours gone,  
 And fewer hours to come.

Age sits and feebly chirps,  
 But Youth does dance and sing;  
 Age is Time's pensioner,  
 Youth is Time's king—his king !

## Beauty's Danger

**H**OW can she safely walk this earth,  
 And not be robbed of all her worth,  
 By bulls and bees that may catch sight  
 Of her lips waving their red light.  
 Birds could make bedding of her hair,  
 And her ripe lips could tempt wasps there;  
 If Summer's moths should see her eyes,  
 They'd drop on them, and never rise,  
 But, filled at once with mad desire,  
 Would soon put out those lamps of fire,  
 With their lives sacrificed : no gem  
 Shines on Night's ebon breast like them.

Even the hawk a foe might prove,  
 To see her bosom in a move;  
 And thinking there she hid young mice,  
 Or birds, that would not sleep in peace.  
 For never doth that bosom rest;  
 If she doth hold her breath, there must  
 Follow a storm ; the only boat  
 That ever on that sea did float  
 Is this blessed hand of mine : when I  
 As helpless as a boat must lie—  
 When seamajds' music makes the Breeze  
 Drop on the sails and sleep. O she's  
 An everlasting spring, that flows  
 When all my other springs do close.

## Childhood's Hours

**M**Y heart's a coffin cold,  
 In which my Childhood lies  
 Unburied yet; and will—  
 Until this body dies.

I think me every hour  
**O**f those sweet, far-off days  
 That draw so very close,  
 And show their pretty ways.

Where'er I am they come,  
 Those ghosts, my Childhood Hours;  
 They run up to my knees,  
 Laughing and waving flowers.

They run up to my knees,  
They shout and cry Cuckoo !  
They mock the bleating lambs,  
And like young calves they moo.

Some of their flowers are weeds,  
Are weeds, and nothing more ;  
But sweeter far they smell  
Than roses at my door.

It is a merry crew,  
And I curse Time that he  
Has made me what I am—  
A man and mystery.

## The Sea

**H**ER cheeks were white, her eyes were wild  
Her heart was with her sea-gone child.  
" Men say you know and love the sea ?  
It is ten days, my child left me ;  
Ten days, and still he doth not come,  
And I am weary of my home."

I thought of waves that ran the deep  
And flashed like rabbits, when they leap,  
The white part of their tails; the glee  
Of captains that take brides to sea,  
And own the ships they steer ; how seas  
Played leapfrog over ships with ease.

The great Sea-Wind, so rough and kind ;  
Ho, ho ! his strength ; the great Sea-Wind  
Blows iron tons across the sea !  
Ho, ho ! his strength ; how wild and free !  
He breaks the waves, to our amaze,  
Into ten thousand little sprays !

" Nay, have no fear " ; I laughed with joy,  
" That you have lost a sea-gone boy ;  
The Sea's wild horses, they are far  
More safe than Land's tamed horses are ;  
They kick with padded hoofs, and bite  
With teeth that leave no marks in sight.

True, Waves will howl when, all day long  
The Wind keeps piping loud and strong ;  
For in ships' sails the wild Sea-Breeze  
Pipes sweeter than your birds in trees ;  
But have no fear "—I laughed with joy,  
" That you have lost a sea-gone boy."

That night I saw ten thousand bones  
Coffined in ships, in weeds and stones ;  
Saw how the Sea's strong jaws could take  
Big iron ships like rats to shake ;  
Heard him still moan his discontent  
For one man or a continent.

I saw that woman go from place  
To place, hungry for her child's face ;  
I heard her crying, crying, crying ;  
Then, in a flash ! saw the Sea trying,  
With savage joy, and efforts wild,  
To smash his rocks with a dead child.

## Vain Beauty

**A**H, what is Beauty but vain show—  
If nothing in the heart is sweet;  
As oft the spider finds a moth—  
All wings and little meat.

Thy look as warm as Autumn's is,  
As false—both he and thou art cold ;  
Then, since thou art unkind and vain,  
Let thy true worth be told.

Worms form thy flesh, and 'tis that flesh  
Makes thee so beautiful to see ;  
When dying thou refuse them food,  
They'll help themselves to thee.

Thy laugh was falser than men make  
Ere they in dreadful battle fall ;  
I found thee false, thy looks deceived  
Like short men that sit tall.

Beauty can make thy two lips red—  
But not thy voice sound soft and sweet ;  
Beauty made thy cheeks smooth, but gave  
Thine eyes no pleasant heat.

I see thee move like a vain horse  
Whose neck is arched to his knee ;  
His head will soon drop there through age—  
And age will so bend thee.

Age with his frost will warn thee soon,  
And pinch and mark thee here and there;  
Will dry thy lip, and dim thine eye,  
And pull out thy long hair.

The flowers that spread their charms too far  
Must soon be served like common weeds;  
With my respect love also died—  
No longer my heart bleeds.

## Waiting

**W**HO can abide indoors this morn,  
Now sunny May is ten days born;  
In his house caged, a moping thing,  
When all the merry free birds sing ?  
It is a pleasant time, and all  
The sky's so full of cloudlets small,  
That white doth seem Heaven's natural hue,  
And clouds themselves are painted blue.  
Now lusty May doth grow and burst  
Her bodice green ; her hawthorn breast,  
Breaking those laces once so tight,  
Doth more than peep its lovely white.  
Come forth, my Love, for Nature wears  
This hour her bridal smile ; she hears  
Ten thousand bantering birds, as they  
Do hop upon her blossomed way.  
The Sun doth shine, all things rejoice;  
The cows forget the milkmaid's voice;

Of gardeners flowers have little care,  
The sheep care not where shepherds are,  
Dewdrops are in the grass, and they  
Are twenty times more bright than day;  
And if we look them close their rays  
Will even make our own eyes daze;  
But from that red and fiery Sun  
Some timid drops of dew have run  
Down the green blades of grass, and found  
At once a cool place underground;  
The birds sing at their high, sweet pitch,  
And bees sing basso deep and rich.  
May is Love's month : her flowers and voice  
Call youth and maiden to rejoice,  
And fill their hearts with Love's sweet pains;  
They meet with laughter in green lanes,  
And then they turn to whispering,  
Under the leaves where the birds sing.  
Fie, fie, my love ; you wait too long  
To hear that old, black kettle's song;  
He'll keep thee suffering long for him,  
And a true lover for his whim  
I've seen where you did stand last night,  
Near the old stile : that spot is white  
With daisies, and I swear, they were  
Never in that green place before;  
But that those sweet flowers came to sight  
Since we two parted there last night,  
At sunset, when that western world  
Had four green rainbows rimmed with gold.  
You indoors when the skylark long  
Has sung on high his matin song !  
The humble bees, dressed in black cloth,  
Like mourners for the dead, come forth

With their false groans—for soon they'll stop  
With red-faced flowers to drink a drop ;  
Until they are so tight with drink,  
They must lie down awhile and think.  
So quiet lie the Butterflies,  
Some Bees can scarce believe their eyes,  
But what they're Blossoms, lovelier far,  
And sweeter than all others are.  
But one black Bee did come along,  
A big, black bully, fat and strong,  
And saw my Lady Butterfly,  
Who, dreaming sweet romance, did lie  
Lazy on a red flower ; and he,  
Vexed she'd not toil like Ant or Bee,  
Buzzed in her ears, and grumbled so—  
She must at last arise and go.  
Come, Love, and breathe on these small flowers,  
So they may live a few more hours.  
Had I been near, you had not ta'en  
Sleep's second draught and drowsed again,  
But waked for good at my first kiss—  
As Phoebus made these flowers with his.  
Young Buds are here, that wait to see  
How you do part your lips for me,  
Ere they ope theirs the least—who wait  
Your coming, Love, which is so late.  
We'll miss, when summer is no more,  
The very weed that chokes a flower.  
Alas ! too soon the time must come  
When leaves will fall, and birds be dumb ;  
And but red Robin's breast will show  
How the late fruits and flowers did glow.  
The leafy Elm, that now has made  
For twenty kine a pleasant shade,

Will in its scraggy bones stand bare,  
With not one leaf seen anywhere.  
The Stream will take and bury one  
By one, till Willow's leaves are gone ;  
The Hedge—see how it dances now !  
Will stand to its broad waist in snow.  
Yet what care I ? If I have thee,  
'Twill still be summer time to me;  
Though no Sun shines, when you come forth  
A light must fall across the earth.

THE END









