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INTIMATION
and *other poems*

INTIMATION

and other poems

by

H. M. MARGOLIOUTH

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TO MY WIFE

NOTE

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The order of the poems given in this volume is, with a few exceptions, the chronological order of composition.

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Intimation

THIS pregnant air, this whitened tree,
This landscape under snow
Are part of something known to me
In some old long ago.

Not that: not long ago, not lost.
There is some elsewhere
In which this silence and this frost,
This strange, snow-laden air

And I myself, unbodied I,
Together form the parts
Of one symbolic harmony
From whence all meaning starts.

Meaning and symbol there are one:
But here the symbol seems,
While Time is measured by the Sun,
Like images in dreams:

And meaning, for which Time must stay,
Baffles intelligence,
Which like Ixion walks astray
Among the lures of sense.

Sleep

COME sleep, creep softly on, let drowsiness
Drone in my brain and body, seal my heart
Against incursions that make more or less
Its steady beating: apathy impart
And warm, slow wanderings of the mused mind
That flickers gradual to a dreamy sense
Of here and not here, while the dim wheels wind
Of fragmentary memory, till far hence
Is all but slumb'rous calm and level lull,
Self-sought submission to the charming rod,
Negation mute and affirmation null.
Then nothing known, annihilation's nod.

Watching

WHITE fronts of houses in the thin mist dream,
Distant, beyond the grass: the huge skies climb.
I am very small, but watching: all things seem
To await a certain time.

I am the watcher, but all things around,
Low houses, towering skies, trees, mist and grass,
They watch me also: I by them am bound:
The slow minutes pass.

Their watching is their message, hard to read:
My watching is my reading, hard to spell,
And many patient lessons should I need
If I would do it well.

'Tis such a busy quiet, so intent—
But I must leave it for my dull concerns,
I will come back—and so indeed I meant,
For too, too late one learns

There is no coming back. The moment known
Has been and is and evermore will be,
Its riches not increased beyond its own
By all futurity.

The Ghosts

SILENT, observant, unasleep
The ghosts are there though hidden deep
Within the men who talk and grin
And lightly play and lightly sin,
Within the men who plot and strain
Each for himself for name or gain;
The ghosts are there but disenthroned,
Forgotten, unperceived, disowned.

Within the traitor heart confined,
The traitor body, traitor mind,
The lawful ruler of the man
Seldom complains and seldom can,
But hither, thither borne apace
Endures in patience his disgrace:
That busy brain, those eyes and ears
Are closed to all his hopes and fears.

Suppose the ghosts should rise to power
And cry, 'Tis now our destined hour,
These bodies are for us to use
To do the deeds that we shall choose,
These senses shall belong to us,
Those tongues shall ghostly themes discuss,
Those hearts and brains shall think and feel
In ghostly wise for ghostly weal.'

Then competition would be dead,
For immaterial wealth is spread
Unlimited and free to all
Who choose to have it at their call:
So might all men themselves employ
In shared but undiminished joy,
If but the ghosts were freely owned,
Perceived, remembered, re-enthroned.

For Ever

I STOOD stockstill and said Tor ever—ever!'—
Eleven years old I was and schoolward bound—
I stood stockstill in terrified endeavour
To face a fact, its fearful depth to sound:
I faced the fact of everlastingness,
I seemed to feel my core of conscious thought
In a void future never growing less—
Infinitude but infinite of nought—
Go on and on, as through a pale grey sky,
Unable into nothingness to sink,
Knowing that I was adamant I,
Unable to forget or cease to think:
Unable to forget the changeless past,
The changeless future stretching on before,
And my small changeless being doomed to last,
In frozen one-ness, more—and more—and more.

In Turner Road I stood near High Road Lee
When first this terror took me. Then I tried
To think of God and how Eternity
With him and saints and angels by my side
Would be a state of bliss: I weakly said
'Well, I suppose I'll like it when I'm there,
Though now it seems so dreadful.'
But that dread
Since then seized often on me unaware.

The Whisper

UNDER the surface show of things
What subtlest essence flows,
So quiet that its murmurings
In silence seem to close:
In silence close—and we forget,
We do our busy deeds,
We aim and gain and fight and fret
And misbelieve our creeds:
In silence close—yet I have caught
Its whisper dim and low,
I strive to follow it with thought
Beyond where thought will go:
In silence close—a close how strange,
Unheard we hear that rill,
Though far on heights of death we range,
Unsought we seek it still:
In silence close—yet silence such
All sound may overcome,
May have sole power our ears to touch
And strike the great world dumb.

Glimpse

THIS then is hell: to have the glimpse withdrawn
And dread to live without it all my days,
Or die untimely, having dreamt the dawn
Then lost in darkened ways.

It should be simple to have heaven on earth,
To quench desires in one supreme Desire,
To give up trash for what alone has worth,
Chill death for living fire.

I dimly see: I cannot taste: it seems
We cannot taste alone or one by one:
All must awaken from their self-bound dreams:
Heaven is for all or none.

Not mine to enter Canaan, or to build
Jerusalem in England's pleasant land:
Yet was there glory with which Blake was filled,
One did on Pisgah stand.

I stand at Pisgah's foot: to me is given
Glimpse of a glimpse, no more: yet I would keep
That little light. Some die who have not striven,
Have lived their life asleep:

I would be watching. Who is on the mount ?
Glimpse of a glimpse to glory might give way.
One was transfigured. Bliss beyond all count
Could be Man's any day.

That Tree

PUT back the apple on the tree,
Let things be as they were.
Alas, alas, that cannot be,
No more is Eden fair.

Adam must swink and Eve complain
And Abel smugly pray,
Stern stalks the haughty form of Cain
And Nimrod loves—to slay.

Put back the apple on the tree.
Ah, would the tree were gone.
It mocks men in their misery,
And Judas hung thereon.

The sages wrangle, saints debate,
Mistaken martyrs preach,
New gods arise, the Church, then State,
New powers are in our reach.

Put back the apple on the tree.
The powers are powers to kill,
Quench the pale light of liberty
And warp the growing will.

Then fell the tree, grub up the root,
Let none know where it stood,
The tree that bore the poisoned fruit
Of Evil and of Good—

My Good, your Evil! Paradise
For me but not for you!
O subtle serpent, whose device
Made men take that for true ?

To Edward Thompson
(1942)

o WORSHIPPER of Wood-Gods, harsh the fate
That threw you on these times:
You could have lived with Pan in Arcady
And poured out rich sweet rhymes;
You could with men your friends have worked at ease
And played and walked and talked:
But you saw Dives had a brother too,
Saw where that Spectre stalked,
Saw where that Spectre's kin in East and West
Was blinding all our souls:
Cassandra-like you prophesied in vain,
For set on narrow goals
Were all who heard nor knew the doom to come,
But your two eyes were clear-
Pity and Indignation are their names,
Poet still but poet and seer.
Canst look into the future and behold-
Not joys of woodland May—
But late and lovely ere the long year end
An Indian Summer's day ?

Sky

so God was banished, was abolished rather,
The sky was cleared, that heavy bearded Father
Known as the figment of a childish brain:

 Yet in this rain,
While five broad sunbeams strike to earth through cloud,
Know I not deity? Stand I unbowed
On the recipient earth, when the Most High
 Dwells in that sky
Not emptied, as they say, but filled the more
By Galileo's gaze and later lore ?
Now while I wonder how to yield my soul
 To His great whole,
The thing is done: I walk submit and bare
Under the rain and sun in the wide air.
It must be done and done till life shall cease.
 'His will is our peace.'

Neighbour

NO, I can't see him now: I'm giving a feast
To three important Levites and a priest,
People I want to cultivate and impress.
My whole career might well be ruined, no less,
If I were found with that Samaritan.
People talk so. How do I know the man?
I wish I didn't. Once—oh, long ago—
Some brigands knocked me down near Jericho
(Three against one) and skipped with all my money.
He came along, when I was feeling funny,
And did what any decent man would do,
Helped me to rise, lent me a pound or two
(Which I repaid next week) and said good-bye.
And now he's turned up here most awkwardly.
I'm doing well, I'm thought a coming man,
I'm known and liked, when this Samaritan
Presuming on a service in the past
Claims my acquaintance: it's enough to blast
All I've built up by years of thought and labour
If people think I like that sort of neighbour.

More Than Mind

WE call It mind, but mind's no more to It
Than faintest sentience is to eager thought:
So looking at the world we see what's writ
 But can read nought:

Nought reading yet we cannot cease to look,
And sometimes feel a flame within us burn,
Troubling and easing trouble, from that book
 Whose pages turn,

Turn ever those uncomprehended lines
To us who copy, classify and teach—
For want of better—undeciphered signs
 Of things past reach,

Past reach of feeble faculties of mind,
O past all reach, capacity and scope,
Yet known to us as colours to the blind,
 The blind who hope.

The Christian Stoic

HE knew the worst, knew that no horror thought
But would be, had been, was even then being wrought,
He knew that he might suffer every wrong
 Nor even himself be strong
 His honour to preserve,
 That body, mind, and nerve
Might break beneath the foe's or fate's onslaught.

He knew the best, that any good conceived
Is so far true and so must be believed,
He knew that his might be that greatest joy
 His powers all to employ
 In clear and welcome duty,
 In love and peace and beauty
That he and all men so might be reprieved.

He knew the likeliest, that he would die
And leave behind the old uncertainty,
So he resolved unfrightened of the worst
 To put the good things first,
 Took Faith to be his guide,
 Let Hope o'er life preside,
Complained not but endured the mystery.

Atlantis

IN old Atlantis long ago
By pleasant breezes fanned,
Where youth was kind, where age came slow,
I lived and loved the land.

In plenty nursed, by toil unspent,
Our shining bodies played,
In love and joy and wonderment
Unspoilt our spirits prayed:

Our prayer was praise—of earth and sea
And sun and star and moon,
Our prayer was praise, what need had we
To beg for heaven's boon ?

By divers arts we kept and conned
The beauty of our day,
We dreamed and talked of what beyond
Our human limits lay,

Of Mightier Things than mind and will
(Yet Soul might touch thereon),
Till with a beauty rarer still
Atlantis sung and shone.

Enoch

THE solid obstacles of sense
To him are windows clear
Through which the spirit's gaze intense
Sees Heaven now and here:

And sometimes for a moment's space
We see what he can see,
Then sinking back to time and place
We doubt and disagree:

We cannot quite remember now
That vision far and dim,
We look for Enoch, but somehow
His God has taken him.

Christmas

THERE are who celebrate to-day
The birth of God in Man.
This some believe and some gainsay:
And what's a Christian?

And what is God ? and Man ? and birth ?
So dark's the mystery
I do not find upon this earth
Impossibility.

Though I with doubtful mind receive
Historic evidence,
I have no power to disbelieve
In spiritual sense,

Whereby the soul not grasps indeed
But touches, feels, finds out
Deep truth of which it stands in need
And cannot live without.

The mind then tries to master it,
Explain and prove and state,
Till men on God in judgement sit,
Propound, confute, relate.

So some believe and some gainsay:
And what's a Christian?
One celebrating every day
The birth of God in Man.

Winter Sun

NOW the pale sunshine of the wintry noon
Reminds and prophesies of God's great June,
For every beauty sense can comprehend

 This also does *intend*-

To stir regret and hope of some high thing
Still on the world's far side. That brightening
Brightens already as we think of it

• And all the soul is lit:
For sense is first the door at which we knock,
Then sense holds out the key to fit the lock
Till through the door we see that garden glow
 No sense can ever know.

Fog

THIS quiet fog shuts all the distance out
 Making a narrow world, wherein I pace
Untroubled in a peace that comes about
 From this deliverance to one time and place.
All hues are dulled, dulled even the hedge's black,
 Above lies one grey uniformity,
But the silent, moveless river renders back
 More light than it receives from that low sky.
So seems it with myself: this outer gloom
 Hangs o'er the placid mirror of my thought
Which, all reflecting, can itself illumine
 As though with secret store of radiance fraught:
When outer things are dim and sunlight fails,
Tis then the light we bear within prevails.

The Dweller in the Innermost

HE listens, and he whispers low or clear,
He sleeps not, he is ever at his post,
Far off he seems, and he seems more than near,
He is the dweller in the innermost.

He is myself, but so much more than I:
Not all the overwrappings of the sense,
Which claim to make me me, can stultify
That dweller, by their soothings and pretence.

He holds a trumpet: he is motionless:
Beyond the world's wide limits is his home,
For innermost is outermost no less
And secret cell is heaven's tremendous dome.

What sound is this ? What dwelling is unsealed ?
The innermost. The last, first trump has pealed.

Laughter

o BEYOND the veil is laughter,
Living laughter, laughing love,
Now-eternal not hereafter
Every-here not up above.

Smiles unbidden come from pleasure,
Laughter ripples in the free,
Dancing, dancing to a measure
Universes shout with glee.

With that wind the veil is swaying,
Through the chinks I almost see
God's great smile at souls a-playing,
Laughing, loving, living, free.

The Mind's Freedom

I HAVE known sudden freedoms, when the mind
Loosed from all bonds, demands, desires, pretence,
In its own kingly right gracious and kind
Summoned to audience.

They came in courtly robes with visage gay,
The sunshine and the streams, the meadows sweet,
The noble churches and the straight rail way,
The spirits in the street.

In all my mind delighted and bestowed
Delight on all: then resting rapt awhile
Heard organ notes that swelled and spread and glowed:
Then rose and with a smile

Led all that concourse to a greater court
Irradiate beyond all thought or sight,
Wherein a monarch was who in like sort
Both took and gave delight.

The Song Beyond Sense

I WHO have never heard
One clear unclouded word
Of that most sacred and most secret song,
I deaf to its no tone,
I to whom nought is known
Know there is nothing else for which men long.

This is the holy grail,
This is Keats' nightingale,
This is the music to which Troy was built:
He alone truly dies
Whose soul this song denies
And shut in sense knows neither God nor guilt.

This is the Song of Songs:
To this Wisdom belongs,
A humble chorister with faltering voice,
And Love more certainly
Can read his part and be
An under-agent in the spirit's choice:

But chiefly Nakedness,
For he who would possess
Anything else but power to hear this song
Shall never hear it well,
But those beneath its spell—
To them Love, Wisdom, Earth, and Heaven belong.

Insufficiency

MAN thought himself the lord of all,
Lord of himself as well,
His own creator, master, thrall,
His heaven and his hell.

Wide-ranging through his universe
Sudden he paused and puled
(Pride yielding to abasement worse),
Thought laws of matter ruled.

Yet spirit can survive self-scorn,
And insufficiency
Be midwife to a sense reborn
Of inner mystery.

Not mind, not man, not matter reigns:
O mightier, mightier far
That unknown being who sustains
The spirit and the star,

Who marks a sparrow fall and where
Deep down in darkness nursed
Lies dreaming of the sunlit air
A seedling soul athirst.

The Chance

FROM darkness of unknowing,
Awareness hid in sleep
What faintest light is showing,
What opening in the deep ?

What dizzy cliffs that frighten ?
What glares that blaze and glow ?
I cannot watch them brighten,
I dare not look below.

Creation's opening closes,
No gleams of God remain,
In ignorance reposes
My coward heart again.

St. Allans Cathedral

THE sweet sound drew me beyond power of choice:

I heard and then I saw

Rapt bodies which had all become one voice

For prayer and praise and awe

But chiefly to rejoice.

In that same place so great a might of song

Had mounted through the years,

The scarce-changed worship had gone on so long

Amid those Norman piers

You could have thought the throng

Of worshippers the same. The same they are,

For, when we leave behind

The cares that isolate and mark and mar,

One body, soul, and mind

Lifts to one unchanged star.

The Score

DAY his innings now has closed
 (Well done, batsmen), and the Night,
Order cunningly disposed,
 Sends his team into the fight.

I the pitch, the wicket I,
 I the bails, the crease, the field,
Fieldsmen, batsmen, bowlers I,
 I the bat the players wield.

Never a run but dreamless sleep,
 Night's collapse would suit me best,
Captain Quiet wicket keep,
 Run them out with soundless zest.

O my bowlers hit for fours,
 Chances missed by slips and cover:
What Day couldn't, Night now scores-
 Sixteen runs in this one over.

The Other

NOW draw the curtains, shut the starers out,
Look at the room you're used to call your own,
Your trifles, treasures, workthings all about,
But are you there alone ?

Draw the mind's curtains, let your lamp be clear,
Forget the junk and jetsam thickly strown,
Do you not find a hope and find a fear
You are not there alone ?

Draw inmost curtains, veil the holy place,
Not by your lamp that Other may be known,
The lightning flashes, for a moment's space
You are not there alone.

Religion

SHOWING perfection, setting us to seek
High things and heavenly, Religion tall
Stooping to speak or check the hourly fall
Herself seems shrunken, superstitious, weak:
Then, of perfection when we hear her speak,
By that same standard judging we recall
Her stoopings, condescensions, stumblings, all
Her present wandering and past course oblique.
So we reject her, by her teaching taught
To seek perfection nor be satisfied
With lesser good, but she, though unbesought,
Rejects us not but whispers to our pride
This lesson learnt now learn thou knowest nought
Except from me and clinging to my side.'

My Raven

O RAVEN whom my soul sent forth,
Whose return I shall not know,
Still flying south, still flying north
O'er the watery waste below,

Did you meet my dove who followed you,
Who came and came again
Bringing the sign that told me true
Of peace after that rain ?

She told of a gentle time to come,
Of an earth serene and kind,
Of quiet at last in our human home
And rest for the storm-tossed mind.

But O my raven of youth and fire,
My grand and my eager one,
O bird whose wing no flight can tire,
Whose searching is never done,

What far dark waves are you crossing now ?
What path do your eyes pursue?
Of lordlier sign than the olive bough,
It is I who must come to you.

The Usurer

WHO can buy time and hoard it for his use
Or save it from its own consuming waste ?
All other things delay and make excuse
But time arrived departs at once in haste.
Who can stamp time and keep it in his purse
Or fix a standard for its currency,
Make better moments last beyond the worse
And golden hours be free from forgery ?
Who when Time presses with his monstrous debt
Can pay except by borrowing again
At unknown interest, till nearer yet
Hovers the shadow of that dread distress ?
Lender, and loan, by no means to be bought,
Harsh usurer, Tjje, how are your victims caught.

Dead

DEAD—what an empty sound that dead word has:
Dead, dead—what means it saving 'is not', 'was' ?

Dead, dead.

Vacuity, nothing, worse—corruption's breath,
Life's hideous counterpart, unanswering death:

Dead, dead.

Grimace of irony at all the past:
What matter good and ill? Death wins at last:

Dead, dead.

Is this death's sting ? This the grave's victory ?
Not my death but another's troubles me:

Dead, dead.

'So mourn you not that death must come to you,
Grieve and grimace that it claims others too ?

Dead, dead?

Dust unto dust, but dust was not the whole,
Dust unto dust, but sense was not the soul,
Dark, dark the mystery, but this is known—
To Caesar Caesar's, unto God his own.

Dead, yet not dead.'

Reality

HOW I forget the world's deep heart
Of which I am a single beat;
Only when all things else depart
And into stillness I retreat,
When busy grief takes holiday
And cares and pleasures leave me free,
Then in its sudden, silent way
Comes back intense reality:

Comes back that knowledge strange and clear
That all on earth means something else,
That underneath this transient here
Move waters from eternal wells,
Wherefrom our roots are fed and grow
And mighty rivers not of sense
Far off and near are heard to flow
By ears attuned to permanence.

The Hero

HE who well-knowing all the pain
And bitterness he must sustain
 Yet holds his purposed course,
Whose beaten body needs must quail,
Whose very soul will shrink and fail
 Subdued by grief and force,

He is the hero. Though he pray,
Pray, pray the cup may pass away,
 He will not flee for fear
Of Judas-kiss, disciples' flight,
Of horror of the judgement-night
 And dawn of day most drear.

He is the hero. Naked, torn,
Exhibited, of God forlorn—
 That bitter human cry—
With body ruined, spirit failing
(No cheers for courage unavailing)
 Behold the hero die.

Perilous Edge

ON the perilous edge of beauty let me play,
Play and revive myself this given day:
 The rocks are rough, sea wild,
 And man's a helpless child
When venturing out beyond his little skill,
Slow learnt and soon forgot— disuse can kill.
 Beauty is Siren-strong
 Luring with deathly song,
The song which we must hear and keep away.
But beauty's in the beating of the lay:
 If we would hear aright,
 It tells of sheltered bight
Where beauty such as man can bear is shown,
Where he can gaze and play and call his own
 His Nature and his Art,
 For they of him are part—
But there is that Without which all transcends,
Which is not man but works for other ends:
Yet when his skill, his time of play are past,
That outer beauty he must face at last.

The Bale

NOT chariots and horsemen, not cars and not planes,
Not fanfare of trumpets, not popular shout
Announce the approach, but a throb of birth-pains
And a tremulous doubt
And a hope and a fear, an abhorrence of change,
Of surrender to newness, to that which shall come,
When the born thing shall conquer, the spirit grow strange,
The old self be numb.

'Tis the Babe that appears, and we worship and hate,
We are Wise Men and Herod: if to Egypt it fly,
Yet the time will come round, the moment will wait,
It is Herod will die,
And the world will be different, the Babe will grow strong,
The Voice of Commandment will thunder and plead,
And he who is called, who has lingered so long,
Will follow the lead
To peace and to peril, high up on a hill
Whence the kingdoms of Earth lie all dwarfed to the view,
But the Babe is divine and the watchers so still
Are transfigured too.

Medieval Oxford

THICK-STREWN with churches lay in olden days

This little city to which scholars came:

Beside the walls, in each of the Four Ways,

And where they met, rose in the sacred name

Of Saint, Apostle, Angel, Rood, or Maid

A church of solid dignity and span,

A house of song and worship duly paid

And intercession for ever-falling Man.

Prayed they with hearts on Heaven always fixed ?

Were there no venal priests ? no lives lived wrong ?

Were ignorance and idolatry not mixed

With heavenly science and the spirit's song ?

Yet this they knew: Heaven's Kingdom will not come

To those who merely wait, inert and dumb.

Salix Balyknica

THEY hanged their harps upon the trees,
They could not sing for pain
Of fond nostalgic memories,
Sights not to see again.

They could not Zion's songs repeat.
What comfort was in them ?
And yet they sang—the bitter-sweet
Of lost Jerusalem.

They sang, those exiles: let who can
Determine time or place:
They sang the psalm of Everyman
Exiled from Heaven's face.

Autumn

APLEASANT, gentle light across the grass,
The chestnuts yellowing, limes a paler green,
Poplars whose rustling leaves as faint winds pass
White underneath are seen—

These early autumn days are quiet and chill,
And chill and quiet my mind still dreaming on
Sunshine and sea and riverside and hill

And all the summer gone,
And all the summer gone, and I must wake
To this new winter which will last so long,
The winter and the war: I must forsake

My dream, my summer song,
For there are songs of winter I may hear—

O many a song has winter brought to me—
When I have wakened and attuned my ear
To that cold harmony.

Yet summer's dreams more please, and winter sings
Sweetest of summer's loves and questionings.

Two Worlds

TWO worlds there are worthy of man's regard,
Worthy of love, worthy to dwell within,
The worlds of sense and spirit: but a hard
Ignobleness, a dull discordant din,
Crass appetite or frittering of aim
Keep most from both: some few escape to one
Warming a half-life with a curtained flame,
But, lest they die, refuse to see the sun.
Yet both are for our living, and in both
Our double nature must expatiate,
Each has a door to each: why are we loth
Thus to re-enter Eden's happy state ?
Spirit and sense so meet: he who revealed
Heaven's kingdom loved the lilies of the field.

Before The Dawn

NO morning walks, lamented Vaughan,
 No talks with God as once have been:
But I who never knew that dawn,
 Who have that presence never seen,
Yet know that in the eastern skies
The glow of morning must arise.

Though murk of earth and cloud of heaven
 So seldom give me vision clear,
Sometimes the barriers are riven
 And I behold the stars appear,
I see their wheeling courses run
And know them heralding the sun.

But will eyes used to dimmest light
 Unblinded bear the coming day ?
Shall I have strength to walk upright ?
 Have power to talk? have words to say?
These are my fears of night while I
Immobile in this silence lie.

Late

'YOU enter late,' he said. 'Alas, I went
Far off in search of pleasure and of power/
I answered, 'till your gifts were almost spent,
One only left for this eleventh hour:

When I bethought me that from all I gained
An empty purse was mine and empty heart,
The little I had given alone remained,
I will arise, I said, I will depart:

This little I will give again and so,
Working my passage, to my home return,
I am expected there: they wait, I know,
At last I know, but I was slow to learn.'

'You enter late,' he said, 'yet, if you will,
Of what I gave, you can give something still.'

The Silent Singer

NO spirit stirs: no song is sung:
The book is shut: the singer sleeps:
The Master of the Music keeps
His instrument unstrung.

The elves and imps of passing day
Have notched and bruised that instrument
And all the singer's time have spent
On chasing them away.

Too weary now to read the book,
To catch the songs the spirit sighs,
To open heart or ears or eyes
He sleeps with leaden look.

Zacchaeus

JUST look at him cleverly climbing the tree:
He's made up his mind that he's going to see
The prophet in progress, although he's so little.
His name is Zacchaeus, our local lickspittle,
Chief farmer of taxes, blackmailer, and thief,
His villainies almost pass bounds of belief.

Well, here's Mr. Famous, I'll ask him to dinner.

He's stopped and called up to that miserable sinner.
What? going to dine there and stay the whole night?
Our Zacchy can't hold himself in for delight.

Giving up half his fortune ? paying fourfold each theft ?
He won't—he'd be beggared—not a penny'd be left:
But he's stung me a trifle—I'm off on his track—
While he's still in the mood, I'll have fortyfold back.

Prudence

PRUDENCE is thrifty, careful, sage,
She looks before she leaps,
Improves upon her heritage
And what she gets she keeps,
She sows in youth and in her age
The tidy harvest reaps.

Prudence is cowardly, selfish, sly,
A calculating miss:
The soul's adventures pass her by,
Hers is a sordid bliss,
There is no heaven in her eye,
No benison in her kiss.

The imprudent on their neighbours prey
(They call it God providing):
Only the imprudent lead the way
When daring is deciding:
Uneasily we swerve and sway
And seek a star for guiding.

Port Meadow

THE thin mist dulls my meadow, cattle browse
Like archetypal forms, single black birds
In short straight lines fly swiftly and arouse
Strange thoughts that find no counterpart in words.
Here is Blake's Beulah, threefold vision here,
Imagination's peace and calm repose,
Refreshment's country, poetry's atmosphere,
Which, passing single, twofold vision enclose.
Far on the other side the poplars dark,
So that I only guess their leaves still cling,
Remind me how too soon all bare and stark
They will rise watchful in their wintering:
So I leave Beulah for a land more stern,
But I have seasons too, I shall return.

The Frontier

THE frontier station: you may wait a minute
But mayn't stop in the train by which you came.
That train goes back and all your luggage in it.
Death is the station's name.

You can't see if your ticket is a through one ?
It's not a pleasant place to stay the night.
You wonder if that story was a true one
About a land of light

Just past the tunnel ? Is it terrifying
To have to part from everything you know ?
Or do you find the adventure of this dying
Worth while to undergo ?

The language ? That you'll need far more than money.
You haven't learnt it ? Yes, you were a fool.
But surely you can ask for milk and honey ?
You did a bit at school.

Here's your new train: good-bye: you're really in it.
Do give our love to any friends you see.
Good-bye. It's gone—all over in a minute-
Gone. Did I dream? Of me?

The Call

'LEAVE all and follow me'—that word
Perhaps with joy the Apostle heard—
Clean cut, a break with all the past,
Boats burnt, no further choice, die cast—
Many a man has gone to war
Glad to be rid of all that went before.

'Stay put and follow me'—that call
Is heard at heart by nearly all—
The same surroundings, curious eyes,
No drama, no high sacrifice,
Only dull duty and a sense
Of endless striving for obedience.

'Leave me to follow me'—that too
The holy soul has had to do,
Quit crying with the crowd 'Lord, Lord,'
For Conscience' sake denied the Word
And by a bitter road about
Obeyed the call, reached certainty through doubt.

Homo Sapiens

THE senses, which distinguish and select,
So doing, nearly everything reject—
 That is their mortal nature—
And God may smile when Homo will believe
Only in what the senses can perceive:
 He made the sapient creature.

The Leaf

I AM alive, a soul immortal, now,
And God and I are one as leaf and tree:
What though I waver on the windy bough?
Yet the great trunk with sap sustained! me.

The Note

THERE is a note played on a string,
There is a hue most delicate,
There is a movement of the spirit's wing,
For which I wait.

It comes and it is gone,
It leaves a gentle joy behind,
A hue half-seen, a near-remembered tone,
A rustle in the mind,

It is and is not, never was, still is:
I think it is the distant, distant beat
Of the world's heart, star-distant dust of bliss,
An Angel's distant feet.

Love

'LOVE thou art absolute, sole Lord'—
Ah many and many a secret hoard
Have I deep hidden from thy sight,
Depriving thee and me of right.
Love, from the very first I gave
Myself to be myselfs own slave
And knew no other way to live
But from my Lord a fugitive.
Love, from the very first I heaped
In secret cave whatever I reaped,
Nor knew that he who gave the power,
The seed, the plough, the fertile shower,
The ripening sun, the very ground
Had part or right in what I found.

'Love thou art absolute, sole Lord'—
Come, claim me, claim each secret hoard,
Claim each reluctant thought that still
Cries, Lord, not thy but my own will.
Set thou these feet upon thy track
Though obstinate they wander back.
In sudden moments, little things
Be present with thy pardonings:
In great decisions, choice of road
Be present, take on thee the load.
My prayer proceeds, it seems I crave
That I be master, thou the slave:
Yet are not they exalted so
Who serve thee, Lord, and with thee go ?

Epilogue

FULL late in spring my flowers came out,
Thin-scattered, one by one:
Then all was over: who could doubt
That fruit there would be none ?

Not lack of rain, not frost unmeet
Forbade the sap to spring:
It seems the very summer's heat
That stopped the ripening:

And now in autumn fruit of June
Appears with sudden haste,
Touched strangely by the harvest moon
And bitter-sweet to taste.

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