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AN  
ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN POETRY



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AN  
ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN  
POETRY

EDITED BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

ANYONE familiar with the well-known instances in literary history of ill-balanced and unsatisfactory criticisms of the works of contemporary poets will think many times before venturing to attempt an estimate either of the main tendencies of the poetry of to-day, or of the works of the leading modern poets. He should at all events be conscious that his estimate must inevitably be incomplete, tentative, and premature. What he says to-day he may himself feel called upon to modify to-morrow, and he may be certain that the coming generations will have something very different to say. Time and space have their own inscrutable and inexorable standards. Each day discovers a new prophet; but the generations and the centuries are cruel though just.

. . . . .

Victorian poetry, like the rest of Victorian literature, had been marked by what its arch-priest called "high seriousness." The Victorians took themselves seriously: they revered their art. They were intellectual, highly moral, and severely practical. The controversies over Religion and Science, High and Low Church, Catholic Emancipation, Positivism, Free Trade, left them no time for frivolity or light-heartedness. They extolled the solid virtues—self-help, duty, honesty, thrift. Poetry, too, was lofty in tone and theme, rarely trivial. The language employed by the poets was becoming once more dignified, pure, and impressive. As Flecker remarked in his essay on John Davidson, "The royal harmonies of 'Hyperion,' the falling cadences of Rossetti, the clear rustle of Tennyson's

measure, the impetuosity of Swinburne—spring from a nearly identical convention, rich and infinitely variable, which nevertheless yearly became more distant from the general language of mankind.” Exceptions there had been, it is true: Thackeray and Patmore, for instance. But in the main the typical Victorian poet expressed beautifully a comfortable philosophy of life. He had in his early years known mental distress, doubt, uncertainty, “strife divine.” The effort to recover from it and to effect a “compromise” ended in a belief in progress, in a liberalism that looked forward with confidence to the Federation of the World. God was in His Heaven, and all was right with the world. William Morris spoke

Of the wonderful days a-coming,  
When all shall be better than well.

Lord Morley, one of the most persuasive apologists of the Victorians, says: “The outcast and the poor are better tended. The prisoner knows more of mercy, and has better chances of a new start. Duelling has been transformed from folly to crime. The end of the greatest of civil wars—always the bitterest of wars—was followed by the widest of amnesties. Slavery has gone, or is going. The creatures below man may have souls or not—a question that brings us into dangerous dispute with churches and philosophies—either way, the spirit of compassion, justice, understanding, is more steadily extending to those dumb friends and oppressed servitors of ours, who have such strange resemblances to us in form, faculty and feeling.”

If the philosophical Radical be suspected of being too partial, here is the equally enthusiastic testimony

of a pessimist like George Gissing: "Often have the English people been at loggerheads among themselves, but they have never flown at each others' throats, and from every grave dispute has resulted some substantial gain. They are a cleaner people, and more sober; in every class there is a diminution of brutality; education has notably extended: certain forms of tyranny have been abolished; certain forms of suffering, due to heedlessness or ignorance, have been abated."

Such writers forgot or did not choose to remember that, in 1880, Henry George had written in the Preface to his *Progress and Poverty*: "So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury, and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent. The reaction must come. The tower leans from its foundation, and every new story but hastens the final catastrophe. To educate men who must be condemned to poverty is but to make them restive; to base on a state of most glaring social inequality political institutions under which men are theoretically equal, is to stand a pyramid on its apex."

But during the latter part of the reign of Victoria, optimism, belief in progress, complacency continued, and it was not until after the first decade of the present century that the rumble of discontent began to be clearly heard. The mood of midsummer ecstasy had been exhausted. Reaction inevitably set in.

. . . . .

Before 1914 is reached, however, we have to take note of the intervening period, and especially of the

eighteen-nineties—usually condemned as decadent, but in truth yielding an amazingly rich crop of poetry. It witnessed an æsthetic movement with which are associated the names of Lord Alfred Douglas, Ernest Dowson, Laurence Housman, Lionel Johnson, J. A. Symonds, Arthur Symonds, Francis Thompson, W. B. Yeats, Max Beerbohm, George Moore—an impressive list of artists, who, whatever their other qualities, were genuinely and passionately devoted to their craft. That several writers of that period were unfortunate in their private lives and died prematurely, that a few of them were drunkards or opium addicts, that at least one of them committed suicide—is irrelevant. Flaubert and Baudelaire had taught in France the glorification of Art as Art, irrespective of ethics: in the 'nineties the younger English writers spent all their energy and all their intellectual resources on formal perfection, on technical dexterity, and sought to widen the range of literature, even at the cost of depicting unsavoury subjects, sordid details, and the seamy side of life in general. Mr. Middleton Murry wonders if it was not a misfortune that the word "art" ever came to be mixed up with literature. At any rate, while in its content poetry was brought nearer to the homes and hearts of the masses, in form it was more exquisite, more "precious" than ever before. From this semi-artificial mode of expression a revolt was inevitable. The exotic hothouse air of Lord Alfred Douglas's

Steal from the meadows, rob the tall green hills,  
Ravish my orchard's blossoms, let me bind  
A crown of orchard flowers and daffodils,  
Because my love is fair and white and kind.

To-day the thrush has trilled her daintiest phrases,  
Flowers with their incense have made drunk the  
air,  
God has bent down to gild the heart of daisies,  
Because my love is kind and white and fair.

or of J. A. Symonds'

Fear not to tread; it is not much  
To bless the meadow with your touch;  
Nay, walk unshod; for, as you pass,  
The dust will take your feet like grass.  
O dearest melodies, O beat  
Of musically moving feet!

was bound to be rudely disturbed. Even during the 'nineties the first notes of rebellion were heard, if scarcely heeded. Mr. A. E. Housman's work created little or no impression when *A Shropshire Lad* appeared in 1896. And yet it was a portent. Gone was the smug self-satisfaction of the Victorians, the enthusiasm and ardour, the pride and easy optimism. In their place came discontent, resentment, not at anything ephemeral, temporary, or accidental, but at the "sorry scheme of things entire," at the very texture of the world.

Ay, look: high heaven and earth ail from the prime  
foundation;  
All thoughts to rive the heart are here, and all are  
vain.

The poet's self-restraint and avoidance of violent expression made his indictment seem all the more terrible and just. There was no way of escape; the shades of the prison-house were bound to close on

all mankind. But "Courage, lad, 'tis not for long," and death ends all human ills.

Oh, never fear, man, nought's to dread,  
Look not left nor right:  
In all the endless road you tread  
There's nothing but the night.

Rudyard Kipling's career began while Tennyson's mellifluous voice was still heard, and Browning's verse was at last receiving justice. FitzGerald's spell was spreading; the half-sceptical melancholy, the vague longing for the pleasures of the flesh mingled with a Stoic philosophy, made the Persian Omar an English classic. Other conspicuous figures were those of Morris, Swinburne, and Meredith. Mediæval romance, "chaos illumined by lightning," the sheer intoxication of verbal music and rhythm, the blend of psychology and fancy—these captivated the public for a few years. Kipling, so utterly different in method and theme, had to bear the brunt of the attack on the moderns. His earlier poems were matter-of-fact, practical, business-like; they did not imagine so much as observe. They were full of the humour, pathos, tragedy, romance, of everyday; they were leaves out of the book of actual life. To many people Kipling's manner seemed jarring, harsh and crude, and his ideals purely materialistic. He employed many Cockney expressions, many phrases peculiar to the "Tommy", or private soldier, of the day, many words which Anglo-Indians alone could understand. He wrote as his characters would speak, with all their vulgarisms and abbreviations. All this was new, and Kipling suffered grievously for his innovations for a time.

When Thomas Hardy forsook the novel for poetry, he employed the dramatic lyric with even greater success, perhaps, than Browning, though his lack of melody, and what seems at times a deliberate uncouthness of phrase, have always limited the number of his admirers. For the purposes of a number of his poems he adapted the technique of the reporter, merely reproducing a conversation without any explicit comment. Mr. Wilfrid Gibson, whose first volume of poems appeared in 1900, began in the approved Victorian style of pseudo-romanticism; but by the year 1905 he had cast off this superficial veneer and asserted his own personality. Since the publication of *The Web of Life* in 1908 he has dealt as no other poet has with the subjects and people that poetry usually ignores—workmen, miners, shopkeepers, unemployed, incidents of the colliery, the factory, the street, even the workhouse and the battlefield. Hard-working men and women, their little dreams, their humble aspirations: the fight for their daily bread, their courage and manliness; their generous impulses and loving-kindness: these soon became his chosen themes. He is the Poet of his own recent poem:

His was no easy eloquence—  
Not his the volubility  
Of volatile vacuity:  
So much he had to say,  
Such crowded news he gathered by the way,  
That his tongue stammered, struggling with a  
    sense  
Of the unutterable opulence  
And unimaginable magnificence  
Of every day.

It is this "unimaginable magnificence of every day" which struck the poets whose realism was before long to cause something of a scandal. It was not because they took a particular delight in startling the general reader, but because they felt with regard to their subject-matter that, in Meredith's words:

These things are life,  
And life, some think, is worthy of the Muse.

It is, indeed, the supreme achievement of the modern poet that underneath the outward ugliness he hears the heart of the Beautiful palpitating in harmony with all that is good and lovely.

In 1911 appeared *The Everlasting Mercy* by the present Poet Laureate, Mr. John Masefield. It immediately created a sensation. His latest biographer, Mr. Gilbert Thomas, says, "It disturbed both the surface and the hidden depths. It carried Mr. Kipling's literary method further than its originator himself had done. But it not only wrinkled the smooth bosom of the lake; it probed to the mud of conventional and stagnant morality beneath." Some described it as a work of genius, others as a blatant piece of vulgarity. The significant fact is that it dwelt upon ugliness, if not with satisfaction, certainly with no disgust; that it mingled loveliness with grime; that blackguardism and godliness were both found in the same individual; that gross words and "swear words" and tabooed words were employed. Yet, as the story is one of sin in all its phases and of redemption, such language is appropriate in the passages that speak of Saul Kane's transgressions, even as a shining simplicity is appropriate

to the exquisite lines with which the tale of eternal mercy ends:

O lovely lily clean,  
O lily springing green,  
O lily bursting white,  
Dear lily of delight,  
Spring in my heart agen  
That I may flower to men.

Kipling, A. E. Housman, Thomas Hardy, Wilfrid Gibson, and Masfield anticipated and determined the main tendencies of what has been called the Georgian School of poetry.

With a wonderful sensitiveness to popular feelings, never more striking than during the years immediately preceding the War, Mr. Lloyd George said once in course of a speech: "You have hundreds of thousands of men working unceasingly for wages that barely bring them enough bread to keep themselves and their families above privation. Generation after generation they see their children wither before their eyes for lack of air, light, and space, which is denied them by men who have square miles for their own use. Take our cities, the great cities of a great Empire. Right in the heart of them everywhere you have ugly quagmires of human misery, seething, rotting, at last fermenting. We pass them by every day on our way to our comfortable homes. . . . You can hear, carried by the breezes from the North, the South, the East and the West, ominous rumbling." This was before the War, and Georgian Poetry came into

prominence two years before that world-conflagration and was indeed independent of it. The War opened men's eyes. They saw their comfortable fictions fail. Disillusionment came. And a nervous, fearful people realised that the music-makers had indeed a truer vision, that they had read the riddle aright. Recognition and popularity the Georgian poets now received in abundant measure. Indeed, appreciation became unreflecting, and praise was transformed into adulation. The wheel had come full circle.

A well-informed critic divides the moderns into seven groups—the Philosophers, consisting of Lascelles Abercrombie, Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, Harold Monro, John Masefield; the Realists, comprising Wilfrid Gibson, Siegfried Sassoon, W. H. Davies; the Fantastics, including Walter de la Mare, Ralph Hodgson, Robert Graves, James Stephens; the Exotics, consisting of Gordon Bottomley, J. E. Flecker, and D. H. Lawrence; the Critic Poets, such as J. C. Squire, John Freeman, Edmund Blunden; the Imagists, including Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, and F. S. Flint; and finally, the “Wheels” group consisting of Edith Sitwell and her brothers Osbert and Sacheverell, and Aldous Huxley. This division is not altogether satisfactory, but it helps to focus attention on the wonderful diversity of modern poetry, its varied aims and ideals, and its main characteristics. To the question whether the moderns can rightly be said to form a school, two answers have been given, each by an eminent scholar. Sir Edmund Gosse says: “The poets who have become prominent in the present century are remarkable for their general

identity. They form a school in a degree which has rarely been seen in this country." On the other hand, Professor Gilbert Murray insists that "each writer has his own special quality and character, and hardly any two of them are much alike. There is no remotest sign of a school, a clique, or a coterie. These writers are not Futurists, nor Unanimists, nor Parosysts, nor Asphysiasts, nor members of any other rising doctrinal body. They have written as suited them best, and their work has been judged for its poetry, not for its tendency."

To the extent that each poet has his own individuality, we may object to the use of the terms "school" and "group." But in point of time, if nothing else, they must all be considered together. What can be more dissimilar than the torrent and storm in Marlowe, and the serenity and sweetness of Spenser; the artistic lawlessness of Shakespeare and the dull classicalism of Jonson; the grace and studied elegance of Lyly and the sententious brevity of Bacon? Yet we usually classify them all as Elizabethans. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Shelley, Southey, Keats, Byron, how little they have in common, yet they all belong to the Romantic school. There is nothing to be frightened of in a label. The characteristic features of the work of Masfield are different from those of W. H. Davies. No poets can be more dissimilar than Blunden and Ezra Pound. But none the less they are Georgians, and there is something in the work of each of them that brands them so. One naturally does not think of poets who adhere to the classical tradition—poets like Maurice Baring, William Watson, and Lascelles Abercrombie; these seem uninfluenced

by the spirit of the age. But for the rest the years 1910-1930 are writ large on their work.

The origin of the name "Georgian" is to be traced to the year 1912, when a volume of less than two hundred pages was published in the month of December. It was entitled *Georgian Poetry*, and contained poems by Rupert Brooke, Lascelles Abercrombie, Robert Graves, and John Masefield among others. The editor, Edward Marsh, said that he believed that "English poetry is now once again putting on a new strength and beauty." Whether the new poets were to achieve much as regards quality was yet to be proved, but in quantity they amply demonstrated that poetry was very much alive. During the eight years 1912-1920, no fewer than a thousand poets published volumes of their work. There was no doubt that poetry had once more gained popular favour. Helicon was flooded.

There can be little question that the moderns are, despite all their apparent carelessness, skilled artificers of verse. So far as technique is concerned they are almost as meticulous as the most conscious artist of the 'nineties. Robert Graves divides them into three groups, and distinguishes their verse thus: "With the Conservative the prosody is always that of the five iambic feet and the cæsura that can have only three legitimate places. Variations are permitted only in the case of awkwardly-scanning proper names, or occasional moments of passion or dramatic pause, or heavy humour. The extra syllable at the end is regarded as a decadence. The Liberal seldom uses blank verse, but when he does, justifies his greater variation,

occasional trochees, dactyls or anapæsts instead of iambs, and frequent feminine endings, by Shakespeare's later tragedies. The Left Wing may do almost anything to blank verse, and does. The way to do it, is to do it." This is a useful division, though it refers almost exclusively to the use of blank verse. There are many verse experimenters, not all of them equally successful. Several old metres have been revived. The octosyllabic couplet, for instance, is used with remarkable skill by recent writers, as for example Mr. Gerald Cumberland:

For me life has no joys but these:  
To search for new discoveries,

To burn my flesh at life's great fire,  
To quench my soul of its desire.

To rise upon ambition's wings  
To risk my life for gorgeous things.

But new discoveries soon blend  
With stale regret, and then they end.

The heroic couplet associated with Pope has also made a sudden return to favour.

Alike in verse and prose the great tendency of the present day is to rend all veils. The young writer of to-day looks back on the disaster which earlier generations brought upon the world in the shape of the Great War. Their civilisation had collapsed. The smooth shows of diplomacy had covered the savagest jealousies and hatred. Organised religion had encouraged destruction. Governments, churches, parties, newspapers had deluded and betrayed those who trusted

them. The generation that has been born to the resulting heritage of debt and disenchantment is determined to destroy the entire fabric that has proved not only its worthlessness but its dangerous character. Down with the old men! Down with the past! And above all away with all reticences! Let everything be openly discussed. These feelings manifest themselves in the outspokenness which is such a feature of contemporary literature, though they do not palliate excesses that are often a mere offence against ordinary decency.

One may observe next the fondness for irregular patterns, and sentences left incomplete; for pictorial representation, thereby approximating to the cinematograph; for concrete objects rather than abstract ideas. As Mr. Herbert Read remarks: "The modern poet does not deny the right of regular verse to exist, or to be poetic. He merely affirms that poetry is sincerity, and has no essential alliance with regular schemes of any sort. He reserves the right to adapt his rhythm to his mood, to modulate his metre as he progresses." This freedom is perhaps best illustrated by one or two examples:

Himself  
And the element.  
Food, of course!  
Water-eager eyes,  
Mouth-gate open  
And strong spine urging, driving;  
And desirous belly gulping  
(D. H. Lawrence's "Fish.").

He'd even havè his joke  
While we were sitting tight,  
And so he needs must poke  
His silly head in sight

To whisper some new jest,  
Chortling, but as he spoke  
A rifle cracked . . .  
And now God knows when I shall hear the rest.  
(Wilfrid Gibson's "The Joke.")

A wail.  
Lights. Blurr.  
Gone.  
On, on. Lead. Lead. Hail.  
Spatter. Whirr! Whirr!  
*"Towards that patch of brown;  
Direction left*  
(Robert Nichols' "The Assault.")

When one seeks for some unity of thought in modern poetry, one is bewildered by apparent inconsistencies and contradictions. Even a single poet is not always consistent, much less a whole generation of poets. But the observation may be hazarded that disillusionment is its predominant note. A glory and a loveliness have faded from life and man. The poet is depressed that there should be so much ugliness and misery. He realises the contrast between what is and what might be. The tyranny of the mere thing has gripped him, and he groans under it. Machinery, man-made machinery crushes life out of man, and all beauty is smothered. Man and woman and child are all alike becoming slaves to the machine. Deliberately man plots his spiritual ruin. "These be thy gods, O Israel!" Little wonder that, seeing thus beneath the surface of things, the poets of to-day write in a melancholy strain—but it is not a luxurious melancholy in the manner of Keats and Shelley, they are not dejected as Coleridge was dejected, nor depressed as Byron

fancied himself to be. It is not a self-induced condition, it is forced upon them from without.

There may be some exaggeration or mistake in taking such a serious view of life. But none can deny the honesty and sincerity of these writers. If in the attempt to be true to experience the poet appears to concentrate on the uglier aspects of life, his explanation is, in Rupert Brooke's words: "There are common and sordid things—situations or details—that may suddenly bring all tragedy, or at least the brutality of actual emotions, to you. I rather grasp relievedly at them, after I have beaten vain hands in the rosy mists of poets' experiences."

Connected with this feature, and indeed part of it, is the poets' sense of the irony of life, and the curious mingling of light-hearted frivolity and deep feeling. The burthen of their songs is that "the world's more full of weeping than you can understand." Thomas Hardy is so persistently struck by the horror of the passage of time, by the miseries and griefs and losses which are mankind's inheritance, by the inevitableness of tragedy—that he is, despite his vehement protests, one of the major poets of pessimism in English, as he shows in the poem entitled "To Life":

O Life with the sad, seared face,  
I weary of seeing thee,  
And thy draggled cloak, and thy hobbling  
pace,  
And thy too-forced pleasantry!

I know what thou wouldst tell,  
Of Death, Time, Destiny—  
I have known it long, and know, too, well  
What it all means for me.

But canst thou not array  
Thyself in rare disguise,  
And feign like truth, for one mad day,  
That Earth is Paradise?

I'll tune me to the mood,  
And mum with thee till eve,  
And maybe what as interlude  
I feign, I shall believe!

Among other characteristics may be mentioned the return to nature (as in the work of Edmund Blunden), the habit of sharp contrast and anti-climax, and fondness for the distant and the romantic. One may find examples in Ralph Hodgson's "The Gipsy Girl:"

She fawned and whined "Sweet gentleman,  
A penny for three tries!"  
—But oh, the den of wild things in  
The darkness of her eyes!

or in W. H. Davies' "The Likeness:"

That flock of sheep, on the green grass,  
Well might it lie so still and proud.  
Its likeness had been drawn in heaven,  
On a blue sky, in silvery cloud.

to illustrate the pictorial quality of some modern poetry. The use of contrast is admirably shown in Masfield's "Cargoes" and in some well-known lines by Wilfrid Gibson:

Snug in my easy chair,  
I stirred the fire to flame,  
Fantastically fair  
The flickering fancies came,

Born of heart's desire—  
Amber woodlands streaming;  
Topaz islands dreaming;  
Sunset-cities gleaming,  
Spire on burning spire;  
Ruddy-windowed taverns;  
Sunshine-spilling wines;  
Crystal-lighted caverns  
Of Golconda's mines. . . .

Till, dazzled by the drowsy glare,  
I shut my eyes to heat and light,  
And saw in sudden night,  
Crouched in the dripping dark  
With steaming shoulders stark,  
The man who hews the coal to  
    feed my fire.

Very great departure in technique, and considerable change in theme and outlook—these mark out modern poetry. In so far as the language tends to approximate more closely to the language of everyday life, it is an advance in the right direction and makes poetry more valuable for the masses and not merely the pleasure of the cultured few. But when the theme is elevated and the poet does not deal with commonplace and vulgar subjects, the language is exalted, suggestive and rich in those qualities that mark the genuine song. For proof we need only quote Walter de la Mare's:

Very old are we men;  
    Our dreams are tales  
Told in dim Eden  
    By Eve's nightingales;  
We wake and whisper a while,  
    But, the day gone by,  
Silence and sleep like fields  
    Of amaranth lie.

## Or Rupert Brooke's:

O world of lips, O world of laughter,  
Where hope is fleet and thought flies  
after,  
Of lights in the clear night, of cries  
That drift along the wave and rise  
Thence to the glittering stars above,  
You know the hands, the eyes of love!

When we consider the content we are on surer ground. The poet of to-day has enlarged the range of poetry and has an outlook which differs materially from that of his forbears. He is less preoccupied by the beauty of the earth than by the harsh destiny and unfathomable heart of man. He dwells not on realism but on reality, as Lord Dunsany puts it. He looks below and above and bewails the gulf between. How sweet and pure and lovely are men's dreams; and how dark and ugly their life. The end of poetry that concentrates on these themes is precisely the same as that of the poetry of earlier ages, though the method is different. In all its phases, after laughter and sorrow and scorn and rage, after storm and tempest, one notices in the typical poetry of to-day a strain of tenderness, sympathy, and compassion. The cynicism is only surface-deep. The passionate rage is the outcome of pity. Pity, understanding, the desire and the power to find fit utterance for all the secrets of men's hearts—these have been the highest gifts of the poet since the world's history began.

AMARANATHA JHA.



## I.—VITA NUOVA

I WATCHED you in the distance tall and  
pale,

Like a swift swallow in a pearly sky;  
Your eyelids drooped like petals wearily,  
Your face was like a lily of the vale.  
You had the softness of all Summer days,  
The silver radiance of the twilight hour,  
The mystery of bluebell-haunted ways,  
The passion of the white syringa's flower.

I watched you, and I knew that I had  
found

The long-delaying, long-expected Spring;  
I knew my heart had found a tune to sing;  
That strength to soar was in my spirit's  
wing;

That life was full of a triumphant sound,  
That death could only be a little thing.

*Maurice Baring.*

## II.—THE FANATIC

LAST night in Compton Street, Soho,  
A man whom many of you know  
Gave up the ghost at half-past nine.  
That evening he had been to dine  
At Gressington's—an act unwise,  
But not the cause of his demise.  
The doctors all agree that he  
Was touched with cardiac atrophy  
Accelerated (more or less)  
By lack of proper food, distress,  
Uncleanliness, and loss of sleep.

He was a man that could not keep  
His money (when he had the same)  
Because of creditors who came  
And took it from him; and he gave  
So freely that he could not save.

But all the while a sort of whim  
Persistently remained with him,  
Half admirable, half absurd:  
To keep his word, to keep his word. . .  
By which he did not mean what you  
And I would mean (of payments due  
Or punctual rental of the Flat—  
He was a deal too mad for that),  
But—as he put it with a fine  
Abandon, foolish or divine—  
But “That great word which every man

Gave God before his life began.”

It was a sacred word, he said,  
Which comforted the pathless dead  
And made God smile when it was shown  
Unforfeited, before the Throne.  
And this (he said) he meant to hold  
In spite of debt, and hate, and cold;  
And this (he said) he meant to show  
As passport to the Wards below.  
He boasted of it and gave praise  
To his own self through all his days.

He wrote a record to preserve  
How steadfastly he did not swerve  
From keeping it; how stiff he stood  
Its guardian, and maintained it good.  
He had two witnesses to swear  
He kept it once in Berkeley Square  
(Where hardly anything survives)  
And, through the loneliest of lives,  
He kept it clean, he kept it still,  
Down to the last extremes of ill.

So when he died, of many friends  
Who came in crowds from all the ends  
Of London, that it might be known  
They knew the man who died alone,  
Some, who had thought his mood sublime  
And sent him soup from time to time,  
Said, “Well, you cannot make them fit  
The world, and there’s an end of it!”

But others, wondering at him, said:  
“The man that kept his word is dead!”

Then angrily, a certain third  
Cried, “Gentlemen, he kept his word.  
And as a man whom beasts surround  
Tumultous, on a little mound  
Stands Archer, for one dreadful hour,  
Because a Man is born to Power—  
And still, to daunt the pack below,  
Twangs the clear purpose of his bow,  
Till overwhelmed he dares to fall:  
So stood this bulwark of us all.  
He kept his word as none but he  
Could keep it, and as did not we.  
And round him as he kept his word  
To-day’s diseased and faithless herd,  
A moment loud, a moment strong,  
But foul forever, rolled along.”

*Hilaire Belloc.*

### III.—THE MOCKERY OF LIFE

#### I

God! What a mockery is this life of ours!  
Cast forth in blood and pain from our mother's  
womb,

Most like an excrement, and weeping showers  
Of senseless tears; unreasoning, naked, dumb,  
The symbol of all weakness and the sum:  
Our very life a sufferance.—Presently,  
Grown stronger, we must fight for standing-room  
Upon the earth, and the bare liberty  
To breathe and move. We crave the right to  
toil.

We push, we strive, we jostle with the rest.  
We learn new courage, stifle our old fears,  
Stand with stiff backs, take part in every broil.  
It may be that we love, that we are blest.  
It may be, for a little space of years,  
We conquer fate and half forget our tears.

#### II

And then fate strikes us. First our joys decay.  
Youth, with its pleasures, is a tale soon told.  
We grow a little poorer day by day.  
Old friendships falter. Loves grow strangely  
cold.

In vain we shift our hearts to a new hold  
And barter joy for joy, the less for less.  
We doubt our strength, our wisdom, and our  
gold.  
We stand alone, as in a wilderness  
Of doubts and terrors. Then, if we be wise,  
We make our terms with fate and, while we  
may,  
Sell our life's last sad remnant for a hope.  
And it is wisdom thus to close our eyes.  
But for the foolish, those who cannot pray,  
What else remains of their dark horoscope  
But a tall tree and courage and a rope?

### III

And who shall tell what ignominy death  
Has yet in store for us; what abject fears  
Even for the best of us; what fights for breath;  
What sobs, what supplications, what wild  
tears;  
What impotence of soul against despairs  
Which blot out reason?—The last trembling  
thought  
Of each poor brain, as dissolution nears,  
Is not of fair life lost, of Heaven bought  
And glory won. 'Tis not the thought of grief;  
Of friends deserted; loving hearts which bleed;  
Wives, sisters, children who around us weep.

But only a mad clutching for relief  
From physical pain, importunate Nature's need;  
The search as for a womb where we may creep  
Back from the world, to hide,—perhaps to sleep.

*W. S. Blunt.*

#### IV.—“THE STORM IS OVER”

THE storm is over, the land hushes to rest:  
The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,  
Is fallen back in the west  
To couch with the sinking sun.  
The last clouds fare  
With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly  
In melting drifts of the sky.  
Already the birds in the air  
Appear again; the rooks return to their haunt,  
And one by one,  
Proclaiming aloud their care,  
Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches  
again reset,  
They trim afresh the fair  
Few green and golden leaves withheld from the  
storm,  
And awhile will be handsome yet.  
To-morrow's sun shall caress  
Their remnant of loveliness:  
In quiet days for a time  
Sad Autumn lingering warm  
Shall humour their faded prime.

But ah! the leaves of summer that lie on the  
ground!

What havoc! The laughing timbrels of June,  
That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened  
    their song,  
That sheltered the cooing doves at noon,  
Of airy fans the delicate throng,—  
Torn and scattered around:  
Far out afield they lie,  
In the watery furrows die,  
In grass pools of the flood they sink and drown,  
Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and  
    brown,  
The high year's flaunting crown  
Shattered and trampled down.

The day is done: the tired land looks for night:  
She prays to the night to keep  
In peace her nerves of delight:  
While silver mist upstealeth silently,  
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear  
    sky  
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,  
And in her tranquil light  
Sleep falls on forest and field.  
Sée! sléep hath fallen: the trees are asleep:  
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

*Robert Bridges.*

## V.—ASIAN BIRDS

IN this May-month, by grace  
of heaven, things shoot apace.  
The waiting multitude  
of fair boughs in the wood,  
How few days have arrayed  
their beauty in green shade.

What have I seen or heard?  
it was the yellow bird  
Sang in the tree: he flew  
a flame against the blue;  
Upward he flashed. Again,  
hark! 'tis his heavenly strain.

Another! Hush! Behold,  
many, like boats of gold,  
From waving branch to branch  
their airy bodies launch.  
What music is like this,  
where each note is a kiss?

The golden willows lift  
their boughs the sun to sift:  
Their sprays they droop to screen  
the sky with veils of green,  
A floating cage of song,  
where feathered lovers throng.

How the delicious notes  
    come bubbling from their throats!  
Full and sweet how they are shed  
    like round pearls from a thread!  
The motions of their flight  
    are wishes of delight.

Hearing their song I trace  
    the secret of their grace.  
Ah, could I this fair time  
    so fashion into rhyme,  
The poem that I sing  
    would be the voice of spring.

*Robert Bridges.*

## VI.—THE GREAT LOVER

I HAVE been so great a lover: filled my days  
So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise,  
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,  
Desire illimitable, and still content,  
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,  
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear  
Our hearts at random down the dark of life.  
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife  
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,  
My night shall be remembered for a star  
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.  
Shall I not crown them with immortal praise  
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared  
with me

High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see  
The inenarrable godhead of delight?  
Love is a flame;—we have beaconed the world's  
night.

A city:—and we have built it, these and I.  
An emperor:—we have taught the world to die.  
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,  
And the high cause of Love's magnificence,  
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those  
names

Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,  
And set them as a banner, that men may know,  
To dare the generations, burn, and blow

Out on the wind of 'Time, shining and  
streaming. . . .

These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,  
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;  
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong  
crust

Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;  
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;  
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;  
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny  
hours,

Dreaming of moths that drink them under the  
moon;

Then, the cool kindness of sheets, that soon  
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss  
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is  
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen  
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;  
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;  
The good smell of old clothes; and other such—  
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,  
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers  
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .

Dear names,  
And thousand other throng to me! Royal flames;  
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;

Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing;  
Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,  
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting  
train;  
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam  
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes  
home;  
And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold  
Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mould;  
Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;  
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-  
new;  
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on  
grass;—  
All these have been my loves. And these shall  
pass,  
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,  
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power  
To hold them with me through the gate of  
Death.  
They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor  
breath,  
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's  
trust  
And sacramented covenant to the dust.  
—Oh, never a doubt but; somewhere, I shall  
wake,  
And give what's left of love again, and make  
New friends, now strangers. . . .

But the best I've known  
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is  
blown  
About the winds of the world, and fades from  
brains  
Of living men, and dies.

Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again  
This one last gift I give: that after men  
Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed,  
Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He  
loved."

*Rupert Brooke.*

## VII.—“TEACH ‘ME A SONG”

### I

TEACH me a song which shall possess the  
night,  
Shall hush the nightingale from her sad lays,  
And charm the restless moon to still delight;  
A song that, trembling down from phrase to  
phrase,  
From sweetness into sweetness, yet shall  
move  
Towards the looked-for, final close of love.

### II

Teach me a song so sad with memory,  
So wild with hope, so keen with love's pure  
fire,  
An angel hearing it, shall wish to be  
Human and capable of vain desire,  
Foolish like me, by mine own passions  
wrung,  
That he may sing but once as I have sung.

### III.

Teach me a song shall sound above the stars,  
Out-distance time and drown the noise of  
doom;

One that shall triumph past the golden bars  
Of heaven, and past the silence of the tomb;  
One that shall crowd all space, beneath,  
    above,  
With the full volume of the praise of love.

*A. Clutton-Brock.*

## VIII.—EGYPT'S MIGHT

EGYPT'S might is tumbled down  
Down a-down the deeps of thought;  
Greece is fallen and Troy town,  
Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,  
Venice' pride is nought.

But the dreams their children dreamed,  
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,  
Shadowy as the shadows seemed,  
Airy nothing, as they deemed,  
These remain.

*Mary E. Coleridge.*

## IX.—AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

O, to have a little house!  
To own the hearth and stool and all!  
The heaped-up sods upon the fire,  
The pile of turf again' the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains,  
And pendulum swinging up and down!  
A dresser filled with shining delph,  
Speckled with white and blue and  
brown!

I could be busy all the day  
Cleaning and sweeping hearth and floor,  
And fixing on their shelf again  
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night  
Beside the fire and by myself,  
Sure of a bed, and loth to leave  
The ticking clock and shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,  
And roads where there's never a house  
or bush,  
And tired I am of bog and road,  
And the crying wind and the lonesome  
hush!

And I am praying to God on high,  
And I am praying Him night and day,  
For a little house—a house of my own—  
Out of the wind's and rain's way.

*Padraic Colum.*

## X.—THE TWO CHILDREN

“ Ah, little boy! I see  
    You have a wooden spade.  
    Into this sand you dig  
    So deep—for what?” I said.  
“ There’s more rich gold,” said he,  
    “ Down under where I stand,  
    Than twenty elephants  
    Could move across the land.”

“ Ah, little girl with wool!—  
    What are you making now?”  
“ Some stockings for a bird,  
    To keep his legs from snow.”  
And there those children are,  
    So happy, small, and proud:  
The boy that digs his grave,  
    The girl that knits her shroud.

*W. H. Davies.*

## XI.—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.

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

*W. H. Davies.*

## XII.—ON EXPECTING SOME BOOKS

TO-MORROW they will come. I know  
How rich their sweet contents are, so  
Upon their dress let Fancy play—  
Will it be blue, red, green or grey?  
Sweet Books that I have oft heard named,  
And seen stand up like blossoms framed,  
Through many a common window shown—  
When I was moneyless in town;  
But never touched their leaves, nor bent  
Close to them and inhaled their scent.  
They'll come like snowdrops to a Bee  
That, tired of empty dreams, can see  
Real flowers at last. Until this time,  
Now on the threshold of my prime,  
I did not guess my poverty;  
That none of these rich Books, that lie  
Untouched on many a shelf—save when  
A housemaid, dreaming of young men  
And music, sport, and dance, and dress,  
Will bang them for their dustiness—  
That none of these were in my care;  
To-morrow I will have them here.  
Well do I know their value; they  
Will not be purses found, which may  
Be full of coppers, nails or keys—  
They will not disappoint, like these.  
Books I can always trust; for they

Will not tell neighbours what I say,  
What time I go to bed and rise,  
What eat and drink. They'll make no  
cries

For cloth to suit the season; no  
Oft going out, to make me grow  
Jealous of their long absence. When  
I'm visited by living men,  
They will not sulk and cast black looks  
When left unflattered. These sweet Books  
Will not be heard to grumble that  
I keep the room too cold or hot:  
The one in leather will not chide  
To feel a cloth one touch his side.  
O may their coming never cease!  
May my book-family increase;  
Clothes, pictures, ornaments of show,  
Trinkets and mirrors—these can go  
Outside, that all my Books may be  
Together in one room with me.

*W. H. Davies.*

### XIII.—TRULY GREAT

My 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 but 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.

*W. H. Davies.*

#### XIV.—MARTHA

“ONCE . . . once upon a time . . .”

Over and over again,  
Martha would tell us her stories,  
In the hazel glen.

Hers were those clear, grey eyes  
You watch, and the story seems  
Told by their beautifulness  
Tranquil as dreams.

She'd sit with her two slim hands  
Clasped round her bended knees;  
While we on our elbows lolled,  
And stared at ease.

Her voice and her narrow chin,  
Her grave, small, lovely head,  
Seemed half the meaning  
Of the words she said.

“Once . . . once upon a time . . .”

Like a dream you dream in the  
night,  
Fairies and gnomes stole out  
In the leaf-green light.

And her beauty far away  
Would fade, as her voice ran on,

Till hazel and summer sun  
And all were gone:—

All fordone and forgot;  
And like clouds in the height of  
the sky,  
Our hearts stood still in the hush  
Of an age gone by.

*Walter de la Mare.*

## XV.—THE LISTENERS

“Is there anybody there?” said the Traveller,  
Knocking on the moonlit door;  
And his horse in the silence champed the  
grasses  
Of the forest’s ferny floor;  
And a bird flew up out of the turret,  
Above the Traveller’s head:  
And he smote upon the door again a second  
time;  
“Is there anybody there?” he said.  
But no one descended to the Traveller;  
No head from the leaf-fringed sill  
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,  
Where he stood perplexed and still.  
But only a host of phantom listeners  
That dwelt in the lone house then  
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight  
To that voice from the world of men:  
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the  
dark stair,  
That goes down to the empty hall,  
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken  
By the lonely Traveller’s call.  
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,  
Their stillness answering his cry,  
While his horse moved, cropping the dark  
turf,

'Neath the starred and leafy sky;  
For he suddenly smote on the door, even  
Louder, and lifted his head:—  
“Tell them I came, and no one answered,  
That I kept my word,” he said.  
Never the least stir made the listeners,  
Though every word he spake  
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the  
still house  
From the one man left awake:  
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,  
And the sound of iron on stone,  
And how the silence surged softly backward,  
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

*Walter de la Mare.*

## XVI.—FORGETFULNESS

ALAS! that Time should war against Distress,  
And numb the sweet ache of remembered loss,  
And give for sorrow's gold the indifferent dross  
Of calm regret or stark forgetfulness.  
I should have worn eternal mourning dress  
And nailed my soul to some perennial cross,  
And made my thoughts like restless waves that  
    toss  
On the wild sea's intemperate wilderness.

But lo! came Life, and with its painted toys  
Lured me to play again like any child.  
O pardon me this weak inconstancy.  
May my soul die if in all present joys,  
Lapped in forgetfulness or sense-beguiled,  
Yea, in my mirth if I prefer not thee.

*Lord Alfred Douglas.*

## XVII.—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

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.

*John Drinkwater.*

## XVIII.—WAR SONG OF THE SARACENS

WE are they who come faster than fate: we are  
they who ride early or late:

We storm at your ivory gate: Pale Kings of the  
Sunset, beware!

Not on silk nor in samet we lie, not in curtained  
solemnity die

Among women who chatter and cry, and children  
who mumble a prayer.

But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we  
rise with a shout, and we tramp

With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the  
spray of the wind in our hair.

From the lands where the elephants are, to the  
forts of Merou and Balghar,

Our steel we have brought and our star to shine  
on the ruins of Rum.

We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and  
by God we will go there again;

We have stood on the shore of the plain where  
the Waters of Destiny boom.

A mart of destruction we made at Jalulā where  
men were afraid,

For death was a difficult trade, and the sword was  
a broker of doom;

And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured  
not a few of ambition,  
And drave not a few to perdition with medicine  
bitter and strong:  
And the shield was a grief to the fool and as  
bright as a desolate pool,  
And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when  
their cavalry thundered along:  
For the coward was drowned with the brave  
when our battle sheered up like a wave,  
And the dead to the desert we gave, and the  
glory to God in our song.

*J. E. Flecker.*

## XIX.—LA VIE CEREBRALE

I AM alone, alone,  
There is nothing—only I;  
And, when I come to die  
All must be gone.

Eternal thought in me  
Puts on the dress of time  
And builds a stage to mime  
Its listless tragedy.

And in that dress of time  
And on that stage of space  
I place, change, and replace  
Life to a wilful rhyme.

I summon at my whim  
All things that are, that were:  
The high incredible air  
Where stars—my creatures—swim.

I dream and from my mind  
The dead, the living come;  
I build a marble Rome,  
I give it to the wind.

Athens and Babÿlon  
I breathe upon the night,  
Troy towers for my delight  
And crumbles stone by stone.

I change with white and green  
The seasons hour by hour;  
I think—it is a flower,  
Think—and the flower has been.

Men, women, things, a stream  
That wavers and flows by,  
A lonely dreamer, I  
Build and cast down the dream.

And one day, weary grown  
Of all my brain has wrought,  
I shall destroy my thought  
And I and all be gone.

*Robin Flower.*

## XX.—ERRANTRY

COME! Let us lay a crazy lance in rest,  
And tilt at windmills under a wild sky!  
For who would live so petty and unblest  
That dare not tilt at something ere he die,  
Rather than, screened by safe majority,  
Preserve his little life to little ends,  
And never raise a rebel battle-cry!

Ah! for the weapon wistful and sublime,  
Whose lifted point recks naught of woe or  
weal,  
Since Fate demands it shivered every time!  
When in the wildness of our charge we reel  
Men laugh indeed—the sweeter heavens  
smile,  
For all the world of fat prosperity  
Has not the value of that broken steel!

Ah! for the summons of a challenge cry  
Which sets to swinging fast the bell that  
tolls  
The high and leaping chimes of sympathy  
Within that true cathedral of our souls  
Set in our bodies' jeering market-place—  
So crystal-clear, the shepherd's wayward  
pipe  
From feasts his cynical soft sheep cajoles.

God save the pennon, ragged to the dawn,  
That signs to moon to stand, and sun to fly;  
And flutters when the weak is overborne  
To stem the tide of fate and certainty.  
That knows not reason, and that seeks no  
fame—

But has engraved around its stubborn wood  
The words: "Knight-Errant, till Eternity!"

So! Undismayed beneath the serried clouds,  
Raise up the banner of forlorn defence—  
A jest to the complacency of crowds—  
Bright-haloed with the one diviner sense:  
To hold itself as nothing to itself;  
And in the quest of its imagined star  
To lose all thought of after-recompense!

*John Galsworthy.*

## XXI.—THE SHOP

TIN-Tinkle-Tinkle-Tinkle went the bell  
As I pushed in, and, once again, the smell  
Of groceries and news-sheets freshly printed  
That always greeted me when I looked in  
To buy my evening-paper: but to-night  
I wondered not to see the well-known face  
With kind brown eyes and ever-friendly smile  
Behind the counter, and to find the place  
Deserted at this hour, and not a light  
In either window. Waiting there a while,  
Though wondering at what change these changes  
hinted,

I yet was grateful for the quiet gloom—  
Lit only by a gleam from the back-room,  
And here and there a glint of glass or tin—  
So pleasant after all the flare and din  
And hubbub of the foundry; and my eyes,  
Still tingling from the smoke, were glad to rest  
Upon the ordered shelves, so neatly dressed  
That even in the dusk they seemed to tell  
No little of the hand that kept them clean,  
And of the head that sorted things so well  
That naught of waste or worry could be seen,  
But all kept sweet with ever-fresh supplies.  
And as I thought upon her quiet way,  
Wondering what could have got her that she'd  
left

The shop unlit, untended and bereft  
Of her kind presence, overhead I heard  
A tiptoe creak as though somebody stirred  
With careful step across the upper floor:  
Then all was silent till the back-room door  
Swung open and her husband hurried in.  
He feared he'd kept me waiting in the dark,  
And he was sorry; but his wife, who served  
The customers at night-time usually,  
While he made up the ledger after tea,  
Was busy when I . . . Well, to tell the truth,  
They were in trouble, for their little son  
Had come in ill from school . . . the doctor  
said  
Pneumonia. . . . They'd been putting him to  
bed:  
Perhaps I heard them moving overhead,  
For boards would creak and creak, for all your  
care.  
They hoped the best, for he was young, and  
youth  
Could come through much; and all that could  
be done  
Would be . . . Then he stood, listening, quite  
unnerved,  
As though he heard a footstep on the stair,  
Though I heard nothing: but at my remark  
About the fog and sleet he turned  
And answered quickly as there burned

In his brown eyes an eager flame:  
If but his son might breathe West-country air!  
A certain Cornish village he could name  
Was just the place—if he could send him there,  
And only for a week, he'd come back stronger. . . .  
And then again he listened; and I took  
My paper and went, afraid to keep him  
longer,  
And left him standing with that haggard look.  
Next night as I pushed in there was no tinkle  
And, glancing up, I saw the bell was gone,  
Although in either window the gas shone,  
And I was greeted by a cheery twinkle  
Of burnished tins and bottles from the shelves:  
And now I saw the father busy there  
Behind the counter, cutting with a string  
A bar of soap up for a customer,  
With weary eyes and jerky harassed air  
As if his mind were hardly on the task;  
And when 'twas done and parcelled up for  
her  
And she had gone, he turned to me and said—  
He thought that folk might cut their soap them-  
selves . . .  
'Twas nothing much . . . but any little thing  
At such a time. . . . And having little doubt  
The boy was worse I did not like to ask,  
So picked my paper up and hurried out.  
And all next day amid the glare and clang

And clatter of the workshop his words rang,  
And kept on ringing, in my head a-ring—  
*But any little thing . . . at such a time. . . .*  
And kept on chiming to the anvil's chime—  
*But any little thing . . . at such a time. . . .*  
And they were hissed and sputtered in the  
sizzle

Of water on hot iron—*little thing . . .*  
*At such a time:* and when I left at last  
The smoke and steam and walked through the  
cold drizzle,  
The lumbering of the buses as they passed  
Seemed full of it, and to the passing feet  
The words kept patter, patter with dull beat.

I almost feared to turn into their street  
Lest I should find the blinds down in the shop;  
And more than once I'd half-a-mind to stop  
And buy my paper from the yelling boys,  
Who darted all about with such a noise  
That I half-wondered in a foolish way  
How they could shriek so, knowing that the  
sound  
Must worry children lying ill in bed. . . .  
Then, thinking even they must earn their bread  
As I earned mine, and scarce as noisily!  
I wandered on, and very soon I found  
I'd followed where my thoughts had been all  
day,

And stood before the shop, relieved to see  
The gases burning, and no down-drawn blind  
Of blank foreboding. With an easier mind  
I entered slowly, and was glad to find  
The father by the counter 'waiting me  
With paper ready and a cheery face.  
Yes! Yes! the boy was better—took the turn  
Last night just after I had left the place.  
He feared that he'd been short and cross last  
night . . .

But when a little child was suffering  
It worried you, and any little thing  
At such a moment made you cut up rough:  
Though now that he was going on all right—  
Well, he'd have patience now to be polite!  
And, soon as ever he was well enough,  
The boy should go to Cornwall for a change—  
Should go to his own home, for he himself  
Was Cornish, born and bred, his wife as well;  
And still his parents lived at the old place—  
A little place as snug as snug could be . . .  
Where apple-blossom dipped into the sea. . . .  
Perhaps to strangers' ears that sounded  
strange,

But not to any Cornishman who knew  
How sea and land ran up into each other,  
And how all round each wide blue estuary  
The flowers were blooming to the water's edge:  
You'd come on bluebells like a sea of blue . . .

But they would not be out for some while  
yet—

'Twould be primroses blowing everywhere,  
Primroses and primroses and primroses. . . .  
You'd never half-know what primroses were  
Unless you'd seen them growing in the West,  
But, having seen, would never more forget.  
Why, every bank and every lane and hedge  
Was just one blaze of yellow, and the smell  
When the sun shone upon them after wet! . . .  
And his eyes sparkled as he turned to sell  
A penny loaf and half-an-ounce of tea  
To a poor child who waited patiently  
With hacking cough that tore her hollow chest:  
And as she went out, clutching tight the change,  
He muttered to himself: *It's strange, it's strange  
That little ones should suffer so!* The light  
Had left his eyes, but when he turned to me  
I saw a flame leap in them hot and bright.  
*I'd like to take them all, he said, to-night!*

And in the workshop all through the next day  
The anvils had another tune to play—  
*Primroses and primroses and primroses!*  
The bellows puffing out: *It's strange, it's strange  
That little ones should suffer so. . . .*  
And now my hammer at a blow—  
*I'd like to take them all to-night!*  
And in the clouds of steam and white-hot glow

I seemed to see primroses everywhere,  
Primroses and primroses and primroses.

And each night after that I heard the boy  
Was mending quickly and would soon be well,  
Till one night I was startled by the bell—  
*Tin-tinkle-tinkle-tinkle*, loud and clear,  
And tried to hush it lest the lad should hear.  
But, when the father saw me clutch the thing,  
He said the boy had missed it yesterday  
And wondered why he could not hear it ring,  
And wanted it, and had to have his way.  
And then with brown eyes burning with deep  
joy

Told me his son was going to the West—  
Was going home . . . the doctor thought next  
week

He'd be quite well enough: the way was long,  
But trains were quick and he would soon be  
there;

And on the journey he'd have every care,  
His mother being with him. . . . It was best  
That she should go, for he would find it  
strange,

The little chap, at first. She needed change . . .  
And when they'd had a whiff of Western air  
'Twould cost a deal, and there was naught to  
spare:

But what was money if you hadn't health?

And what more could you buy if you'd the  
wealth? . . . :

Yes, 'twould be lonely for himself and rough,  
Though on the whole he'd manage well enough:  
He'd have a lot to do, and there was naught  
Like work to keep folk cheerful: when the hand  
Was busy you had little time for thought,  
And thinking was the mischief. And 'twas  
grand  
To know that they'd be happy. Then the  
bell  
Went *tinkle-tinkle*, and he turned to sell.

One night he greeted me with face that shone,  
Although the eyes were wistful: they were gone—  
Had gone that morning, he was glad to say;  
And, though 'twas sore work setting them away,  
Still, 'twas the best for them . . . and they  
would be  
Already in the cottage by the sea. . . .  
He spoke no more of them, but turned his  
head  
And said he wondered if the price of bread . . .  
And as I went again into the night  
I saw his eyes were glistening in the light.

And two nights after that he'd had a letter,  
And all was well: the boy was keeping better  
And was as happy as a child could be

All day with the primroses and the sea—  
And pigs! Of all the wonders of the West,  
His mother wrote, he liked the pigs the best!  
And now the father laughed until the tears  
Were in his eyes, and chuckled—ay, he knew!  
Had he not been a boy there once himself?  
He'd liked pigs too when he was his son's  
    years.

And then he reached a half-loaf from the shelf  
And twisted up a farthing's worth of tea  
And a farthing's worth of sugar for the child,  
The same poor child who waited patiently,  
Still shaken by a hacking, racking cough.

And all next day the anvils rang with jigs;  
The bellows roared and rumbled with loud  
    laughter

Until it seemed the workshop had gone  
    wild,

And it would echo, echo ever after  
The tune the hammers tinkled on and off—  
A silly tune of primroses and pigs. . . .

*Of all the wonders of the West*

*He liked the pigs, he liked the pigs the best!*

Next night as I went in I caught  
A strange fresh smell. The postman had just  
    brought

A precious box from Cornwall, and the shop

Was lit with primroses that lay atop  
A Cornish pasty and a pot of cream;  
And as with gentle hands the father lifted  
The flowers his little son had plucked for him,  
He stood a moment in a far-off dream,  
As though in glad remembrances he drifted  
On Western seas, and as his eyes grew dim  
He stooped and buried them in deep sweet  
bloom;  
Till, hearing once again the poor child's cough,  
He served her hurriedly and sent her off  
Quite happily with thin hands filled with  
flowers.  
And as I followed to the street the gloom  
Was starred with primroses, and many hours  
The strange shy flickering surprise  
Of that child's keen, enchanted eyes  
Lit up my heart and brightened my dull room.

Then many nights the foundry kept me late  
With overtime, and I was much too tired  
To go round by the shop, but made for bed  
As straight as I could go; until one night  
We'd left off earlier, though 'twas after eight,  
I thought I'd like some news about the boy.  
I found the shop untended, and the bell  
Tin-tinkled-tinkled-tinkled all in vain:  
And then I saw through the half-curtained pane  
The back-room was a very blaze of joy;

And knew the mother and son had come safe  
back.

And as I slipped away, now all was well,  
I heard the boy shriek out in shrill delight:

*And, father, all the little pigs were black!*

*Wilfrid Gibson.*

## XXII.—STARS

WHO travelling through a midnight wood  
Tilts up his chin to watch the stars  
Will like enough trip over roots  
Or bark his shins against the knars:  
But who, benighted in blind ways,  
Struggles to thrust close boughs apart  
Will never win from out the wood  
Unless the stars are in his heart.

*Wilfrid Gibson.*

## XXIII.—A DREAM QUESTION

*“It shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine.”*—Micah, iii. 6.

I asked the Lord: “Sire, is this true  
Which hosts of theologians hold,  
That when we creatures censure you  
For shaping griefs and ails untold  
(Deeming them punishments undue)  
You rage, as Moses wrote of old?”

“When we exclaim: ‘Beneficent  
He is not, for he orders pain,  
Or, if so, not omnipotent:  
To a mere child the thing is plain!’  
Those who profess to represent  
You, cry out: ‘Impious and profane!’”

He: “Save me from my friends, who  
deem  
That I care what my creatures say!  
Mouth as you list: sneer, rail, blaspheme,  
O manikin, the livelong day,  
Not one grief-groan or pleasure-gleam  
Will you increase or take away.

“Why things are thus, whoso derides,  
May well remain my secret still. . . .

A fourth dimension, say the guides,  
To matter is conceivable.  
Think some such mystery resides  
Within the ethic of my will.”

*Thomas Hardy.*

## XXIV.—NEW YEAR'S EVE

“I HAVE finished another year,” said God,

“In grey, green, white, and brown;  
I have strewn the leaf upon the sod,  
Sealed up the worm within the clod,  
And let the last sun down.”

“And what's the good of it?” I said,

“What reasons made you call  
From formless void this earth we tread,  
When nine-and-ninety can be read  
Why nought should be at all?”

“Yea, Sire; why shaped you us, ‘who in

This tabernacle groan’—  
If ever a joy be found herein,  
Such joy no man had wished to win  
If he had never known!”

Then he: “My labours—logicless—

You may explain; not I:  
Sense-sealed I have wrought, without a  
guess

That I evolved a Consciousness  
To ask for reasons why.

“Strange that ephemeral creatures who

By my own ordering are,

Should see the shortness of my view,  
Use ethic tests I never knew,  
Or made provision for!"

He sank to raptness as of yore,  
And opening New Year's Day  
Wove it by rote as theretofore,  
And went on working evermore  
In his unweeting way.

*Thomas Hardy.*

## XXV.—THE LAST LEAF

“THE leaves throng thick above:—  
Well, I’ll come back, dear Love,  
When they all are down!”

She watched that August tree,  
(None now scorned summer as she),  
Till it broidered it brown.

And then October came blowing,  
And the leaves showed signs they were  
going,  
And she saw up through them.

O how she counted them then!  
—November left her but ten,  
And started to strew them.

“Oh, when they all are gone,  
And the skeleton-time comes on,  
Whom shall I see!”

—When the fifteenth spread its sky  
That month, her upturned eye  
Could count but three.

And at the close of the week  
A flush flapped over her cheek:  
The last one fell.

But—he did not come. And, at length,  
Her hope of him lost all strength,  
And it was as a knell. . . .

When he did come again,  
Years later, a husband then,  
Heavy somewhat,

With a smile she reminded him:  
And he cried: “Ah, that vow of our  
whim!—  
Which I forgot,

“As one does!—And was that the tree?  
So it was!—Dear me, dear me:  
Yes: I forgot.”

*Thomas Hardy.*

## XXVI.—TIME, YOU OLD GIPSY MAN

TIME, you old gipsy man,  
Will you not stay,  
Put up your caravan  
Just for one day?

All things I'll give you  
Will you be my guest,  
Bells for your jennet  
Of silver the best,  
Goldsmiths shall beat you  
A great golden ring,  
Peacocks shall bow to you,  
Little boys sing,  
Oh, and sweet girls will  
Festoon you with may,  
Time, you old gipsy,  
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,  
Last night in Rome,  
Morning, and in the crush,  
Under Paul's dome;  
Under Paul's dial  
You tighten your rein—  
Only a moment,  
And off once again;  
Off to some city

Now blind in the womb,  
Off to another  
Ere that's in the tomb.

Time, you old gipsy man,  
Will you not stay,  
Put up your caravan  
Just for one day?

*Ralph Hodgson.*

## XXVII.—THE CHILDREN'S SONG

LAND of our Birth, we pledge to thee  
Our love and toil in the years to be;  
When we are grown and take our place,  
As men and women with our race.

Father in Heaven who lovest all,  
Oh, help Thy children when they call;  
That they may build, from age to age,  
An undefiled heritage.

Teach us to bear the yoke in youth  
With steadfastness and careful truth;  
That, in our time, Thy Grace may give  
The Truth whereby the Nations live.

Teach us to rule ourselves alway,  
Controlled and cleanly night and day;  
That we may bring, if need arise,  
No maimed or worthless sacrifice.

Teach us to look in all our ends  
On Thee for judge, and not our friends;  
That we, with Thee, may walk uncowed  
By fear or favour of the crowd.

Teach us the Strength that cannot seek,  
By deed or thought, to hurt the weak;  
That, under Thee, we may possess  
Man's strength to comfort man's distress.

Teach us Delight in simple things,  
And Mirth that has no bitter springs;  
Forgiveness free of evil done,  
And Love to all men 'neath the sun!

*Land of our Birth, our faith, our pride,  
For whose dear sake our fathers died ;  
O Motherland, we pledge to thee  
Head, heart, and hand through the years to  
be!*

*Rudyard Kipling.*

## XXVIII.—THE FIRES

MEN make them fires on the hearth  
Each under his roof-tree,  
And the Four Winds that rule the  
earth  
They blow the smoke to me.

Across the high hills and the sea  
And all the changeful skies,  
The Four Winds blow the smoke to  
me  
Till the tears are in my eyes.

Until the tears are in my eyes,  
And my heart is well-nigh broke  
For thinking on old memories  
That gather in the smoke.

With every shift of every wind  
The homesick memories come,  
From every quarter of mankind  
Where I have made me a home.

Four times a fire against the cold  
And a roof against the rain—  
Sorrow fourfold and joy fourfold  
The Four Winds bring again!

How can I answer which is best  
Of all the fires that burn?  
I have been too often host or guest  
At every fire in turn.

How can I turn from any fire,  
On any man's hearthstone?  
I know the wonder and desire  
That went to build my own!

How can I doubt man's joy or woe  
Where'er his house-fires shine,  
Since all that man must undergo  
Will visit me at mine?

Oh, you Four Winds that blow so strong  
And know that this is true,  
Stoop for a little and carry my song  
To all the men I knew!

Where there are fires against the  
cold,  
Or roofs against the rain—  
With love fourfold and joy fourfold,  
Take them my songs again!

*Rudyard Kipling.*

## XXIX.—SHIV AND THE GRASSHOPPER

SHIV, who poured the harvest and made the  
winds to blow,  
Sitting at the doorways of a day of long ago,  
Gave to each his portion, food and toil and fate,  
From the King upon the *guddee* to the Beggar at  
the gate.

*All things made he—Shiva the Preserver.  
Mahadeo! Mahadeo! He made all,—  
Thorn for the camel, fodder for the kine,  
And Mother's heart for sleepy head, O little  
Son of mine!*

Wheat he gave to rich folk, millet to the poor,  
Broken scraps for holy men that beg from door  
to door;  
Cattle to the tiger, carrion to the kite,  
And rags and bones to wicked wolves without the  
wall at night.  
Naught he found too lofty, none he saw too low—  
Parbati beside him watched them come and go;  
Thought to cheat her husband, turning Shiv to  
jest—  
Stole the little grasshopper and hid it in her  
breast.

*So she tricked him, Shiva the Preserver.  
Mahadeo! Mahadeo! turn and see!  
Tall are the camels, heavy are the kine,  
But this was Least of Little Things, O little  
Son of mine!*

When the dole was ended, laughingly she said,  
“Master, of a million mouths is not one unfed?”  
Laughing, Shiv made answer, “All have had their  
part,  
Even he, the little one, hidden 'neath thy heart.”  
From her breast she plucked it, Parbati the thief,  
Saw the Least of Little Things gnawed a new-  
grown leaf!  
Saw and feared and wondered, making prayer to  
Shiv,  
Who hath surely given meat to all that live!

*All things made he—Shiva the Preserver.  
Mahadeo! Mahadeo! He made all,—  
Thorn for the camel, fodder for the kine,  
And Mother's heart for sleepy head, O little  
Son of mine!*

*Rudyard Kipling.*

### XXX.—LAUGH AND BE MERRY

LAUGH and be merry, remember, better the world  
with a song,

Better the world with 'a blow in the teeth of 'a  
wrong.

Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length  
of a span.

Laugh and be proud to belong to the old proud  
pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry: remember, in olden time,  
God made Heaven and Earth for joy He took in  
a rhyme,

Made them, and filled them full with the strong  
red wine of His mirth,

The splendid joy of the stars: the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue  
cup of the sky,

Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping  
by,

Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the  
wine outpoured

In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of  
the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin!  
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,

Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the  
music ends.  
Laugh till the game is played; and be you merry,  
my friends.

*John Masefield.*

## XXXI.—A SONG AT PARTING

THE tick of the blood is settling slow, my heart  
will soon be still,  
And ripe and ready am I for rest in the grave  
atop the hill;  
So gather me up and lay me down, for ready and  
ripe am I,  
For the weary vigil with sightless eyes that may  
not see the sky.

I have lived my life: I have spilt the wine that  
God the Maker gave,  
So carry me up the lonely hill and lay me in the  
grave,  
And cover me in with cleanly mould and old and  
lichened stones,  
In a place where ever the cry of the wind shall  
thrill my sleepy bones.

Gather me up and lay me down with an old song  
and a prayer,  
Cover me in with wholesome earth, and weep  
and leave me there;  
And get you gone with a kindly thought and an  
old tune and a sigh,  
And leave me alone, asleep, at rest, for ready and  
ripe am I.

*John Masefield.*

## XXXII.—THE WEST WIND

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds'  
cries;

I never hear the west wind but tears are in my  
eyes.

For it comes from the west lands, the old brown  
hills,

And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired  
as mine,

Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like  
wine,

There is cool green grass there, where men may  
lie at rest,

And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from  
the nest.

“Will you not come home, brother? ye have  
been long away,

It's April, and blossom time, and white is the may;  
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the  
rain,—

Will ye not come home, brother, home to us  
again?

“The young corn is green, brother, where the  
rabbits run,

It's blue sky, and white 'clouds, and warm rain  
and sun.

It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's  
brain,

To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring  
again.

“Larks are singing in the west, brother, above  
the green wheat,

So will ye not come home, brother, and rest your  
tired feet?

I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep for  
aching eyes,”

Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of birds'  
cries.

It's the white road westwards is the road I must  
tread

To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest for  
heart and head,

To the violets and the warm hearts and the  
thrushes' song,

In the fine land, the west land, the land where  
I belong.

*John Masefield.*

### XXXIII.—INDIAN WEAVERS

WEAVERS, weaving at break of day,  
Why do you weave a garment so gay? . . .  
Blue as the wing of a halcyon wild,  
We weave the robes of a new-born child.

Weavers, weaving at fall of night,  
Why do you weave a garment so bright? . . .  
Like the plumes of a peacock, purple and green,  
We weave the marriage-veils of a queen.

Weavers, weaving solemn and still,  
What do you weave in the moonlight chill? . . .  
White as a feather and white as a cloud,  
We weave a dead man's funeral shroud.

*Sarojini Naidu.*

## XXXIV.—THE QUEEN'S RIVAL

### I

QUEEN GULNAAR sat on her ivory bed,  
Around her countless treasures were spread;

Her chamber walls were richly inlaid  
With agate, porphyry, onyx and jade;

The tissues that veiled her delicate breast  
Glowed with the hues of a lapwing's crest;

But still she gazed in her mirror and sighed:  
"O King, my heart is unsatisfied."

King Feroz bent from his ebony seat:  
"Is thy least desire unfulfilled, O sweet?"

"Let thy mouth speak and my life be spent  
To clear the sky of thy discontent."

"I tire of my beauty, I tire of this  
Empty splendour and shadowless bliss;

"With none to envy and none gainsay,  
No savour or salt hath my dream or day."

Queen Gulnaar sighed like a murmuring rose:  
"Give me a rival, O King Feroz."

King Feroz spoke to his Chief Vizier:

“Lo! ere to-morrow’s dawn be here,

“Send forth my messengers over the sea,  
To seek seven beautiful brides for me;

“Radiant of feature and regal of mien,  
Seven handmaids meet for the Persian Queen.”

## II

Seven new moon tides at the Vesper call,  
King Feroz led to Queen Gulnaar’s hall

A young queen eyed like the morning star,  
“I bring thee a rival, O Queen Gulnaar.”

But still she gazed in her mirror and sighed:  
“O King, my heart is unsatisfied.”

Seven queens shone round her ivory bed,  
Like seven soft gems on a silken thread,

Like seven fair lamps in a royal tower,  
Like seven bright petals of Beauty’s flower.

Queen Gulnaar sighed like a murmuring rose:  
“Where is my rival, O King Feroz?”

### III

When spring winds wakened the mountain  
floods,  
And kindled the flame of the tulip buds,

When bees grew loud and the days grew long,  
And the peach groves thrilled to the oriole's song,

Queen Gulnaar sat on her ivory bed,  
Decking with jewels her exquisite head;

And still she gazed in her mirror and sighed:  
"O King, my heart is unsatisfied."

Queen Gulnaar's daughter, two springtimes old,  
In blue robes bordered with tassels of gold,

Ran to her knee like a wildwood fay,  
And plucked from her hand the mirror away.

Quickly she set on her own light curls  
Her mother's fillet with fringes of pearls;

Quickly she turned with a child's caprice  
And pressed on the mirror a swift, glad kiss.

Queen Gulnaar laughed like a tremulous rose:  
"Here is my rival, O King Feroz."

*Sarojini Naidu.*

XXXV.—SONG OF RADHA, THE  
MILKMAID

I CARRIED my curds to the Mathura fair. . . .  
How softly the heifers were lowing. . . .  
I wanted to cry "Who will buy, who will buy  
These curds that are white as the clouds in the  
sky

When the breezes of *Shrawan* are blowing?"  
But my heart was so full of your beauty, Beloved,  
They laughed as I cried without knowing:

*Govinda! Govinda!*

*Govinda! Govinda!*

How softly the river was flowing!

I carried my pots to the Mathura tide . . . .  
How gaily the rowers were rowing! . . . .  
My comrades called, "Ho! let us dance, let us  
sing,

And wear saffron garments to welcome the spring,  
And pluck the new buds that are blowing."

But my heart was so full of your music, Beloved,  
They mocked when I cried without knowing:

*Govinda! Govinda!*

*Govinda! Govinda!*

How gaily the river was flowing!

I carried my gifts to the Mathura shrine . . . .  
How brightly the torches were glowing! . . . .  
I folded my hands at the altars to pray,

“O shining Ones, guard us by night and by  
day”—

And loudly the conch shells were blowing.  
But my heart was so lost in your worship, Beloved,  
They were wroth when I cried without knowing:

*Govinda! Govinda!*

*Govinda! Govinda!*

How brightly the river was flowing!

*Sarojini Naidu.*

## XXXVI.—GUERDON

To field and forest  
The gifts of the spring,  
To hawk and to heron  
The pride of their wing;  
Her grace to the panther,  
Her tints to the dove. . . .  
For me, O my Master,  
The rapture of Love!

To the hand of the diver  
The gems of the tide,  
To the eyes of the bridegroom  
The face of his bride;  
To the heart of a dreamer  
The dreams of his youth. . . .  
For me, O my Master,  
The rapture of Truth!

To priests and to prophets  
The joy of their creeds,  
To kings and their cohorts  
The glory of deeds;  
And peace to the vanquished  
And hope to the strong. . . .  
For me, O my Master,  
The rapture of Song!

*Sarojini Naidu.*

## XXXVII.—HOPE THE HORNBLOWER

“HARK ye, hark to the winding horn;  
Sluggards, awake, and front the morn!  
Hark ye, hark to the winding horn;  
    The sun’s on meadow and mill.  
Follow me, hearts that love the chase;  
Follow me, feet that keep the pace:  
Stirrup to stirrup we ride, we ride,  
    We ride by moor and hill.”

Huntsman, huntsman, whither away?  
What is the quarry afoot to-day?  
Huntsmen, huntsmen, whither away,  
    And what the game ye kill?  
Is it the deer, that men may dine?  
Is it the wolf that tears the kine?  
What is the race ye ride, ye ride,  
    Ye ride by moor and hill?

“Ask not yet till the day be dead  
What is the game that’s forward fled,  
Ask not yet till the day be dead  
    The game we follow still.  
An echo it may be, floating past;  
A shadow it may be, fading fast:  
Shadow or echo, we ride, we ride,  
    We ride by moor and hill.”

*Sir Henry Newbolt.*

### XXXVIII.—DREAM-LOVE

YOUNG Love lies sleeping  
In May-time of the year,  
Among the lilies,  
Lapped in the tender light:  
White lambs come grazing,  
White doves come building  
there:  
And round about him  
The May-bushes are white.

Soft moss the pillow  
For oh, a softer cheek;  
Broad leaves cast shadow  
Upon the heavy eyes:  
There wind and waters  
Grow lulled and scarcely speak;  
There twilight lingers  
The longest in the skies.

Young Love lies dreaming;  
But who shall tell the dream?  
A perfect sunlight  
On rustling forest tips;  
Or perfect moonlight  
Upon a rippling stream;  
Or perfect silence,  
Or song of cherished lips.

Burn odours round him  
To fill the drowsy air;  
Weave silent dances  
Around him to and fro;  
For oh, in waking  
The sights are not so fair,  
And song and silence  
Are not like these below.

Young Love lies dreaming  
Till summer days are gone,—  
Dreaming and drowsing  
Away to perfect sleep:  
He sees the beauty  
Sun hath not looked upon,  
And tastes the fountain  
Unutterably deep.

Him perfect music  
Doth hush unto his rest,  
And through the pauses  
The perfect silence calms:  
Oh, poor the voices  
Of earth from east to west,  
And poor earth's stillness  
Between her stately palms!

Young Love lies drowsing  
Away to popped death;

Cool shadows deepen  
    Across the sleeping face:  
So fails the summer  
    With warm, delicious breath;  
And what hath autumn  
    To give us in its place?

Draw close the curtains  
    Of branchèd evergreen;  
Change cannot touch them  
    With fading fingers sere:  
Here first the violets  
    Perhaps will bud unseen,  
And a dove, maybe,  
    Return to nestle here.

*Christina Rossetti.*

### XXXIX.—LOVE

ERE I lose myself in the vastness and drowse  
myself with the peace,  
While I gaze on the light and the beauty afar  
from the dim homes of men,  
May I still feel the heart-pang and pity, love-ties  
that I would not release;  
May the voices of sorrow appealing call me back  
to their succour again.

Ere I storm with the tempest of power the thrones  
and dominions of old,  
Ere the ancient enchantment allure me to roam  
through the star-misty skies,  
I would go forth as one who has reaped well  
what harvest the earth may unfold;  
May my heart be o'erbrimmed with compassion;  
on my brow be the crown of the wise.

I would go as the dove from the ark sent forth  
with wishes and prayers  
To return with the paradise blossoms that bloom  
in the Eden of light:  
When the deep star-chaunt of the seraphs I hear  
in the mystical airs,  
May I capture one tone of their joy for the sad  
ones discrowned in the night.

Not alone, not alone would I go to my rest in the  
heart of the love:  
Were I tranced in the innermost beauty, the  
flame of its tenderest breath,  
I would still hear the cry' of the fallen recalling  
me back from above,  
To go down to the side of the people who weep  
in the shadow of death.

*George William Russell (A.E.).*

## XL.—STRANGENESS OF HEART

WHEN I have lost the power to feel the pang  
Which first I felt in childhood when I woke  
And heard the unheeding garden bird who sang  
Strangeness of heart for me while morning broke;  
Or when in latening twilight sure with spring,  
Pausing on homeward paths along the wood,  
No sadness thrills my thought while thrushes  
sing,

And I'm no more the listening child who stood  
So many sunsets past and could not say  
What wandering voices called from far away:  
When I have lost those simple spells that  
stirred  
My being with an untranslated song,  
Let me go home for ever; I shall have heard  
Death; I shall know that I have lived too long.

*Siegfried Sassoon.*

## XLI.—TO ONE IN PRISON

TO-DAY we have remembered sacrifice and glory  
And the Cenotaph with flowers is overstocked:  
A single gun to soundlessness has clocked  
And unified King, Communist, and Tory. . . .  
I have listened to your broken stumbling story,  
And trespassed in your mind, slum-built and  
shoddy.

You, too, have shared the Silence; you have  
knelt  
In the cheerless Prison chapel; you have felt  
Armistice Day emotion brim your body.

Six years, you say, you've worked at baking bread  
(A none-too-wholesome task that must be done  
By those whom God appoints). You are twenty-  
one  
(Though I'd have guessed you less). Your father's  
dead

(Run over by a lorry, I think you said,  
In the Great War, while coming home on leave).  
Your brother got in trouble and spent three years  
In Borstal (all these facts I can believe  
Without the reinforcement of your tears).

Your brother failed completely to "make good;"  
Your brother died; committed suicide  
By turning on the gas, a twelve-month since.

Now you're in prison for stealing what you could:  
Mother's in prison for the same offence:  
And I've no reason to suspect you lied  
When you informed me that you "only tried  
To stick to mother." I was touched. You stood  
So young, so friendless, so remorseful-eyed.

Therefore I find myself compelled to add  
A footnote on your candour and humility.  
You seem to me a not insensitive lad  
Of average emotional ability.  
You've "been upset to-day." "By what?" I  
query.  
"By the two-minute silence." Then your  
weeping . . .  
And then your face, so woebegone and weary.  
And now—what use, the pity that I am heaping  
Upon your head? What use—to wish you well  
And slam the door? Who knows? . . . My  
heart, not yours, can tell.

*Siegfried Sassoon.*

## XLII.—IN WASTE PLACES

As a naked man I go  
Through the desert, sore afraid;  
Holding up my head, although  
I'm as frightened as a maid.

The lion crouches there! I saw  
In barren rocks his amber eye!  
He parts the cactus with his paw!  
He stares at me, as I go by!

He would pad upon my trace  
If he thought I was afraid!  
If he knew my hardy face  
Veils the terrors of a maid.

He rises in the night-time, and  
He stretches forth! He snuffs the air!  
He roars! He leaps along the sand!  
He creeps! He watches everywhere!

His burning eyes, his eyes of bale,  
Through the darkness I can see!  
He lashes fiercely with his tail!  
He makes again to spring at me.

I am the lion and his lair!  
I am the fear that frightens me!  
I am the desert of despair!  
And the night of agony!

Night or day, whate'er befall,  
I must walk that desert land,  
Until I dare my fear, and call  
The lion out to lick my hand!

*James Stephens.*

### XLIII.—PLAYTHINGS

CHILD, how happy you are sitting in the dust,  
playing with a broken twig all the morning.

I smile at your play with that little bit of a broken  
twig.

I am busy with my accounts, adding up figures  
by the hour.

Perhaps you glance at me and think, "What a  
stupid game to spoil your morning with!"

Child, I have forgotten the art of being absorbed  
in sticks and mud-pies.

I seek out costly playthings, and gather lumps of  
gold and silver.

With whatever you find you create your glad  
games, I spend both my time and my  
strength over things I never can obtain.

In my frail canoe I struggle to cross the sea of  
desire, and forget that I, too, am playing a  
game.

*Rabindranath Tagore.*

## XLIV.—THE NIGHT DARKENED

THE night darkened. Our day's works had been done. We thought that the last guest had arrived for the night and the doors in the village were all shut. Only some said, The King was to come. We laughed and said, "No, it cannot be!"

It seemed there were knocks at the door and we said it was nothing but the wind. We put out the lamps and lay down to sleep. Only some said, "It is the messenger!" We laughed and said, "No, it must be the wind!"

There came a sound in the dead of the night. We sleepily thought it was the distant thunder. The earth shook, the walls rocked, and it troubled us in our sleep. Only some said, it was the sound of wheels. We said in a drowsy murmur, "No, it must be the rumbling of clouds!"

The night was still dark when the drum sounded. The voice came, "Wake up! delay not!" We pressed our hands on our hearts and shuddered with fear. Some said, "Lo, there is the King's flag!" We stood up on our feet and cried, "There is no time for delay!"

The King has come,—but where are lights, where are wreaths? Where is the throne to seat him? Oh, shame, Oh, utter shame! Where is the hall, the decorations? Some one has said, “Vain is this cry! Greet him with empty hands, lead him into thy rooms all bare!”

Open the doors, let the conch-shells be sounded!  
In the depth of the night has come the King of our dark, dreary house. The thunder roars in the sky. The darkness shudders with lightning. Bring out thy tattered piece of mat and spread it in the courtyard. With the storm has come of a sudden our King of the fearful night.

*Rabindranath Tagore.*

## XLV.—I ASKED NOTHING FROM THEE

I ASKED nothing from thee: I uttered not my name to thine ear. When thou took'st thy leave I stood silent. I was alone by the well where the shadow of the tree fell aslant, and the women had gone home with their brown earthen pitchers full to the brim. They called me and shouted, "Come with us, the morning is wearing on to noon." But I languidly lingered awhile lost in the midst of vague musings.

I heard not thy steps as thou camest. Thine eyes were sad when they fell on me; thy voice was tired as thou spoked low—"Ah, I am a thirsty traveller." I started up from my day-dreams and poured water from my jar on thy joined palms. The leaves rustled overhead; the cuckoo sang from the unseen dark, and perfume of *babla* flowers came from the bend of the road.

I stood speechless with shame when my name thou didst ask. Indeed, what had I done for thee to keep me in remembrance? But the memory that I could give water to thee to allay thy thirst will cling to my heart and

enfold it in sweetness. The morning hour is late, the bird sings in weary notes, *neem* leaves rustle overhead and I sit and think and think.

*Rabindranath Tagore.*

## XLVI.—TREASURES

(FOR G.E.M.)

THESE are my treasures: just a word, a look,  
A chiming sentence from his favourite book,  
A large, blue, scented blossom that he found  
And plucked for me in some enchanted ground,  
A joy he planned for us, a verse he made  
Upon a birthday, the increasing shade  
Of trees he planted by the waterside,  
The echo of a laugh, his tender pride  
In those he loved, his hand upon my hair,  
The dear voice lifted in his evening prayer.

How safe they must be kept! So dear, so few,  
And all I have to last my whole life through.  
A silver mesh of loving words entwining,  
At every crossing thread of brittle words, I'll make  
A safer, humble hiding-place apart,  
And lock them in the fastness of my heart.

*Mary Webb.*

## XLVII.—THE YOUNG

I MUST remember now that the year's circle  
    swings  
    back to the slender green and the snow on the  
    tree,  
that my way is no longer the way to salute  
    these things,  
    that they belong to the future and to younger  
    men than me,

who are aware of spring directly in a different way,  
    watching her with eyes serious and un-  
    astonished,  
their bright young faces grave under the  
    reckless spray,  
    princes by their own decree from their  
    kingdoms banished.

For them is no legend of a Greek girl returning  
    flushed from the underworld with its dark-  
    ness a cloak  
flung from her shoulder as she moves, falling  
    and burning  
    in the flame-blue of the wild harebell and the  
    crocus-smoke.

There is no thicket aflame with hawthorn and  
    briar

to be scaled for the adventurer, nor to discover  
in the still garden beyond, hedged by the  
dog-rose fire,  
Primavera waiting, asleep, for the lips of her  
lover.

They are tired of romance, with its false fair  
glamour,  
weary of gods and heroes, and the splendour of  
Troy.

They will plant their own roses for their own  
summer,  
their beauty is not Helen, nor Paris their gold  
boy.

They will not bid the daffodils to stay with  
Herrick,  
nor go with their sweet like Ronsard to snare  
the rose.

They have a story to weave of their own, and a  
lyric  
simpler, colder and more obstinate than those.

They have passed beyond those seekings and  
hidings  
of the heart and its shadow. They are looking,  
it seems,  
into the actual world, and bring back strange  
tidings

of facts more burnished than fancy, stranger  
than dreams——

harsh, unrelated to the loveliness that we have  
known——

and yet, in their own despite, groping with  
plastic fingers  
back to the old craftsmen and with the curved  
bone  
tossing the torch in the air to the new light-  
bringers.

If the glory on their brow is of the unseen morrow,  
their eyelids are shadowy with the old lost  
ages,  
if they weep for the unborn, being wrung with  
their sorrow,  
the star that is lost in their hair is the star of  
the Mages.

*Humbert Wolfe.*

XLVIII.—THE LOVER TELLS OF THE  
ROSE IN HIS HEART

ALL things uncomely and broken, all things worn  
out and old,  
The cry of a child by the roadway, the creak of a  
lumbering cart,  
The heavy steps of the ploughman, splashing the  
wintry mould,  
Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in  
the deeps of my heart.

The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too  
great to be told;  
I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green  
knoll apart,  
With the earth and the sky and the water, remade  
like a casket of gold  
For my dreams of your image that blossoms a  
rose in the deeps of my heart.

*W. B. Yeats.*

XLIX.—TO A CHILD DANCING IN THE  
WIND

I

DANCE there upon the shore;  
What need have you to care  
For wind or water's roar?  
And tumble out your hair  
That the salt drops have wet;  
Being young you have not known  
The fool's triumph, nor yet  
Love lost as soon as won,  
Nor the best labourer dead  
And all the sheaves to bind.  
What need have you to dread  
The monstrous crying of wind?

II

Has no one said those daring  
Kind eyes should be more learn'd?  
Or warned you how despairing  
The moths are when they are burned?  
I could have warned you; but you are young,  
So we speak a different tongue.

O you will take whatever's offered  
And dream that all the world's a friend,

Suffer as your mother suffered,  
Be as broken in the end;  
But I am old and you are young,  
And I speak a barbarous tongue.

*W. B. Yeats.*

## L.—THE QUAILS

(In the South of Italy the peasants put out the eyes of a captured quail so that its cries may attract the flocks of spring migrants into their nets.)

ALL through the night  
I have heard the stuttering call of a blind quail,  
A caged decoy, under a cairn of stones,  
Crying for light as the quails cry for love.

Other wanderers,  
Northward from Africa winging on numb  
    pinions, dazed  
With beating winds and the sobbing of the sea,  
Hear, in a breath of sweet land-herbage, the call  
Of the blind one, their sister. . . .  
Hearing, their fluttered hearts  
Take courage, and they wheel in their dark flight,  
Knowing that their toil is over, dreaming to see  
The whole stubble of Abruzzi smitten with dawn  
And spilt grain lying in the furrows, the squandered  
    gold  
That is the delight of quails in their spring  
    mating.

Land scents grow keener,  
Penetrating the dank and bitter odour of brine

That whitens their feathers;  
Far below, the voice of their sister calls them  
To plenty, and sweet water, and fulfilment.  
Over the pallid margin of dim seas breaking,  
Over the thickening in the darkness that is  
land,  
They fly. Their flight is ended. Wings beat no  
more.  
Downward they drift, one by one, like dark petals,  
Slowly, listlessly falling,  
Into the mouth of horror:  
The nets. . . .

Where men come trampling and crying with  
bright lanterns,  
Plucking their weak, entangled claws from the  
meshes of net,  
Clutching the soft brown bodies mottled with  
olive,  
Crushing the warm, fluttering flesh, in hands  
stained with blood,  
Till their quivering hearts are stilled, and the  
bright eyes,  
That are polished agate, glaze in death.

But the blind one, in her wicker cage, without  
ceasing  
Haunts this night of spring with her stuttering  
call,

Knowing nothing of the terror that walks in dark-  
ness,  
Knowing only that some cruelty has stolen the  
light  
That is life, and that she must cry until she dies.

I, in the darkness,  
Heard, and my heart grew sick. But I know that  
to-morrow  
A smiling peasant will come with a basket of  
quails  
Wrapped in vine-leaves, prodding them with  
blood-stained fingers,  
Saying, "Signore, you must cook them thus, and  
thus,  
With a sprig of basil inside them." And I shall  
thank him,  
Carrying the piteous carcasses into the kitchen  
Without a pang, without shame.

"Why should I be ashamed? Why should I,  
rail  
Against the cruelty of men? Why should I pity  
Seeing that there is no cruelty which men can  
imagine  
To match the subtle dooms that are wrought  
against them  
By blind spores of pestilence: seeing that each  
of us,

Lured by dim hopes, flutters in the toils of death  
On a cold star that is spinning blindly through  
space  
Into the nets of time? ”

So cried I, bitterly thrusting pity aside,  
Closing my lids to sleep. But sleep came not,  
And pity, with sad eyes,  
Crept to my side, and told me  
That the life of all creatures is brave and pitiful  
Whether they be men, with dark thoughts to vex  
them,  
Or birds, wheeling in the swift joys of flight,  
Or brittle ephemerids, spinning to death in the  
haze  
Of gold that quivers on dim evening waters;  
Nor would she be denied.

The harshness died  
Within me, and my heart  
Was caught and fluttered like the palpitant heart  
Of a brown quail, flying  
To the call of her blind sister,  
And death, in the spring night.

*Francis Brett Young.*

## NOTES

### I.—VITA NUOVA

The Hon. Maurice Baring was born in 1874. His first work was *Hildesheim* (1900). His *Collected Poems* appeared in 1925. He is a very versatile writer, and his prose works include volumes on French literature, Russia, several novels, short stories, essays, and plays. In 1922 he published an entertaining autobiography, *The Puppet Show of Memory*. This sonnet is taken from the volume entitled *Poems: 1914-1919*, published by Martin Secker (1920).

The rhyme arrangement of the sonnet is a little singular: a b b a c d c d; e f f f e f. The three lines in the sestet, 10, 11, 12, rhyming together produce the effect of elation which is the poet's obvious intention.

### II.—THE FANATIC

Hilaire Belloc, the son of a French father and English mother, was born in 1870. He is a prolific writer, and is especially successful as an essayist and historian. His writings include *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts* (1896), *Robespierre* (1901), *On Nothing* (1907), *The French Revolution*, *A History of England* (1927), and his collected *Sonnets and Verse* (1923), from which this poem is taken. It is light-hearted on the surface, but the vehemence of the last section indicates its serious undercurrent.

### III.—THE MOCKERY OF LIFE

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was born in 1840 and died in 1922. He travelled extensively in the East and wrote several works dealing with the Sudan and India. His other publications were the two volumes of *My Diaries*, and his *Poetical Works* (2 vols. 1914). The three poems given

here are taken from "The Love Sonnets of Proteus." These sonnets are 114 in number, and are divided into four parts, entitled respectively, "To Manon," "Juliet," "Gods and False Gods," and "Vita Nuova." They vary in length, some of them having fifteen, eighteen, or twenty lines instead of the customary fourteen. Blunt's verse is characterised by deep emotionalism and a frankness that at times is somewhat startling. In issuing the fourth edition of this work, he wrote: "No life is perfect that has not been lived—youth in feeling—manhood in battle—and old age in meditation. Again, no life is perfect that is not sincere."

#### IV.—"THE STORM IS OVER"

Robert Bridges was born in 1844. He succeeded Alfred Austin as Poet Laureate in 1913, and died in 1929. He was a great authority on prosody, and his own metrical experiments were many and successful. His best-known poems are mainly short lyrics, but his *magnum opus* is the *Testament of Beauty* (1928), which conceives "Beauty to be the sum and summit of experience, a part of man's aspiration after immortality." He also wrote a number of poetic dramas including *Prometheus the Firegiver* (1884), *The Return of Ulysses* (1890), *Humours of the Court* (1893), and *Demeter* (1905).

This poem is taken from *Shorter Poems* (Clarendon Press). It is a beautiful description of a storm-swept landscape, settling down to its normal appearance, and finally reposing in the soft embrace of the still night.

#### V.—ASIAN BIRDS

This is also taken from the author's *Shorter Poems*. The main idea of the poem is similar to that of Shelley's *To a Skylark*. The birds stand for joy and delight, colour and music, and they herald the dawn of a brighter day. If the poet had the birds' skill his words would have the same significance.

## VI.—THE GREAT LOVER

Rupert Brooke was born in 1887, and died on active service in 1915. He was associated with the publication of the celebrated collection of *Georgian Poetry* in 1912. His *Poems* appeared in 1911, and *1914 and Other Poems* in 1915, after his death.

"The Great Lover" was written during his stay in Tahiti in the early months of 1914. The memoir which forms part of the volume of *Collected Poems* (1918) states: "In the 'wide verandah' he wrote or finished *Tiare Tahiti, Retrospect* and the *Great Lover*." A sentence taken from a letter written at the time provides a clue to the mood which the poem expresses: "I really do feel a little anchorless." He was far from home, and lonely, and he found delight in recalling the sights and sounds and smells that had given him the keenest pleasure in other days. The lines are a memorable example of the use of everyday objects and sensations as the subject-matter of authentic poetry.

## VII.—"TEACH ME A SONG"

Arthur Clutton-Brock (1867-1923) was a well-known critic of art and literature, whose essays are of high literary merit. It was only after his death that people learnt that he was also a poet. His widow published his poems in a limited edition in 1926 under the title of *The Miracle of Love and Other Poems* (Ernest Benn). These lines form the Prelude to "A Sonnet Sequence in Three Moods"—Love Awakened, Love Rejected, and Love Triumphant.

## VIII.—EGYPT'S MIGHT

Mary E. Coleridge was born in 1861, and died in 1907. She was a well-known poet, essayist and novelist. Her first volume of poems, *Fancy's Following*, came out in 1896. Her collected *Poems* were published in 1907, as was also

*Gathered Leaves*, a collection of her essays and stories. She has been described as "all poet and three-quarters saint." Her poems are dreamy, wistful, and melancholy in mood, but terse and concentrated in form.

## IX.—AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

Padraic Colum was born in 1881, and is a well-known poet, dramatist, and story-teller. He has been associated with the Irish National Theatre, for which his *Three Plays* (1917) were written. He is, however, more famous for the verses published in *Wild Earth* (1907), *Dramatic Legends* (1922), and other works now collected in his volume of *Poems* (1932). He has also published a number of books containing his prose versions of the legends and folk-tales of Ireland and many other parts of the world.

## X.—THE TWO CHILDREN

W. H. Davies was born in 1870. He has related in his *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* and *Later Days* his early hardships and the adventures that he experienced. His *Collected Poems* have been issued in one volume.

Like the poems of several of the other moderns, these lines from "Child Lovers" combine deep melancholy feeling with an impressive self-restraint. Compare with it Mrs. Naidu's "Indian Weavers."

Of the author's first book of poems, Edward Thomas said: "He has been divinely gifted with a power of expression equal to that of any other man of our day." His range is limited, but the sincerity and simplicity of his utterance, and the astonishing freshness of his imagery and diction, have secured him a place that is all his own in contemporary poetry.

## XI.—NATURE'S FRIEND

From *Nature Poems*, (1908) of which it has been said that it "contains hardly anything which is not as fresh as a linnet's note."

## XII.—ON EXPECTING SOME BOOKS

From *Farewell to Poesy* (1910).

## XIII.—TRULY GREAT

From *Nature Poems*.

## XIV.—MARTHA

Walter de la Mare was born in 1873. His *Poems, 1901-1918* appeared in 1920, a charming anthology, *Come Hither*, in 1923, and *Stuff and Nonsense*, in 1927. There is a curious dream-like, distant charm in his verse; his world is that of fancies and faeries and moonlight and elves. The most notable of his prose works in the same vein is his *Memoirs of a Midget* (1921).

This poem is from *The Listeners and Other Poems*, first published in 1912.

## XV.—THE LISTENERS

From the same volume.

## XVI.—FORGETFULNESS

Lord Alfred Douglas was born in 1870, and his chief works are contained in his *Collected Poems* (1919) and *Collected Satires* (1926). His poetic creed is stated thus

in the Preface to his *Complete Poems* (1928). "The poet is one who puts into a beautiful form the expression of an overpowering emotion, and it follows that his emotion must be quite exceptionally deep and sincere, and that it is the motive power of his style which, without the emotion to inspire it, would be as useless and dumb as an unplayed violin. To write poetry without sincerity is merely to play with words."

## XVII.—THE MIRACLE

John Drinkwater was born in 1882. His *Collected Poems* (Sidgwick and Jackson) were published in 1923. He has achieved wide fame as a dramatist with his historical plays *Abraham Lincoln*, *Robert E. Lee*, and *Oliver Cromwell*, and is the author of a number of critical studies in prose.

## XVIII.—WAR SONG OF THE SARACENS

James Elroy Flecker was born in 1884, and died in 1915. His *Collected Poems* were published in 1916, his beautiful play *Hassan*, from which these verses are taken, in 1921, and another play, *Don Juan*, in 1925. He expressed his poetic theory by claiming to be a disciple of the French Parnassian school, which, according to him, was characterised by a determination "to create beauty, a beauty somewhat statuesque, dramatic, and objective, rather than intimate."

He was a member of the consular service in the East, and many of his poems are on Oriental subjects.

## XIX.—LA VIE CÉRÉBRALE

Robin Flower is a living poet, author of *Éire and Other Poems* (1910), *Hymenæa* (1918), and *Poems and Translations* (1931).

## XX.—ERRANTRY

John Galsworthy was born in 1867, and died in 1933. Better known as novelist and playwright, he was also the author of *Moods, Songs, and Doggerels* (1912) and *Verses, Old and New* (1926). The award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1932 was a fitting recognition of his eminent position as a man of letters. No one has seen the social ills and injustices of our times with a clearer eye. He describes them and analyses them, and if he prescribes no remedies his work is known to have had practical effect in giving an impetus to various much-needed reforms. His novels and short stories and plays have been translated into most of the principal languages of the world. His verses, though not so remarkable, ought not to be ignored.

## XXI.—THE SHOP

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson was born in 1878. His *Collected Poems, 1905-1925* appeared in 1926, *The Golden Room* in 1928, *Hazards* in 1930, and *Islands* in 1932. As a writer in *The Times Literary Supplement* said of him: "The problem in Mr. Gibson's poetry is how to raise matters of everyday life to poetry. He allows himself none of the aids of poetic diction or of imagery, but he seeks to make his matter into poetry by making it dramatic." Another critic says of his verse: "Its unfamiliarity may displease the eye and ear at first, but it is not long before we perceive the design which controls its apparent waywardness, and recognise its fitness to express the life that the poet has chosen to depict." He deals with the struggle for daily bread, the hard lot of the miners and the labourers generally, the disappointments, the dull daily drudgery, the jealousies and hates and pettinesses, and underneath all, the essential nobility, the primal affections, the generous sacrifice and the willing renunciation.

## XXII.—STARS

From *Beauty for Ashes*. This poem is a plea for idealism exceedingly remarkable as coming from one of the great realists in modern poetry.

## XXIII.—A DREAM QUESTION

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928), the author of the great series of Wessex novels, and the superb epic-drama *The Dynasts* (1903–08), forsook prose for poetry after the publication of *Jude the Obscure* (1895). His *Collected Poems* contain his work in verse from *Wessex Poems* (1898) to *Winter Words*, issued after his death in 1929. In the Preface to this last work, he says: “My last volume of poems was pronounced wholly gloomy and pessimistic by reviewers—even by some of the more able class. . . . As labels stick, I foresee readily enough that the same perennial inscription will be set on the following pages.” This protest notwithstanding, melancholy, disillusionment, sorrowful resignation, are the main characteristics of his poetry. Hardy smiles indulgently and wistfully at men’s dreams, so frail and fleeting and powerless against the cruelties and tragedies of actual life. This poem comes from *Time’s Laughingstocks* (1909).

## XXIV.—NEW YEAR’S EVE

Also from *Time’s Laughingstocks*, and dated 1906. God works from force of habit or in obedience to some eternal law, unmindful of man’s protests and of the illogicalities of His plan. He never realised that He was creating a being that would question His ways.

## XXV.—THE LAST LEAF

From *Human Shows, Far Phantasies* (1925).

## XXVI.—TIME, YOU OLD GIPSY MAN

Ralph Hodgson was born in 1872. He has only published two small volumes, *The Last Blackbird* (1907) and *Poems* (1917), but nearly every poem in them is a masterpiece.

## XXVII.—THE CHILDREN'S SONG

Rudyard Kipling was born in India in 1865, and his youth was spent in journalistic work at Lahore and Allahabad. In addition to brilliant and powerful work in prose, particularly in the field of the short story, he has written what is probably the best-known and most often quoted verse of modern times in such volumes as *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892), *The Seven Seas* (1896), *The Five Nations* (1903), and *The Years Between* (1919).

## XXVIII.—THE FIRES

This is the Prelude to the *Collected Verse* published in 1927.

## XXIX.—SHIV AND THE GRASSHOPPER

From *Songs from Books* (1913). An Indian legend rendered into English verse.

## XXX.—LAUGH AND BE MERRY

John Masefield was born in 1874 and succeeded Robert Bridges as Poet Laureate in 1930. He is a writer of plays and novels—*The Tragedy of Nan* (1909), *Sard Harker* (1924)—in addition to poetry. His *Collected Poems* appeared in 1923. These lines are from *Ballads and Poems* (1910). "The days that make us happy make us wise," is one of the author's famous lines; yet he prefers to take "a handful of ashes, a

mouthful of mould" as the theme of his verse. He has written much of the sea and seafaring men, of the countryside, of humble folk and their troubles, of sinners and their redemption.

### XXXI.—A SONG AT PARTING

From *Salt-Water Ballads* (1902).

### XXXII.—THE WEST WIND

Also from *Salt-Water Ballads*.

### XXXIII.—INDIAN WEAVERS

Sarojini Naidu was born in 1880 and is a poetess and orator. She has succeeded in reproducing the atmosphere of the East much more faithfully than any other writer of English verse. She has published three volumes of poetry, *The Golden Threshold*, in which this poem appears, *The Bird of Time*, and *The Broken Wing*.

### XXXIV.—THE QUEEN'S RIVAL

From *The Golden Threshold*.

### XXXV.—SONG OF RADHA, THE MILKMAID

From *The Bird of Time*.

### XXXVI.—GUERDON

From *The Bird of Time*.

### XXXVII.—HOPE THE HORNBLOWER

Sir Henry Newbolt was born in 1862. His stirring and virile work in verse was collected in *Poems New and Old*, published in 1912. He is also, the author of various essays and studies and some collections of historical tales.

### XXXVIII.—DREAM-LOVE

Christina Rossetti was born in 1830 and died in 1894. Many people regard her as the foremost English poetess.

### XXXIX.—LOVE

George William Russell (A.E.) born 1867, was one of the leaders of the Irish literary revival, and is celebrated as an artist, mystic, and economist as well as a poet. His *Collected Poems* were first published in 1913, *Voices of the Stones* in 1925, and *Vale* in 1930.

### XL.—STRANGENESS OF HEART

Siegfried Sassoon was born in 1886. He made his reputation by the bitter and outspoken verses inspired by his war experiences. His works include *The Old Huntsman* (1917), *Counter-Attack* (1918), *War Poems* (1919), *Satirical Poems* (1926), and *The Heart's Journey* (1928), from which these lines are reprinted. He has also published two remarkable volumes of autobiography, *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man* and *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*.

### XLI.—TO ONE IN PRISON

From *The Heart's Journey*.

## XLII.—IN WASTE PLACES

James Stephens, born in 1882, is a highly individual Irish poet and novelist. His volumes of poetry include *Insurrections* (1909), *The Hill of Vision* (1912), *Reincarnations* (1918), *Collected Poems* (1926), and *Strict Joy* (1932). In prose he has written a captivating fantasy, *The Crock of Gold* (1912), and beautiful versions of old Irish stories in *Deirdre* (1923) and *In the Land of Youth* (1924).

## XLIII.—PLAYTHINGS.

Rabindranath Tagore, born in 1861, has achieved an international reputation as poet, novelist, essayist, philosopher, dramatist and speaker. The English version of his *Gitanjali* (1913) introduced him to the Western world, and this volume and its successors, *The Crescent Moon* (1913), *The Gardener* (1913), *Fruit-Gathering* (1916), etc., have been translated into nearly every European language.

This poem comes from *The Crescent Moon*.

## XLIV.—THE NIGHT DARKENED

From *Gitanjali*.

## XLV.—I ASKED NOTHING FROM THEE

From *Gitanjali*.

## XLVI.—TREASURES

Mary Webb (1883-1927) is better known as the author of some notable novels of country life in Wales and Shropshire, *The Golden Arrow* (1916) and *Precious Bane* (1924), than as a poetess.

## XLVII.—THE YOUNG

Humbert Wolfe, born in 1885, is one of the most gifted of living English poets and satirists, who had published a good deal of distinguished work before he won general recognition with his *News of the Devil* (1926), and *Requiem* (1927). This poem is taken from *Snow* (1931).

## XLVIII.—THE LOVER TELLS OF THE ROSE IN HIS HEART

William Butler Yeats, poet, dramatist, and essayist, was born in 1865, and his work has been of immense influence in the revival of Irish literature and drama. The most noteworthy of his separate volumes of verse are probably *Poems* (1895), *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899), *In the Seven Woods* (1903), *Responsibilities* (1914), *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), and *The Tower* (1928). His plays include *Countess Cathleen* (1892), *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), *Deirdre* (1907) and *Four Plays for Dancers* (1921). In their collected form his works are arranged in the six volumes of *Early Poems and Stories*, *Later Poems*, *Plays in Prose and Verse*, *Plays and Controversies*, *Essays*, and *Autobiographies*.

## XLIX.—TO A CHILD DANCING IN THE WIND

From *Responsibilities* (1914).

## L.—THE QUAILS

Francis Brett Young, born in 1884, is the author of a number of unusually fine novels, including *The Young Physician* (1919), *Portrait of Clare* (1927), and *The House under the Water* (1932). He has published only two volumes of verse, *Five Degrees South* (1917) and *Poems 1916-18* (1919). The cruel practice described in this poem has recently been abolished.



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