

**TOWARDS AN OPEN ANTHOLOGY  
OF POETRY**



# TOWARDS AN OPEN ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY

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Appendix: A Selection of Terms for Talking about Poetry



## Poems about Spring, Renewal, and Rebirth

### Loveliest of Trees

*A. E. Housman, 1859 – 1936*

Loveliests of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough,  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,  
Twenty will not come again,  
And take from seventy springs a score,  
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

---

### Spring

*Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1892 – 1950*

To what purpose, April, do you return again?  
Beauty is not enough.  
You can no longer quiet me with the redness  
Of little leaves opening stickily.  
I know what I know.  
The sun is hot on my neck as I observe  
The spikes of crocus.

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The smell of the earth is good.  
It is apparent that there is no death.  
But what does that signify?  
Not only under ground are the brains of men  
Eaten by maggots.  
Life in itself  
Is nothing,  
An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.  
It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,  
April  
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.

---

### The Daffodils

*William Wordsworth, 1770 – 1850*

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

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

The waves beside them danced, but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A Poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

---

Corinna's Going a-Maying

*Robert Herrick, 1591 – 1634*

Get up, get up for shame! The blooming morn  
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.  
See how Aurora throws her fair  
Fresh-quilted colours through the air:  
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see  
The dew bespangling herb and tree!  
Each flower has wept and bow'd toward the east  
Above an hour since, yet you not drest;  
Nay! not so much as out of bed?  
When all the birds have matins said  
And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,  
Nay, profanation, to keep in,  
Whereas a thousand virgins on this day  
Spring sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.  
Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen  
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,  
And sweet as Flora. Take no care  
For jewels for your gown or hair:  
Fear not; the leaves will strew  
Gems in abundance upon you:  
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,  
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.  
Come, and receive them while the light  
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:  
And Titan on the eastern hill  
Retires himself, or else stands still

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Till you come forth! Wash, dress, be brief in praying:  
Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and coming, mark  
How each field turns a street, each street a park,  
Made green and trimm'd with trees! see how  
Devotion gives each house a bough  
Or branch! each porch, each door, ere this,  
An ark, a tabernacle is,  
Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove,  
As if here were those cooler shades of love.  
Can such delights be in the street  
And open fields, and we not see 't?  
Come, we'll abroad: and let 's obey  
The proclamation made for May,  
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;  
But, my Corinna, come, let 's go a-Maying.

There 's not a budding boy or girl this day  
But is got up and gone to bring in May.  
A deal of youth ere this is come  
Back, and with white-thorn laden home.  
Some have despatch'd their cakes and cream,  
Before that we have left to dream:  
And some have wept and woo'd, and plighted troth,  
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth:  
Many a green-gown has been given,  
Many a kiss, both odd and even:  
Many a glance, too, has been sent  
From out the eye, love's firmament:  
Many a jest told of the keys betraying  
This night, and locks pick'd: yet we're not a-Maying!

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,  
And take the harmless folly of the time!  
We shall grow old apace, and die  
Before we know our liberty.  
Our life is short, and our days run  
As fast away as does the sun.

And, as a vapour or a drop of rain,  
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,  
So when or you or I are made  
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,  
All love, all liking, all delight  
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.  
Then, while time serves, and we are but decaying,  
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

---

### The Enkindled Spring

*D. H. Lawrence, 1885 – 1930*

This spring as it comes bursts up in bonfires green,  
Wild puffing of emerald trees, and flame-filled bushes,  
Thorn-blossom lifting in wreaths of smoke between  
Where the wood fumes up and the watery, flickering rushes.

I am amazed at this spring, this conflagration  
Of green fires lit on the soil of the earth, this blaze  
Of growing, and sparks that puff in wild gyration,  
Faces of people streaming across my gaze.

And I, what fountain of fire am I among  
This leaping combustion of spring? My spirit is tossed  
About like a shadow buffeted in the throng  
Of flames, a shadow that's gone astray, and is lost.

---

### Other poems and songs not in the public domain:

- "Spring is like a perhaps hand," e.e. cummings
- "Nothing Gold Can Stay," Robert Frost
- "Cherry Blossoms," Toi Dericotte
- "Here Comes the Sun" (song), The Beatles
- "Spring Thunder," Mark Van Doren
- "365," Jack Buck
- "A Father's First Spring" (song), The Avett Brothers
- "Spring Breakdown" (song), Luke Bryan



## Behind the Scenes: Poets Talking about their Work

### The Raven

*Edgar Allan Poe, 1809 – 1849*

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door—  
“Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,  
“Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—  
This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,

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That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—  
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,  
fearing,

Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"—  
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.

"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—  
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—  
'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;  
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;  
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—  
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—  
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no  
craven,

Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—  
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"  
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door—  
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only  
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.

Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—  
Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other friends have flown before—  
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before.”  
Then the bird said “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store  
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—  
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore  
Of ‘Never—nevermore.’”

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;  
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—  
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore  
Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;  
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o’er,  
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen  
censer

Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath  
sent thee

Respite—respite and nepenthe, from thy memories of Lenore;  
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—  
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,  
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—  
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—  
Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

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“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!  
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”  
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

“Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked,  
upstarting—

“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!  
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my  
door!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still* is sitting  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,  
And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

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**“On the Philosophy of Composition”:** Poe’s detailed discussion of  
how, and why, he wrote “The Raven.”

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### Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle.”

From the *Brainpickings* blog, “The Story Behind Dylan Thomas’s  
“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” and the Poet’s Own  
Stirring Reading of His Masterpiece.”

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## Poems about Nature

### The Lake Isle of Innisfree

*W. B. Yeats, 1865 – 1939*

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

---

### Binsey Poplars

*Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1844 – 1889*

*felled 1879*

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,  
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,  
All felled, felled, are all felled;  
Of a fresh and following folded rank  
Not spared, not one

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That dandled a sandalled  
Shadow that swam or sank  
On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed-winding bank.  
O if we but knew what we do  
When we delve or hew—  
Hack and rack the growing green!  
Since country is so tender  
To touch, her being só slender,  
That, like this sleek and seeing ball  
But a prick will make no eye at all,  
Where we, even where we mean  
To mend her we end her,  
When we hew or delve:  
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.  
Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve  
Strokes of havoc únselve  
The sweet especial scene,  
Rural scene, a rural scene,  
Sweet especial rural scene.

---

### By the Stream

*Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1872 – 1906*

By the stream I dream in calm delight, and watch as in a glass,  
How the clouds like crowds of snowy-hued and white-robed maidens  
pass,  
And the water into ripples breaks and sparkles as it spreads,  
Like a host of armored knights with silver helmets on their heads.  
And I deem the stream an emblem fit of human life may go,  
For I find a mind may sparkle much and yet but shallows show,  
And a soul may glow with myriad lights and wondrous mysteries,  
When it only lies a dormant thing and mirrors what it sees.

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*Other poems, not in the public domain*

- “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” Robert Frost
- “Wild Geese,” Mary Oliver



## Renaissance Love Sonnets for Close- Reading Practice

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586)

*Astrophel and Stella I*

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,  
 That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,—  
 Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,  
 Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,—  
 I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;  
 Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,  
 Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
 Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburn'd brain.  
 But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;  
 Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;  
 And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.  
 Thus great with child to speak and helpless in my throes,  
 Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,  
 "Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write."

---

In this strange labyrinth

*Lady Mary Wroth (1587–1651)*

In this strange labyrinth how shall I turn,  
 Ways are on all sides while the way I miss:  
 If to the right hand, there, in love I burn,

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Let me go forward, therein danger is.  
If to the left, suspicion hinders bliss;  
Let me turn back, shame cries I ought return:  
Nor faint, though crosses my fortunes kiss,  
Stand still is harder, although sure to mourn.  
This let me take the right, or left hand way,  
Go forward, or stand still, or back retire:  
I must these doubts endure without allay  
Or help, but travel finde for my best hire.  
Yet that which most my troubled sense doth move,  
Is to leave all, and take the thread of Love.

---

### One Day I Wrote Her Name Upon the Strand

*Edmund Spenser (1552–1599)*

ONE day I wrote her name upon the strand,  
But came the waves and washèd it away:  
Again I wrote it with a second hand,  
But came the tide and made my pains his prey.  
Vain man (said she) that dost in vain assay  
A mortal thing so to immortalise;  
For I myself shall like to this decay,  
And eke my name be wipèd out likewise.  
Not so (quod I); let baser things devise  
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame; 10  
My verse your virtues rare shall eternise,  
And in the heavens write your glorious name:  
Where, when as Death shall all the world subdue,  
Our love shall live, and later life renew.

## Light Verse

### The Owl and the Pussy-Cat

*BY EDWARD LEAR*

I

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea  
 In a beautiful pea-green boat,  
 They took some honey, and plenty of money,  
 Wrapped up in a five-pound note.  
 The Owl looked up to the stars above,  
 And sang to a small guitar,  
 "O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,  
 What a beautiful Pussy you are,  
     You are,  
     You are!  
 What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

II

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!  
 How charmingly sweet you sing!  
 O let us be married! too long we have tarried:  
 But what shall we do for a ring?"  
 They sailed away, for a year and a day,  
 To the land where the Bong-Tree grows  
 And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood  
 With a ring at the end of his nose,  
     His nose,  
     His nose,  
 With a ring at the end of his nose.

III

“Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling  
 Your ring?” Said the Piggy, “I will.”  
 So they took it away, and were married next day  
 By the Turkey who lives on the hill.  
 They dined on mince, and slices of quince,  
 Which they ate with a runcible spoon;  
 And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,  
 They danced by the light of the moon,  
     The moon,  
     The moon,  
 They danced by the light of the moon.

---

The Courtship of the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo

*Edward Lear, 1812 – 1888*

On the Coast of Coromandel  
 Where the early pumpkins blow,  
 In the middle of the woods  
 Lived the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.  
 Two old chairs, and half a candle,  
 One old jug without a handle—  
 These were all his worldly goods,  
 In the middle of the woods,  
 These were all his worldly goods,  
 Of the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo,  
 Of the Yonghy-Bonghy Bo.  
 Once, among the Bong-trees walking  
 Where the early pumpkins blow,  
 To a little heap of stones  
 Came the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.  
 There he heard a Lady talking,  
 To some milk-white Hens of Dorking—  
 “’Tis the Lady Jingly Jones!  
 On that little heap of stones

Sits the Lady Jingly Jones!"

Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo,

Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.

"Lady Jingly! Lady Jingly!

Sitting where the pumpkins blow,

Will you come and be my wife?"

Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.

"I am tired of living singly—

On this coast so wild and shingly—

I'm a-weary of my life;

If you'll come and be my wife,

Quite serene would be my life!"

Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo,

Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.

"On this Coast of Coromandel

Shrimps and watercresses grow,

Prawns are plentiful and cheap,"

Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.

"You shall have my chairs and candle,

And my jug without a handle!

Gaze upon the rolling deep

(Fish is plentiful and cheap);

As the sea, my love is deep!"

Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo,

Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.

Lady Jingly answered sadly,

And her tears began to flow—

"Your proposal comes too late,

Mr. Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo!

I would be your wife most gladly!"

(Here she twirled her fingers madly)

"But in England I've a mate!

Yes! you've asked me far too late,

For in England I've a mate,

Mr. Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo!

Mr. Yongby-Bonghy-Bo!

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“Mr. Jones (his name is Handel-  
Handel Jones, Esquire, & Co.)  
Dorking fowls delights to send  
Mr. Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo!  
Keep, oh, keep your chairs and candle,  
And your jug without a handle-  
I can merely be your friend!  
Should my Jones more Dorkings send,  
I will give you three, my friend!  
Mr. Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo!  
Mr. Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo!

“Though you’ve such a tiny body,  
And your head so large doth grow-  
Though your hat may blow away  
Mr. Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo!  
Though you’re such a Hoddy Doddy,  
Yet I wish that I could modi-  
fy the words I needs must say!  
will you please to go away  
That is all I have to say,  
Mr. Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo!  
Mr. Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo!”

Down the slippery slopes of Myrtle,  
Where the early pumpkins blow,  
To the calm and silent sea  
Fled the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.  
There, beyond the Bay of Gurtle,  
Lay a large and lively Turtle.  
“You’re the Cove,” he said, “for me;  
On your back beyond the sea,  
Turtle, you shall carry me!”  
Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo,  
Said the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.

Through the silent-roaring ocean  
Did the Turtle swiftly go;  
Holding fast upon his shell

Rode the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.  
 With a sad primeval motion  
 Towards the sunset isles of Boshen  
 Still the Turtle bore him well.  
 Holding fast upon his shell,  
 "Lady Jingly Jones, farewell!"  
 Sang the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo,  
 Sang the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.

From the Coast of Coromandel  
 Did that Lady never go;  
 On that heap of stones she mourns  
 For the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.  
 On that Coast of Coromandel,  
 In his jug without a handle  
 Still she weeps, and daily moans;  
 On that little heap of stones  
 To her Dorking Hens she moans,  
 For the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo,  
 For the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.

---

### Jabberwocky

*BY LEWIS CARROLL*

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
 All mimsy were the borogoves,  
 And the mome raths outgrabe.  
 "Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
 The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
 Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
 The frumious Bandersnatch!"  
 He took his vorpal sword in hand;  
 Long time the manxome foe he sought—  
 So rested he by the Tumtum tree  
 And stood awhile in thought.

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And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!  
One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.  
“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”  
He chortled in his joy.  
’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

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### The Walrus and the Carpenter

*BY LEWIS CARROLL*

“The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might:  
He did his very best to make  
The billows smooth and bright —  
And this was odd, because it was  
The middle of the night.  
The moon was shining sulkily,  
Because she thought the sun  
Had got no business to be there  
After the day was done —  
“It’s very rude of him,” she said,  
“To come and spoil the fun.”  
The sea was wet as wet could be,  
The sands were dry as dry.  
You could not see a cloud, because

No cloud was in the sky:  
No birds were flying overhead —  
There were no birds to fly.  
The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Were walking close at hand;  
They wept like anything to see  
Such quantities of sand:  
If this were only cleared away,'  
They said, it *would* be grand!  
If seven maids with seven mops  
Swept it for half a year,  
Do you suppose,' the Walrus said,  
That they could get it clear?'  
I doubt it,' said the Carpenter,  
And shed a bitter tear.  
O Oysters, come and walk with us!  
The Walrus did beseech.  
A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,  
Along the briny beach:  
We cannot do with more than four,  
To give a hand to each.'  
The eldest Oyster looked at him,  
But never a word he said:  
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,  
And shook his heavy head —  
Meaning to say he did not choose  
To leave the oyster-bed.  
But four young Oysters hurried up,  
All eager for the treat:  
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,  
Their shoes were clean and neat —  
And this was odd, because, you know,  
They hadn't any feet.  
Four other Oysters followed them,  
And yet another four;  
And thick and fast they came at last,

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And more, and more, and more —  
All hopping through the frothy waves,  
And scrambling to the shore.  
The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Walked on a mile or so,  
And then they rested on a rock  
Conveniently low:  
And all the little Oysters stood  
And waited in a row.  
The time has come,' the Walrus said,  
To talk of many things:  
Of shoes — and ships — and sealing-wax —  
Of cabbages — and kings —  
And why the sea is boiling hot —  
And whether pigs have wings.'  
But wait a bit,' the Oysters cried,  
Before we have our chat;  
For some of us are out of breath,  
And all of us are fat!  
No hurry!' said the Carpenter.  
They thanked him much for that.  
A loaf of bread,' the Walrus said,  
Is what we chiefly need:  
Pepper and vinegar besides  
Are very good indeed —  
Now if you're ready, Oysters dear,  
We can begin to feed.'  
But not on us!' the Oysters cried,  
Turning a little blue.  
After such kindness, that would be  
A dismal thing to do!  
The night is fine,' the Walrus said.  
Do you admire the view?  
It was so kind of you to come!  
And you are very nice!  
The Carpenter said nothing but

Cut us another slice:  
 I wish you were not quite so deaf —  
     I've had to ask you twice!  
 It seems a shame,' the Walrus said,  
     To play them such a trick,  
 After we've brought them out so far,  
     And made them trot so quick!  
 The Carpenter said nothing but  
     The butter's spread too thick!  
 I weep for you,' the Walrus said:  
     I deeply sympathize.'  
 With sobs and tears he sorted out  
     Those of the largest size,  
 Holding his pocket-handkerchief  
     Before his streaming eyes.  
 O Oysters,' said the Carpenter,  
     You've had a pleasant run!  
 Shall we be trotting home again?'  
     But answer came there none —  
 And this was scarcely odd, because  
     They'd eaten every one."

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### A Wonderful Bird is the Pelican

*by Dixon Lanier Merritt*

A wonderful bird is the pelican,  
 His bill will hold more than his belican,  
 He can take in his beak  
 Enough food for a week  
 But I'm damned if I see how the helican!



## Poems with a Political Agenda

The Chimney Sweeper: When my mother died I was very  
young

*BY WILLIAM BLAKE*

When my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
Could scarcely cry "weep! weep! weep! weep!"  
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.  
There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head  
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved, so I said,  
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,  
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."  
And so he was quiet, & that very night,  
As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!  
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,  
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black;  
And by came an Angel who had a bright key,  
And he opened the coffins & set them all free;  
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,  
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.  
Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,  
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.  
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,  
He'd have God for his father & never want joy.  
And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark  
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.

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Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;  
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

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To the States,

*BY WALT WHITMAN*

To Identify the 16th, 17th, or 18th Presidentiad.  
Why reclining, interrogating? why myself and all drowsing?  
What deepening twilight—scum floating atop of the waters,  
Who are they as bats and night-dogs askant in the capitol?  
What a filthy Presidentiad! (O South, your torrid suns! O North, your  
arctic freezings!)

Are those really Congressmen? are those the great Judges? is that the  
President?

Then I will sleep awhile yet, for I see that these States sleep, for reasons;  
(With gathering murk, with muttering thunder and lambent shoots we  
all duly awake,  
South, North, East, West, inland and seaboard, we will surely awake.)

---

Leaves of Grass. 1900.

*Walt Whitman (1819–1892)*

### **I Sit and Look Out**

I SIT and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all  
oppression and shame;  
I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men, at anguish with  
themselves, remorseful after deeds done;  
I see, in low life, the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected,  
gaunt, desperate;  
I see the wife misused by her husband—I see the treacherous seducer of  
young women;  
I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love, attempted to be  
hid—I see these sights on the earth; 5  
I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny—I see martyrs and

prisoners;

I observe a famine at sea—I observe the sailors casting lots who shall be  
kill'd, to preserve the lives of the rest;

I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon  
laborers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like;

All these—All the meanness and agony without end, I sitting, look out  
upon,

See, hear, and am silent.

---

### Not in the public domain

- “On the pulse of morning,” Maya Angelou
- “Doctrine,” Sam Sax
- “Our Melting, Shifting, Liquid World: Celebrities Read Poems on Climate Change,” *The Guardian*.



## Learning to Recognize Good Poetry by Reading Bad Poetry

### The Beautiful Sun

*William McGonagall (1825-1902)*

Beautiful Sun! with thy golden rays,  
To God, the wise Creator, be all praise;  
For thou nourisheth all the creation,  
Wherever there is found to be animation.

Without thy heat we could not live,  
Then praise to God we ought to give;  
For thou makest the fruits and provisions to grow,  
To nourish all creatures on earth below.

Thou makest the hearts of the old feel glad,  
Likewise the young child and the lad,  
And the face of Nature to look green and gay,  
And the little children to sport and play.

Thou also givest light unto the Moon,  
Which certainly is a very great boon  
To all God's creatures here below,  
Throughout the world where'er they go.

How beautiful thou look'st on a summer morn,  
When thou sheddest thy effulgence among the yellow corn,  
Also upon lake, and river, and the mountain tops,  
Whilst thou leavest behind the most lovely dewdrops!

How beautiful thou seem'st in the firmament above,  
As I gaze upon thee, my heart fills with love

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To God, the great Creator, Who has placed thee there,  
Who watches all His creatures with an eye of care!

Thou makest the birds to sing on the tree,  
Also by meadow, mountain, and lea;  
And the lark high poised up in air,  
Carolling its little song with its heart free from care.

Thou makest the heart of the shepherd feel gay  
As he watches the little lambkins at their innocent play;  
While he tends them on the hillside all day,  
Taking care that none of them shall go astray.

Thou cheerest the weary traveller while on his way  
During the livelong summer day,  
As he admires the beautiful scenery while passing along,  
And singing to himself a stave of a song.

Thou cheerest the tourist while amongst the Highland hills,  
As he views their beautiful sparkling rills  
Glittering like diamonds by the golden rays,  
While the hills seem to offer up to God their praise.

While the bee from flower to flower does roam  
To gather honey, and carry it home;  
While it hums its little song in the beautiful sunshine,  
And seemingly to thank the Creator divine —

For the honey it hath gathered during the day,  
In the merry month of May,  
When the flowers are in full bloom,  
Also the sweet honeysuckle and the broom.

How beautiful thy appearance while setting in the west,  
Whilst encircled with red and azure, 'tis then thou look'st best!  
Then let us all thank God for thy golden light  
In our prayers every morning and night!

---

The Little Match Girl

*BY KNIGHT OF THE WHITE ELEPHANT OF BURMAH*  
*WILLIAM MCGONAGALL*

It was biting cold, and the falling snow,  
Which filled a poor little match girl's heart with woe,  
Who was bareheaded and barefooted, as she went along the street,  
Crying, "Who'll buy my matches? for I want pennies to buy some meat!"  
When she left home she had slippers on;  
But, alas! poor child, now they were gone.  
For she lost both of them while hurrying across the street,  
Out of the way of two carriages which were near by her feet.  
So the little girl went on, while the snow fell thick and fast;  
And the child's heart felt cold and downcast,  
For nobody had bought any matches that day,  
Which filled her little mind with grief and dismay.  
Alas! she was hungry and shivering with cold;  
So in a corner between two houses she made bold  
To take shelter from the violent storm.  
Poor little waif! wishing to herself she'd never been born.  
And she grew colder and colder, and feared to go home  
For fear of her father beating her; and she felt woe-begone  
Because she could carry home no pennies to buy bread,  
And to go home without pennies she was in dread.  
The large flakes of snow covered her ringlets of fair hair;  
While the passers-by for her had no care,  
As they hurried along to their homes at a quick pace,  
While the cold wind blew in the match girl's face.  
As night wore on her hands were numb with cold,  
And no longer her strength could her uphold,  
When an idea into her little head came:  
She'd strike a match and warm her hands at the flame.  
And she lighted the match, and it burned brightly,  
And it helped to fill her heart with glee;  
And she thought she was sitting at a stove very grand;

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But, alas! she was found dead, with a match in her hand!  
Her body was found half-covered with snow,  
And as the people gazed thereon their hearts were full of woe;  
And many present let fall a burning tear  
Because she was found dead on the last night of the year,  
In that mighty city of London, wherein is plenty of gold—  
But, alas! their charity towards street waifs is rather cold.  
But I hope the match girl's in Heaven, beside her Saviour dear,  
A bright reward for all the hardships she suffered here.

## Poems That Tell Stories

### Bridal Ballad

*By Edgar Allan Poe*

The ring is on my hand,  
And the wreath is on my brow;  
Satin and jewels grand  
Are all at my command,  
And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well;  
But, when first he breathed his vow,  
I felt my bosom swell—  
For the words rang as a knell,  
And the voice seemed his who fell  
In the battle down the dell,  
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to re-assure me,  
And he kissed my pallid brow,  
While a reverie came o'er me,  
And to the church-yard bore me,  
And I sighed to him before me,  
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,  
“Oh, I am happy now!”

And thus the words were spoken,  
And this the plighted vow,  
And, though my faith be broken,  
And, though my heart be broken,

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Here is a ring, as token  
That I am happy now!  
    Would God I could awaken!  
For I dream I know not how!  
And my soul is sorely shaken  
Lest an evil step be taken,-  
Lest the dead who is forsaken  
May not be happy now.

---

### The Cremation of Sam McGee

BY ROBERT W. SERVICE

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun  
    By the men who toil for gold;  
The Arctic trails have their secret tales  
    That would make your blood run cold;  
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,  
    But the queerest they ever did see  
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebargé  
    I cremated Sam McGee.*

*Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee, where the cotton blooms and blows.  
Why he left his home in the South to roam 'round the Pole, God only knows.  
He was always cold, but the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell;  
Though he'd often say in his homely way that "he'd sooner live in hell."  
On a Christmas Day we were mushing our way over the Dawson trail.  
Talk of your cold! through the parka's fold it stabbed like a driven nail.  
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze till sometimes we couldn't see;  
It wasn't much fun, but the only one to whimper was Sam McGee.  
And that very night, as we lay packed tight in our robes beneath the snow,  
And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead were dancing heel and toe,  
He turned to me, and "Cap," says he, "I'll cash in this trip, I guess;  
And if I do, I'm asking that you won't refuse my last request."  
Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no; then he says with a sort of  
moan:*

*"It's the cursèd cold, and it's got right hold till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.*

*Yet 'tain't being dead—it's my awful dread of the icy grave that pains;  
So I want you to swear that, foul or fair, you'll cremate my last remains."  
A pal's last need is a thing to heed, so I swore I would not fail;  
And we started on at the streak of dawn; but God! he looked ghastly pale.  
He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all day of his home in Tennessee;  
And before nightfall a corpse was all that was left of Sam McGee.  
There wasn't a breath in that land of death, and I hurried, horror-driven,  
With a corpse half hid that I couldn't get rid, because of a promise given;  
It was lashed to the sleigh, and it seemed to say: "You may tax your brawn  
and brains,*

*But you promised true, and it's up to you to cremate those last remains."  
Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code.  
In the days to come, though my lips were dumb, in my heart how I cursed  
that load.*

*In the long, long night, by the lone firelight, while the huskies, round in a ring,  
Howled out their woes to the homeless snows— O God! how I loathed the  
thing.*

*And every day that quiet clay seemed to heavy and heavier grow;  
And on I went, though the dogs were spent and the grub was getting low;  
The trail was bad, and I felt half mad, but I swore I would not give in;  
And I'd often sing to the hateful thing, and it hearkened with a grin.  
Till I came to the marge of Lake Lebarge, and a derelict there lay;  
It was jammed in the ice, but I saw in a trice it was called the "Alice May."  
And I looked at it, and I thought a bit, and I looked at my frozen chum;  
Then "Here," said I, with a sudden cry, "is my cre-ma-tor-eum."  
Some planks I tore from the cabin floor, and I lit the boiler fire;  
Some coal I found that was lying around, and I heaped the fuel higher;  
The flames just soared, and the furnace roared—such a blaze you seldom see;  
And I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal, and I stuffed in Sam McGee.  
Then I made a hike, for I didn't like to hear him sizzle so;  
And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled, and the wind began to  
blow.*

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*It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled down my cheeks, and I don't know why;*

*And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak went streaking down the sky.*

*I do not know how long in the snow I wrestled with grisly fear;*

*But the stars came out and they danced about ere again I ventured near;*

*I was sick with dread, but I bravely said: "I'll just take a peep inside.*

*I guess he's cooked, and it's time I looked"; ... then the door I opened wide.*

*And there sat Sam, looking cool and calm, in the heart of the furnace roar;*

*And he wore a smile you could see a mile, and he said: "Please close that door.*

*It's fine in here, but I greatly fear you'll let in the cold and storm—*

*Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee, it's the first time I've been warm."*

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun*

*By the men who toil for gold;*

*The Arctic trails have their secret tales*

*That would make your blood run cold;*

*The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,*

*But the queerest they ever did see*

*Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebargé*

*I cremated Sam McGee.*

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### The Lady of Shalott (1832)

BY ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

#### Part I

On either side the river lie

Long fields of barley and of rye,

That clothe the wold and meet the sky;

And thro' the field the road runs by

To many-tower'd Camelot;

The yellow-leaved waterlily

The green-sheathed daffodilly

Tremble in the water chilly

Round about Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens shiver.  
The sunbeam showers break and quiver  
In the stream that runneth ever  
By the island in the river

Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers

The Lady of Shalott.  
Underneath the bearded barley,  
The reaper, reaping late and early,  
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,  
Like an angel, singing clearly,

O'er the stream of Camelot.  
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,  
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary  
Listening whispers, ' 'Tis the fairy,  
Lady of Shalott.'

The little isle is all inrail'd  
With a rose-fence, and overtrail'd  
With roses: by the marge unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken sail'd,  
Skimming down to Camelot.

A pearl garland winds her head:  
She leaneth on a velvet bed,  
Full royally apparelled,  
The Lady of Shalott.

## Part II

No time hath she to sport and play:  
A charmed web she weaves away.  
A curse is on her, if she stay  
Her weaving, either night or day,  
To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be;  
Therefore she weaveth steadily,  
Therefore no other care hath she,

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The Lady of Shalott.  
She lives with little joy or fear.  
Over the water, running near,  
The sheepbell tinkles in her ear.  
Before her hangs a mirror clear,  
    Reflecting tower'd Camelot.  
And as the mazy web she whirls,  
She sees the surly village churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls  
    Pass onward from Shalott.  
Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,  
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
    Goes by to tower'd Camelot:  
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two:  
She hath no loyal knight and true,  
    The Lady of Shalott.  
But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights  
    And music, came from Camelot:  
Or when the moon was overhead  
Came two young lovers lately wed;  
'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
    The Lady of Shalott.

### Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flam'd upon the brazen greaves  
    Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,

That sparkled on the yellow field,  
 Beside remote Shalott.  
 The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
 Like to some branch of stars we see  
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
 The bridle bells rang merrily  
     As he rode down from Camelot:  
 And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
 A mighty silver bugle hung,  
 And as he rode his armour rung,  
     Beside remote Shalott.  
 All in the blue unclouded weather  
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
 The helmet and the helmet-feather  
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
     As he rode down from Camelot.  
 As often thro' the purple night,  
 Below the starry clusters bright,  
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
     Moves over green Shalott.  
 His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;  
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;  
 From underneath his helmet flow'd  
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
     As he rode down from Camelot.  
 From the bank and from the river  
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
 'Tirra lirra, tirra lirra:'  
     Sang Sir Lancelot.  
 She left the web, she left the loom  
 She made three paces thro' the room  
 She saw the water-flower bloom,  
 She saw the helmet and the plume,  
     She look'd down to Camelot.  
 Out flew the web and floated wide;  
 The mirror crack'd from side to side;

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'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

### Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining

Over tower'd Camelot;  
Outside the isle a shallow boat  
Beneath a willow lay afloat,  
Below the carven stern she wrote,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight,  
All raimented in snowy white  
That loosely flew (her zone in sight  
Clasp'd with one blinding diamond bright)

Her wide eyes fix'd on Camelot,  
Though the squally east-wind keenly  
Blew, with folded arms serenely  
By the water stood the queenly  
Lady of Shalott.

With a steady stony glance—  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Beholding all his own mischance,  
Mute, with a glassy countenance—  
She look'd down to Camelot.

It was the closing of the day:  
She loos'd the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

As when to sailors while they roam,  
By creeks and outfalls far from home,  
Rising and dropping with the foam,  
From dying swans wild warblings come,  
Blown shoreward; so to Camelot  
Still as the boathead wound along

The willowy hills and fields among,  
 They heard her chanting her deathsong,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,  
 She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
 Till her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
 And her smooth face sharpen'd slowly,

    Turn'd to tower'd Camelot:  
 For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
 The first house by the water-side,  
 Singing in her song she died,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
 By garden wall and gallery,  
 A pale, pale corpse she floated by,  
 Deadcold, between the houses high,

    Dead into tower'd Camelot.  
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
 To the planked wharfage came:  
 Below the stern they read her name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

They cross'd themselves, their stars they blest,  
 Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire, and guest.  
 There lay a parchment on her breast,  
 That puzzled more than all the rest,  
     The wellfed wits at Camelot.

'The web was woven curiously,  
 The charm is broken utterly,  
 Draw near and fear not,—this is I,  
     The Lady of Shalott.'

---

h1>Barbara Allen

*BY ANONYMOUS In Scarlet town, where I was born,  
 There was a fair maid dwellin',  
 Made every youth cry Well-a-way!*

*Her name was Barbara Allen.*  
*All in the merry month of May,*  
*When green buds they were swellin',*  
*Young Jemmy Grove on his death-bed lay,*  
*For love of Barbara Allen.*  
*He sent his man in to her then,*  
*To the town where she was dwellin';*  
*"O haste and come to my master dear,*  
*If your name be Barbara Allen."*  
*So slowly, slowly rase she up,*  
*And slowly she came nigh him,*  
*And when she drew the curtain by—*  
*"Young man, I think you're dyin'."*  
*"O it's I am sick and very very sick,*  
*And it's all for Barbara Allen."—*  
*O the better for me ye'se never be,*  
*Tho' your heart's blood were a-spillin'!*  
*"O dinna ye mind, young man," says she,*  
*"When the red wine ye were fillin',*  
*That ye made the healths go round and round,*  
*And slighted Barbara Allen?"*  
*He turned his face unto the wall,*  
*And death was with him dealin':*  
*"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,*  
*And be kind to Barbara Allen!"*  
*As she was walking o'er the fields,*  
*She heard the dead-bell knellin';*  
*And every jow the dead-bell gave*  
*Cried "Woe to Barbara Allen."*  
*"O mother, mother, make my bed,*  
*O make it saft and narrow:*  
*My love has died for me today,*  
*I'll die for him tomorrow."*  
*"Farewell," she said, "ye virgins all,*  
*And shun the fault I fell in:*  
*Henceforth take warning by the fall*

*Of cruel Barbara Allen."* Not in the public domain "Jolene" (song), Dolly Parton "Bye bye, Miss American Pie" (song), Don McLean "You're Gonna

*Miss This* (song), Trace Adkins “*The Ballad of Me and My Brain*” (song),  
*The 1975*.



## Poems about philosophy, religion, and spirituality

### When I Consider How My Light Is Spent

*John Milton, 1608 – 1674*

When I consider how my light is spent,  
 Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
 And that one talent which is death to hide  
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
 My true account, lest He returning chide;  
 “Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?”  
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
 That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need  
 Either man’s work or His own gifts. Who best  
 Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state  
 Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed,  
 And post o’er land and ocean without rest;  
 They also serve who only stand and wait.”

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### The Lamb

*William Blake, 1757 – 1827*

Little lamb, who made thee?  
 Dost thou know who made thee,  
 Gave thee life, and bid thee feed

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By the stream and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice?  
Little lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;  
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:  
He is called by thy name,  
For He calls Himself a Lamb.  
He is meek, and He is mild,  
He became a little child.  
I a child, and thou a lamb,  
We are called by His name.  
Little lamb, God bless thee!  
Little lamb, God bless thee!

---

### Remember

*Christina Rossetti, 1830 – 1894*

Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more day by day  
You tell me of our future that you planned:  
Only remember me; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.

---

Song of Nature

*Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803 – 1882*

Mine are the night and morning,  
The pits of air, the gulf of space,  
The sportive sun, the gibbous moon,  
The innumerable days.

I hid in the solar glory,  
I am dumb in the pealing song,  
I rest on the pitch of the torrent,  
In slumber I am strong.

No numbers have counted my tallies,  
No tribes my house can fill,  
I sit by the shining Fount of Life,  
And pour the deluge still;

And ever by delicate powers  
Gathering along the centuries  
From race on race the rarest flowers,  
My wreath shall nothing miss.

And many a thousand summers  
My apples ripened well,  
And light from meliorating stars  
With firmer glory fell.

I wrote the past in characters  
Of rock and fire the scroll,  
The building in the coral sea,  
The planting of the coal.

And thefts from satellites and rings  
And broken stars I drew,  
And out of spent and aged things  
I formed the world anew;

What time the gods kept carnival,  
Tricked out in star and flower,  
And in cramp elf and saurian forms  
They swathed their too much power.

Time and Thought were my surveyors,

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They laid their courses well,  
They boiled the sea, and baked the layers  
Or granite, marl, and shell.

But he, the man-child glorious,—  
Where tarries he the while?  
The rainbow shines his harbinger,  
The sunset gleams his smile.

My boreal lights leap upward,  
Forthright my planets roll,  
And still the man-child is not born,  
The summit of the whole.

Must time and tide forever run?  
Will never my winds go sleep in the west?  
Will never my wheels which whirl the sun  
And satellites have rest?

Too much of donning and doffing,  
Too slow the rainbow fades,  
I weary of my robe of snow,  
My leaves and my cascades;

I tire of globes and races,  
Too long the game is played;  
What without him is summer's pomp,  
Or winter's frozen shade?

I travail in pain for him,  
My creatures travail and wait;  
His couriers come by squadrons,  
He comes not to the gate.

Twice I have moulded an image,  
And thrice outstretched my hand,  
Made one of day, and one of night,  
And one of the salt sea-sand.

One in a Judaeen manger,  
And one by Avon stream,  
One over against the mouths of Nile,  
And one in the Academe.

I moulded kings and saviours,

And bards o'er kings to rule;—  
But fell the starry influence short,  
The cup was never full.

Yet whirl the glowing wheels once more,  
And mix the bowl again;  
Seethe, fate! the ancient elements,  
Heat, cold, wet, dry, and peace, and pain.

Let war and trade and creeds and song  
Blend, ripen race on race,  
The sunburnt world a man shall breed  
Of all the zones, and countless days.

No ray is dimmed, no atom worn,  
My oldest force is good as new,  
And the fresh rose on yonder thorn  
Gives back the bending heavens in dew.

---

### Constancy to an Ideal Object

*BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE*

Since all that beat about in Nature's range,  
Or veer or vanish; why should'st thou remain  
The only constant in a world of change,  
O yearning Thought! that liv'st but in the brain?  
Call to the Hours, that in the distance play,  
The faery people of the future day—  
Fond Thought! not one of all that shining swarm  
Will breathe on thee with life-enkindling breath,  
Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm,  
Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death!  
Yet still thou haunt'st me; and though well I see,  
She is not thou, and only thou are she,  
Still, still as though some dear embodied Good,  
Some living Love before my eyes there stood  
With answering look a ready ear to lend,  
I mourn to thee and say—'Ah! loveliest friend!

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That this the meed of all my toils might be,  
To have a home, an English home, and thee!  
Vain repetition! Home and Thou are one.  
The peacefull'st cot, the moon shall shine upon,  
Lulled by the thrush and wakened by the lark,  
Without thee were but a becalméd bark,  
Whose Helmsman on an ocean waste and wide  
Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside.  
And art thou nothing? Such thou art, as when  
The woodman winding westward up the glen  
At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze  
The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,  
Sees full before him, gliding without tread,  
An image with a glory round its head;  
The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,  
Nor knows he makes the shadow, he pursues!

---

### The Second Coming

*W. B. Yeats, 1865 – 1939*

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,

Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?



## Poems that Inspire and Console

### Invictus

*BY WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY Out of the night that covers me,  
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
 I thank whatever gods may be  
 For my unconquerable soul.  
 In the fell clutch of circumstance  
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
 Under the bludgeonings of chance  
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
 Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
 Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
 And yet the menace of the years  
 Finds and shall find me unafraid.  
 It matters not how strait the gate,  
 How charged with punishments the scroll,  
 I am the master of my fate,  
 I am the captain of my soul. The Quitter By Robert Service*

When you're lost in the Wild, and you're scared as a child,  
 And Death looks you bang in the eye,  
 And you're sore as a boil, it's according to Hoyle  
 To cock your revolver and . . . die.  
 But the Code of a Man says: "Fight all you can,"  
 And self-dissolution is barred.  
 In hunger and woe, oh, it's easy to blow . . .  
 It's the hell-served-for-breakfast that's hard."You're sick of the game!"  
 Well, now, that's a shame.  
 You're young and you're brave and you're bright.

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“You’ve had a raw deal!” I know — but don’t squeal,  
Buck up, do your damndest, and fight.  
It’s the plugging away that will win you the day,  
So don’t be a piker, old pard!  
Just draw on your grit; it’s so easy to quit:  
It’s the keeping-your-chin-up that’s hard. It’s easy to cry that you’re  
beaten — and die;  
It’s easy to crawfish and crawl;  
But to fight and to fight when hope’s out of sight —  
Why, that’s the best game of them all!  
And though you come out of each gruelling bout,  
All broken and beaten and scarred,  
Just have one more try — it’s dead easy to die,  
It’s the keeping-on-living that’s hard.

## Poems about the Creative Process

Astrophil and Stella 1: Loving in truth, and fain in verse my  
love to show

BY SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,  
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,—  
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,  
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,—  
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;  
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,  
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburn'd brain.  
But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;  
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;  
And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.  
Thus great with child to speak and helpless in my throes,  
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,  
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write."

---

Kubla Khan

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772 – 1834*

*Or a Vision in a Dream. A Fragment*  
In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure dome decree:

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Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round:  
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon lover!  
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
A mighty fountain momently was forced:  
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst  
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,  
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:  
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
It flung up momently the sacred river.  
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion  
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,  
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:  
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
Floated midway on the waves;  
Where was heard the mingled measure  
From the fountain and the caves.  
It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!  
A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw;

It was an Abyssinian maid,  
 And on her dulcimer she played,  
 Singing of Mount Abora.  
 Could I revive within me  
 Her symphony and song,  
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me,  
 That with music loud and long,  
 I would build that dome in air,  
 That sunny dome! those caves of ice!  
 And all who heard should see them there,  
 And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
 His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
 Weave a circle round him thrice,  
 And close your eyes with holy dread,  
 For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
 And drunk the milk of Paradise.

---

### Ode to a Nightingale

BY JOHN KEATS

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
     My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
     One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
     But being too happy in thine happiness,—  
     That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees  
         In some melodious plot  
     Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
         Singest of summer in full-throated ease.  
 O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
     Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
     Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,

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Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
    With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
    And purple-stained mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
    And with thee fade away into the forest dim:  
Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
    What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
    Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
    Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
    Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
    And leaden-eyed despairs,  
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
    Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.  
Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
    Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
    Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:  
Already with thee! tender is the night,  
    And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
    Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;  
    But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
    Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.  
I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
    Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
    Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
    White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
    Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
    And mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
    The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.  
Darkling I listen; and, for many a time

I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,  
 To take into the air my quiet breath;  
     Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
     While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
     In such an ecstasy!  
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
     To thy high requiem become a sod.  
 Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
     No hungry generations tread thee down;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
     In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
     Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
     She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
     The same that oft-times hath  
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
     Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.  
 Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
     To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
     As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.  
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
     Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
     Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
     In the next valley-glades:  
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
     Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?