

Mark Twain the Aged Pilot Man

On the Erie Canal, it was,
All on a summer's day,
I sailed forth with my parents
Far away to Albany.

From out the clouds at noon that day
There came a dreadful storm,
That piled the billows high about,
And filled us with alarm.

A man came rushing from a house,
Saying, "Snub up your boat I pray,
[The customary canal technicality for 'tie up.']
Snub up your boat, snub up, alas,
Snub up while yet you may."

Our captain cast one glance astern,
Then forward glanced he,
And said, "My wife and little ones
I never more shall see."

Said Dollinger the pilot man,
In noble words, but few,
--"Fear not, but lean on Dollinger,
And he will fetch you through."

The boat drove on, the frightened mules
Tore through the rain and wind,
And bravely still, in danger's post,
The whip-boy strode behind.

"Come 'board, come 'board," the captain cried,
"Nor tempt so wild a storm;"
But still the raging mules advanced,
And still the boy strode on.

Then said the captain to us all,
"Alas, 'tis plain to me,
The greater danger is not there,
But here upon the sea.

"So let us strive, while life remains,
To save all souls on board,
And then if die at last we must,
Let I cannot speak the word!"

Said Dollinger the pilot man,
Tow'ring above the crew,
"Fear not, but trust in Dollinger,
And he will fetch you through."

"Low bridge! low bridge!" all heads went down,
The laboring bark sped on;
A mill we passed, we passed church,
Hamlets, and fields of corn;
And all the world came out to see,
And chased along the shore
Crying, "Alas, alas, the sheeted rain,
The wind, the tempest's roar!
Alas, the gallant ship and crew,
Can nothing help them more?"

And from our deck sad eyes looked out
Across the stormy scene:
The tossing wake of billows aft,
The bending forests green,
The chickens sheltered under carts
In lee of barn the cows,
The skurrying swine with straw in mouth,
The wild spray from our bows!

"She balances!
She wavers!
Now let her go about!
If she misses stays and broaches to,
We're all"--then with a shout,
"Huray! huray!
Avast! belay!
Take in more sail!
Lord, what a gale!
Ho, boy, haul taut on the hind mule's tail!"
"Ho! lighten ship! ho! man the pump!
Ho, hostler, heave the lead!"

"A quarter-three!--'tis shoaling fast!
Three feet large!--t-h-r-e-e feet!
--Three feet scant!" I cried in fright
"Oh, is there no retreat?"

Said Dollinger, the pilot man,
As on the vessel flew,
"Fear not, but trust in Dollinger,
And he will fetch you through."

A panic struck the bravest hearts,
The boldest cheek turned pale;
For plain to all, this shoaling said
A leak had burst the ditch's bed!
And, straight as bolt from crossbow sped,
Our ship swept on, with shoaling lead,
Before the fearful gale!

"Sever the tow-line! Cripple the mules!"
Too late! There comes a shock!
Another length, and the fated craft
Would have swum in the saving lock!

Then gathered together the shipwrecked crew
And took one last embrace,
While sorrowful tears from despairing eyes
Ran down each hopeless face;
And some did think of their little ones
Whom they never more might see,
And others of waiting wives at home,
And mothers that grieved would be.

But of all the children of misery there
On that poor sinking frame,
But one spake words of hope and faith,
And I worshipped as they came:
Said Dollinger the pilot man,
--(O brave heart, strong and true!)
--"Fear not, but trust in Dollinger,
For he will fetch you through."

Lo! scarce the words have passed his lips

The dauntless prophet say'th,
When every soul about him seeth
A wonder crown his faith!

"And count ye all, both great and small,
As numbered with the dead:
For mariner for forty year,
On Erie, boy and man,
I never yet saw such a storm,
Or one't with it began!"

So overboard a keg of nails
And anvils three we threw,
Likewise four bales of gunny-sacks,
Two hundred pounds of glue,
Two sacks of corn, four ditto wheat,
A box of books, a cow,
A violin, Lord Byron's works,
A rip-saw and a sow.

A curve! a curve! the dangers grow!
"Labbord!--stabbord!--s-t-e-a-d-y!--so!
--Hard-a-port, Dol!--hellum-a-lee!
Haw the head mule!--the aft one gee!
Luff!--bring her to the wind!"

For straight a farmer brought a plank,
--(Mysteriously inspired)
--And laying it unto the ship,
In silent awe retired.

Then every sufferer stood amazed
That pilot man before;
A moment stood. Then wondering turned,
And speechless walked ashore.

Ezra Pound Ballad of the Goodly Fere

SIMON Zelotes speaketh it somehile after the Crucifixion
Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
"First let these go!" quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Or I'll see ye damned," says he.

Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
"Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?" says he.

Oh we drunk his "Hale" in the good red wine
When we last made company,
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere
But a man o' men was he.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
That they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'ss no' get him a' in a book I think
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
"I'll go to the feast," quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Though I go to the gallows tree."

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind,
And wake the dead," says he,
"Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree."

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I have seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free,
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee,
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the grey o' the sea,

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea he cowed at Genseret
Wi' twey words spoke' suddently.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea,
If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

Matthew Arnold Dover Beach

THE SEA is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought

Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-winds, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Wilfred Owen Dulce et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! -- An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime. --
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs
Bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, --
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

Eugene Field Dutch Lullaby

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe,--
Sailed on a river of misty light

Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring-fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we,"
Said Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sung a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew;
The little stars were the herring-fish
That lived in the beautiful sea.
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish,
But never afeard are we!"
So cried the stars to the fishermen three,
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
For the fish in the twinkling foam,
Then down from the sky came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home;
'T was all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be;
And some folk thought 't was a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea;
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock on the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three,--
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Rudyard Kipling Gunga Din

YOU may talk o' gin an' beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But if it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them black-faced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental *bhisti*, Gunga Din.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
You limping lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! *slippy hitherao!*
Water, get it! *Panee lao!*
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din!"

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a twisty piece o' rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted "*Harry By!*"
Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some *juldee* in it,
Or I'll *marrow* you this minute,
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done,
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is *mussick* on 'is back,
'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire."
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide,
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!

It was "Din! Din! Din!"
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could 'ear the front-files shout:
"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

I sha'n't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.

'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' 'e plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water—green;
It was crawlin' an' it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefulest to one from Gunga Din.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground an' 'e's kickin' all around:
For Gawd's sake, git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a *dooli* lay,

An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died:
"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
In the place where 'e is gone—
Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to pore damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in Hell from Gunga Din!

Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Tho' I've belted you an' flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

Alfred Noyes The Highwayman

THE wind was a torrent of darkness upon the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight looping the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding--
Riding--riding--
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn door.

He'd a French cocked hat on his forehead, and a bunch of lace at his chin;
He'd a coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of fine doe-skin.
They fitted with never a wrinkle; his boots were up to his thigh!
And he rode with a jeweled twinkle--
His rapier hilt a-twinkle--
His pistol butts a-twinkle, under the jeweled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard,
He tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred,
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter--
Bess, the landlord's daughter--
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

Dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim, the ostler listened--his face was white and peaked--
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter--
The landlord's black-eyed daughter;
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say:

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart; I'm after a prize tonight,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light.
Yet if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

He stood upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair in the casement! His face burnt like a brand
As the sweet black waves of perfume came tumbling o'er his breast,
Then he kissed its waves in the moonlight
(O sweet black waves in the moonlight!),
And he tugged at his reins in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon.
And out of the tawny sunset, before the rise of the moon,

When the road was a gypsy's ribbon over the purple moor,
The redcoat troops came marching--
Marching--marching--
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord; they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed.
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets by their side;
There was Death at every window,
And Hell at one dark window,
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that he would ride.

They had bound her up at attention, with many a sniggering jest!
They had tied a rifle beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her. She heard the dead man say,
"Look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though Hell should bar the way."

She twisted her hands behind her, but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it, she strove no more for the rest;
Up, she stood up at attention, with the barrel beneath her breast.
She would not risk their hearing, she would not strive again,
For the road lay bare in the moonlight,
Blank and bare in the moonlight,
And the blood in her veins, in the moonlight, throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot tlot, tlot tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hooves, ringing clear;
Tlot tlot, tlot tlot, in the distance! Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding--
Riding--riding--
The redcoats looked to their priming! She stood up straight and still.

Tlot tlot, in the frosty silence! Tlot tlot, in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment, she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight--
Her musket shattered the moonlight--
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him--with her death.

He turned, he spurred to the West; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the casement, drenched in her own red blood!
Not till the dawn did he hear it, and his face grew grey to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs in the golden noon, wine-red was his velvet coat
When they shot him down in the highway,
Down like a dog in the highway,
And he lay in his blood in the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

*And still on a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a gypsy's ribbon looping the purple moor,*

*The highwayman comes riding--
Riding--riding--
The highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.*

*Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard,
He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred,
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter--
Bess, the landlord's daughter--
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.*

Ben Jonson His Excuse for Loving

Let it not your wonder move,
Less your laughter, that I love.
Though I now write fifty years,
I have had, and have, my peers;
Poets, though divine, are men,
Some have lov'd as old again.
And it is not always face,
Clothes, or fortune, gives the grace;
Or the feature, or the youth.
But the language and the truth,
With the ardour and the passion,
Gives the lover weight and fashion.
If you then will read the story,
First prepare you to be sorry
That you never knew till now
Either whom to love or how;
But be glad, as soon with me,
When you know that this is she
Of whose beauty it was sung;
She shall make the old man young,
Keep the middle age at stay,
And let nothing high decay,
Till she be the reason why
All the world for love may die.

Leigh Hunt Jenny Kiss'd Me

JENNY kiss'd me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kiss'd me.

John Keats On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—

Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Shelley Ozymandias of Egypt

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Edna St Vincent Millais Portrait by a Neighbour

Before she has her floor swept
Or her dishes done,
Any day you'll find her
A-sunning in the sun!

It's long after midnight
Her key's in the lock,
And you never see her chimney smoke
Till past ten o'clock!

She digs in her garden
With a shovel and a spoon,
She weeds her lazy lettuce
By the light of the moon,

She walks up the walk
Like a woman in a dream,
She forgets she borrowed butter
And pays you back cream!

Her lawn looks like a meadow,
And if she mows the place
She leaves the clover standing
And the Queen Anne's lace!

Rudyard Kipling Return

PEACE is declared, and I return
To 'Ackneystadt, but not the same;
Things 'ave transpired which made me learn
The size and meanin' of the game.
I did no more than others did,
I don't know where the change began;
I started as a average kid,
I finished as a thinkin' man.

*If England was what England seems
An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't!*

Before my gappin' mouth could speak
I 'eard it in my comrade's tone;

I saw it on my neighbour's cheek
Before I felt it flush my own.
An' last it come to me—not pride,
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

Rivers at night that cluck an' jeer,
Plains which the moonshine turns to sea,
Mountains that never let you near,
An' stars to all eternity;
An' the quick-breathin' dark that fills
The 'ollows of the wilderness,
When the wind worries through the 'ills—
These may 'ave taught me more or less.

Towns without people, ten times took,
An' ten times left an' burned at last;
An' starvin' dogs that come to look
For owners when a column passed;
An' quiet, 'omesick talks between
Men, met by night, you never knew
Until—'is face—by shellfire seen—
Once—an' struck off. They taught me, too.

The day's lay-out—the mornin' sun
Beneath your 'at-brim as you sight;
The dinner-'ush from noon till one,
An' the full roar that lasts till night;
An' the pore dead that look so old
An' was so young an hour ago,
An' legs tied down before they're cold—
These are the things which make you know.

Also Time runnin' into years—
A thousand Places left be'ind—
An' Men from both two 'emispheres
Discussin' things of every kind;
So much more near than I 'ad known,
So much more great than I 'ad guessed—
An' me, like all the rest, alone—
But reachin' out to all the rest!

So 'ath it come to me—not pride,
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.
But now, discharged, I fall away
To do with little things again....
Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,
Look after me in Thamesfontein!

*If England was what England seems
An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! But she ain't!*

Edwin Arlington Robinson Richard Cory

WHENEVER Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

W B Yeats The Second Coming

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?

Alfred Noyes Sherwood

SHERWOOD in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?
Grey and ghostly shadows are gliding through the brake;
Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.

Robin Hood is here again: all his merry thieves
Hear a ghostly bugle-note shivering through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Merry, merry England has kissed the lips of June:
All the wings of fairyland were here beneath the moon;
Like a flight of rose-leaves fluttering in a mist
Of opal and ruby and pearl and amethyst.

Merry, merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter gold:
For Robin Hood is here again beneath the bursting spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Love is in the greenwood building him a house

Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle boughs;
Love it in the greenwood: dawn is in the skies;
And Marian is waiting with a glory in her eyes.

Hark! The dazzled laverock climbs the golden steep:
Marian is waiting: is Robin Hood asleep?
Round the fairy grass-rings frolic elf and fay,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mould,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlett from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down together
With quarter-staff and drinking-can and grey goose-feather;
The dead are coming back again; the years are rolled away
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows;
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper leap,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men;
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day;

Calls them and they answer: from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the *Follow! Follow!* and the boughs begin to crash;
The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly;
And through the crimson dawning the robber band goes by.

Robin! Robin! Robin! All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the leaves:
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Robert Frost The Sound of the Trees

I WONDER about the trees.
Why do we wish to bear
Forever the noise of these
More than another noise
So close to our dwelling place?
We suffer them by the day
Till we lose all measure of pace,
And fixity in our joys,
And acquire a listening air.
They are that that talks of going
But never gets away;
And that talks no less for knowing,
As it grows wiser and older,
That now it means to stay.
My feet tug at the floor
And my head sways to my shoulder
Sometimes when I watch trees sway,
From the window or the door.
I shall set forth for somewhere,

I shall make the reckless choice
Some day when they are in voice
And tossing so as to scare
The white clouds over them on.
I shall have less to say,
But I shall be gone.

Hilaire Belloc The South Country

WHEN I am living in the Midlands
That are sodden and unkind,
I light my lamp in the evening:
My work is left behind;
And the great hills of the South Country
Come back into my mind.

The great hills of the South Country
They stand along the sea;
And it's there walking in the high woods
That I could wish to be,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Walking along with me.

The men that live in North England
I saw them for a day:
Their hearts are set upon the waste fells,
Their skies are fast and grey;
From their castle-walls a man may see
The mountains far away.

The men that live in West England
They see the Severn strong,
A-rolling on rough water brown
Light aspen leaves along.
They have the secret of the Rocks,
And the oldest kind of song.

But the men that live in the South Country
Are the kindest and most wise,
They get their laughter from the loud surf,
And the faith in their happy eyes
Comes surely from our Sister the Spring
When over the sea she flies;
The violets suddenly bloom at her feet,
She blesses us with surprise.

I never get between the pines
But I smell the Sussex air;
Nor I never come on a belt of sand
But my home is there.
And along the sky the line of the Downs
So noble and so bare.

A lost thing could I never find,
Nor a broken thing mend:
And I fear I shall be all alone
When I get towards the end.
Who will there be to comfort me
Or who will be my friend?

I will gather and carefully make my friends
Of the men of the Sussex Weald;
They watch the stars from silent folds,
They stiffly plough the field.

By them and the God of the South Country
My poor soul shall be healed.

If I ever become a rich man,
Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with deep thatch
To shelter me from the cold,
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood
Within a walk of the sea,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Shall sit and drink with me.

John Keats When I have fears that I may cease to be

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high piled books, in charact'ry,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love!—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.