

Twelve Poets

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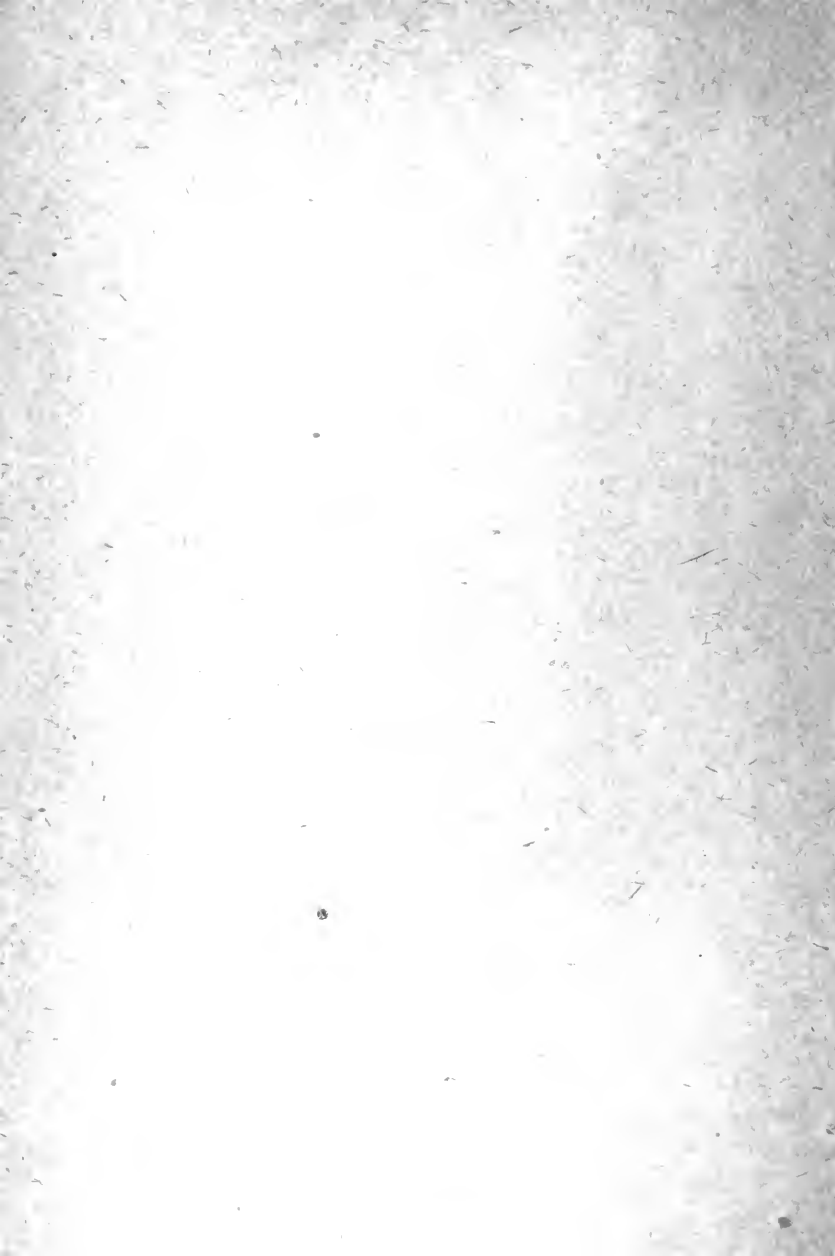
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TWELVE POETS



TWELVE POETS

A MISCELLANY OF NEW VERSE



LONDON:
SELWYN AND BLOUNT,
12, YORK BUILDINGS, ADELPHI, W.C. 2.
1918.

TO
W. H. HUDSON,
AUTHOR OF
"GREEN MANSIONS,"
"A FOOT IN ENGLAND."
ETC.

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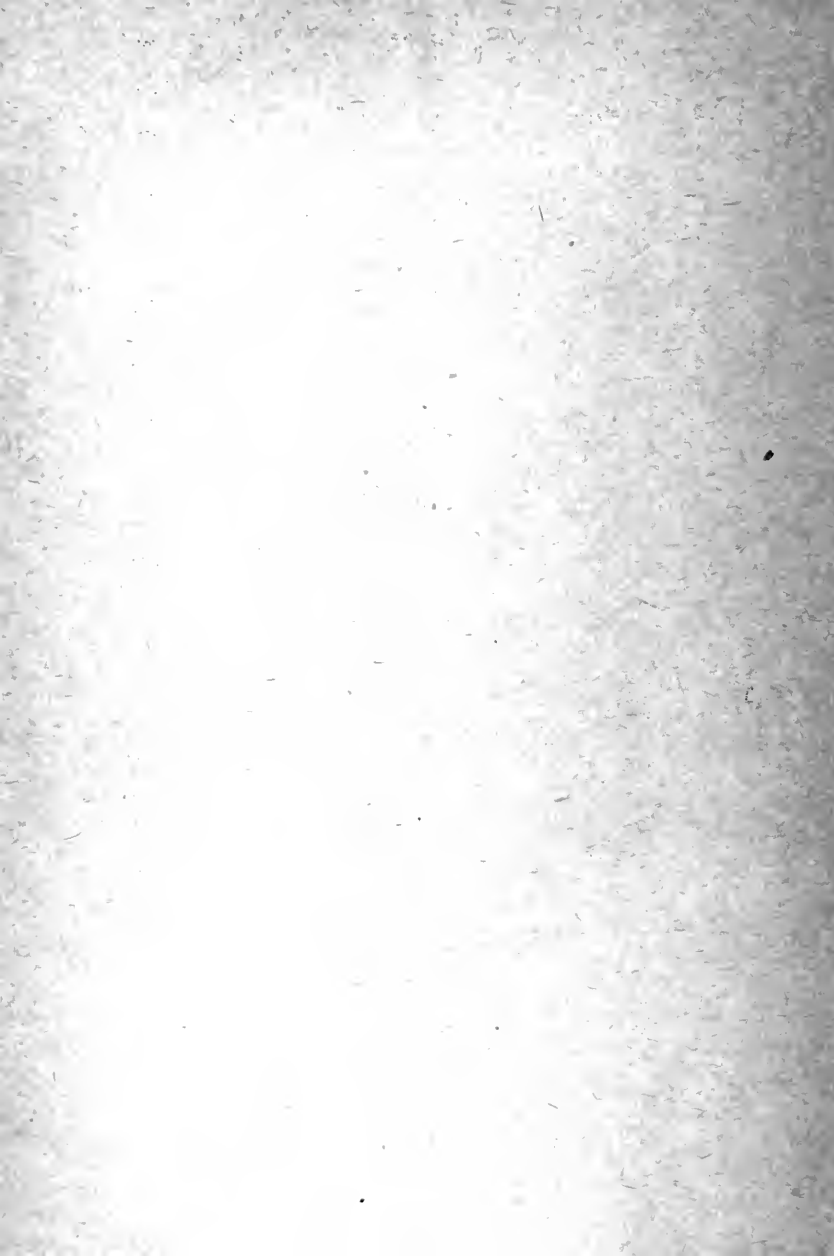
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EDWARD THOMAS

THE DARK FOREST

DARK is the forest and deep, and overhead
Hang stars like seeds of light
In vain, though not since they were sown was bred
Anything more bright.

And evermore mighty multitudes ride
About, nor enter in.
Of the other multitudes that dwell inside
Never yet was one seen.

The forest foxglove is purple, the marguerite
Outside is gold and white,
Nor can those that pluck either blossom greet
The others, day or night.

THE THRUSH

WHEN Winter's ahead,
What can you read in November
That you read in April
When Winter's dead ?

I hear the thrush, and I see
Him alone at the end of the lane
Near the bare poplar's tip,
Singing continuously.

Is it more that you know
Than that, even as in April,
So in November,
Winter is gone that must go ?

Or is all your lore
Not to call November November,
And April April,
And Winter Winter—no more ?

But I know the months all,
And their sweet names, April,
May, and June and October,
As you call and call.

I must remember
What died into April
And consider what will be born
Of a fair November ;

EDWARD THOMAS

And April I love for what
It was born of, and November
For what it will die in,
What they are and what they are not,

While you love what is kind,
What you can sing in
And love and forget in
All that's ahead and behind.

EDWARD THOMAS

TO-NIGHT

HARRY, you know at night
The larks in Castle Alley
Sing from the attic's height
As if the electric light
Were the true sun above a summer valley :
Whistle, don't knock, to-night.

I shall come early, Kate ;
And we in Castle Alley
Will sit close out of sight
Alone, and ask no light
Of lamp or sun above a summer valley :
To-night I can stay late.

MARCH THE THIRD*

HERE again (she said) is March the third
And twelve hours singing for the bird
'Twixt dawn and dusk, from half-past six
To half-past six, never unheard.

'Tis Sunday, and the church-bells end
When the birds do. I think they blend
Now better than they will when passed
Is this unnamed, unmarked godsend.

Or do all mark, and none dares say,
How it may shift and long delay,
Somewhere before the first of Spring,
But never fails, this singing day ?

And when it fails on Sunday, bells
Are a wild, natural voice that dwells
On hillsides ; but the birds' songs have
The holiness gone from the bells.

This day unpromised is more dear
Than all the named days of the year
When seasonable sweets come in,
Because we know how lucky we are.

* The Author's birthday.

THE HOLLOW WOOD

OUT in the sun the goldfinch flits
Along the thistle-tops, flits and twits
Above the hollow wood
Where birds swim like fish—
Fish that laugh and shriek—
To and fro, far below
In the pale hollow wood.

Lichen, ivy and moss
Keep evergreen the trees
That stand half-flayed and dying,
And the dead trees on their knees
In dog's-mercury and moss :
And the bright twit of the goldfinch drops
Down there as he flits on thistle-tops.

GOOD-NIGHT

THE skylarks are far behind that sang over the
down ;

I can hear no more those suburb nightingales ;
Thrushes and blackbirds sing in the gardens of
the town

In vain : the noise of man, beast, and machine
prevails.

But the call of children in the unfamiliar streets
That echo with a familiar twilight echoing,
Sweet as the voice of nightingale or lark, completes
A magic of strange welcome, so that I seem a king

Among man, beast, machine, bird, child and
the ghost

That in the echo lives and with the echo dies.

The friendless town is friendly ; homeless, I am
not lost ;

Though I know none of these doors, and meet
but strangers' eyes.

Never again, perhaps, after to-morrow, shall
I see these homely streets, these church windows
alight,

Not a man or woman or child among them all :
But it is All Friends' Night, a traveller's good-
night.

THE MOUNTAIN CHAPEL

CHAPEL and gravestones, old and few,
Are shrouded by a mountain fold
From sound and view
Of life. The loss of the brook's voice
Falls like a shadow. All they hear is
The eternal noise
Of wind whistling in the grass more shrill
Than aught as human as a sword,
And saying still :
“ 'Tis but a moment since man's birth
And in another moment more
Man lies in earth
For ever ; but I am the same
Now, and shall be, even as I was
Before he came ;
Till there is nothing I shall be.”
Yet there the sun shines after noon
So cheerfully
The place almost seems peopled, nor
Lacks cottage chimney, cottage hearth :
It is not more
In size than is a cottage, less
Than any other empty home
In homeliness.
It has a garden of wild flowers
And finest grass and gravestones warm

EDWARD THOMAS

In sunshine hours
The year through. Men behind the glass
Stand once a week, singing, and drown
The whistling grass
Their ponies munch. And yet somewhere,
Near or far off, there's a man could
Be happy here,
Or one of the gods, perhaps, were they
Not of inhuman stature dire,
As poets say
Who have not seen them clearly ; if
At sound of any wind of the world
In grass-blades stiff
They would not startle and shudder cold
Under the sun. When gods were young
This wind was old.

THE ASH GROVE

HALF of the grove stood dead, and those that yet
lived made

Little more than the dead ones made of shade.

If they led to a house, long before they had seen
its fall :

But they welcomed me ; I was glad without
cause and delayed.

Scarce a hundred paces under the trees was the
interval—

Paces each sweeter than sweetest miles—but
nothing at all,

Not even the spirits of memory and fear with
restless wing,

Could climb down in to molest me over the wall

That I passed through at either end without
noticing.

And now an ash grove far from those hills can
bring

The same tranquillity in which I wander a ghost
With a ghostly gladness, as if I heard a girl sing

The song of the Ash Grove soft as love uncrossed,
And then in a crowd or in distance it were lost,
But the moment unveiled something unwilling to
die

And I had what most I desired, without search
or desert or cost.

THESE THINGS THAT POETS SAID

THESE things that poets said
Of love seemed true to me
When I loved and I fed
On love and poetry equally.

But now I wish I knew
If theirs were love indeed,
Or if mine were the true
And theirs some other lovely weed :

For certainly not thus,
Then or thereafter, I
Loved ever. Between us
Decide, good Love, before I die.

Only, that once I loved
By this one argument
Is very plainly proved :
I, loving not, am different.

OUT IN THE DARK

Out in the dark over the snow
The fallow fawns invisible go
With the fallow doe ;
And the winds blow
Fast as the stars are slow.

Stealthily the dark haunts round
And, when a lamp goes, without sound
At a swifter bound
Than the swiftest hound,
Arrives, and all else is drowned ;

And I and star and wind and deer,
Are in the dark together—near,
Yet far—and fear
Drums on my ear
In that sage company drear.

How weak and little is the light,
All the universe of sight,
Love and delight,
Before the might,
If you love it not, of night.

W. H. DAVIES

LOVE SPEECHLESS

I LOOK on Nature and my thoughts,
Like nimble skaters, skim the land ;
But when I watch my loved one near,
My thoughts are walkers in soft sand.

I am a man that sees a sky
Alive with stars that cannot rest ;
My eyes are here, my eyes are there,
Above, and then below her breast.

Much like the summer's bee am I,
A thousand flowers before his eyes ;
He, knowing each one's power to please,
No sooner settles than must rise.

I sit bewildered by those charms
That follow wave by wave all day ;
When I would with one wave make free,
The others take my breath away.

WHEN LEAVES BEGIN

WHEN leaves begin to show their heads,
Before they reach their curly youth ;
And birds in streams are coming north,
With seas of music from the south ;

Then—like a snail with horns outstretched—
My senses feel the air around ;
There's not a move escapes my eyes,
My ears are cocked to every sound.

Till Nature to her greenest comes,
And—with her may that blossoms white—
Bursts her full bodice, and reveals
Her fair white body in the light.

THE CAPTIVE LION

THOU that in fury with thy knotted tail
Hast made this iron floor thy beaten drum ;
That now in silence walks thy little space—
Like a sea-captain—careless what may come :

What power has brought your majesty to this,
Who gave those eyes their dull and sleepy look ;
Who took their lightning out, and from thy
throat

The thunder when the whole wide forest shook :

It was that man who went again, alone,
Into thy forest dark—Lord, he was brave !
That man a fly has killed, whose bones are left
Unburied till an earthquake digs his grave.

ONE THING WANTING

Your life was hard with mangling clothes,
You scrubbed our floors for years ;
But now, your children are so good,
That you can rest your poor old limbs,
And want for neither drink nor meat.
“ It’s true,” she said, and laughed for joy ;
And still her voice, with all her years,
Could make a song-bird wonder if
A rival sweetness challenged him.
But soon her face was full of trouble :
“ If I could only tear,” she said,
“ My sister Alice out of her grave—
Who taunted me when I was poor—
And make her understand these words :
‘ See, I have everything I want,
My children, Alice, are so good ’—
If I could only once do that,
There’s nothing else I want on earth.”

WALTER DE LA MARE

SAM'S THREE WISHES, OR LIFE'S LITTLE WHIRLIGIG

“ I'm thinking and thinking,” said old Sam Shore,
“ 'Twere somebody *knocking* I heard at the
door.”

From the clock popped the cuckoo and cuckooed
out eight,

As there in his chair he wondering sate . . .

“ There's no one I knows on would come so late,

A-clicking the latch of an empty house

With nobbut inside 'un but me and a mouse. . . .

Maybe a-waking in sleep I be,

And 'twere out of a dream came that tapping to
me.”

At length he cautiously rose, and went,

And with thumb upon latch awhile listening
bent,

Then slowly drew open the door. And behold !

There stood a Fairy !—all green and gold,

WALTER DE LA MARE

Mantled up warm against dark and cold,
And smiling up into his candle shine,
Lips like wax, and cheeks like wine,
As saucy and winsome a thing to see
As are linden buds on a linden tree.

Stock-still in the doorway stood simple Sam,
A-ducking his head, with "Good-e'en to 'ee,
Ma'am."

Dame Fairy she nods, and cries clear and sweet,
" 'Tis a *very* good-e'en, sir, when such folks meet.
I know thee, Sam, though thou wist not of me,
And I'm come in late gloaming to speak with
thee ;
Though my eyes do dazzle at glint of your rush,
All under this pretty green fuchsia bush."

Sam ducked once more, smiling simple and slow.
Like the warbling of birds her words did flow,
And she laughed, very merry, to see how true
Shone the old man's kindness his courtesy
through.

And she nodded her head, and the stars on high
Sparkled down on her smallness from out of the
sky.

"A friend is a friend, Sam, and wonderful
pleasant,

And I'm come for old sake's sake to bring thee
a present.

Three wishes, three wishes are thine, Sam Shore,
Just three wishes—and wish no more,

All for because, ruby-ripe to see,

The pixy-pears burn in yon hawthorn tree,

And your old milch cow, wheresoever she goes
Never crops over the fairy-knowes.

Ay, Sam, thou art old and thy house is lone,

But there's Potencies round thee, and here is
one ! ”

Poor Sam, he stared : and the stars o'erhead

A shimmering light on the elm-tops shed.

Like rilling of water her voice rang sweet,

And the night-wind sighed at the sound of it.

He frowned—glanced back at the empty grate,

And shook very slowly his grey old pate :

“ Three wishes, my dear ! Why, I scarcely knows

Which be my crany and which my toes !

But I thank 'ee, Ma'am, kindly, and this I'd say,

That the night of your passing is Michaelmas

Day ;

And if it were company come on a sudden,

Why, I'd ax for a fat goose to fry in the oven ! ”

And lo, and forsooth ! as the words he was
uttering,

WALTER DE LA MARE

A rich puff of air set his candle a-guttering,
And there rose in the kitchen a sizzling and
sputtering,
With a crackling of sparks and of flames a great
fluttering,
And—of which here could not be two opinions—
A smoking-hot savour of sage and onions.
Beam, wall and flagstones the kitchen was lit,
Every dark corner and cranny of it
With the blaze from the hearthstone. Copper
and brass
Winked back the winking of platter and glass.
And a wonderful squeaking of mice went up
At the smell of a Michaelmas supper to sup—
Unctuous odours that wreathed and swirled
Where'er frisked a whisker or mouse-tail stirred,
While out of the chimney up into the night
That ne'er-to-be-snuffed-too-much smoke took
flight.

“That's one,” says the Fairy, finger on thumb,
“So now, Mister Sam, there's but two to come!”
She leaned her head sidelong; she lifted her chin,
With a twinkling of eye from the radiance within.
Poor Sam stood stounded; he says, says he,
“I *wish* my old Mother was back with me,
For if there was one thing she couldn't refuse
'Twas a sweet thick slice from the breast of a goose.”

WALTER DE LA MARE

But his cheek grew stiff and his eyes stared bright,
For there, on her stick, pushing out of the night,
Tap-tapping along, herself and no other,
Came who but the shape of his dear old Mother !
Straight into the kitchen she hastened and went,
Her breath coming quick as if all but spent,
“ Why, Sam,” says she, “ the bird be turning,
For my nose tells I that the skin’s a-burning ! ”
And down at the oven the ghost of her sat
And basted the goose with the boiling fat.

“ Oho,” cries the Fairy, sweet and small,
“ Another wish gone will leave nothing at all.”
And Sam sighs, “ Bless ’ee, Ma’am, keep the
other,
There’s nowt that I want now I have my
Mother.”

But the Fairy laughs softly, and says, says she,
“ There’s one wish left, Sam, I promised ’ee three
Hasten your wits, the hour creeps on,
There’s calling afield and I’m soon to be gone.
Soon as haps midnight the cocks will crow
And me to the gathering and feasting must go.’

Sam gazed at his Mother—withered and wan,
The rose in her cheek, her bright hair, gone,
And her poor old back bent double with years—
And he scarce could speak for the salt, salt tears

WALTER DE LA MARE

“ Well, well,” he says, “ I’m unspeakable glad :
But—it bain’t quite the same as when I was a lad.
There’s joy and there’s joy, Ma’am, but to tell
’ee the truth

There’s none can compare with the joy of one’s
youth.

And if it was possible, how could I choose
But be back in boy’s breeches to eat the goose ;
And all the old things—and my Mother the most,
To shine again real as my own gatepost.

What wouldn’t I give, too, to see again wag
The dumpity tail of my old dog, Shag !

Your kindness, Ma’am, but all wishing was vain
Unless us can both be young again.”

A shrill, faint laughter from nowhere came. . . .
Empty the dark in the candle-flame. . . .

And there stood our Sam, about four foot high,
Snub nose, shock hair, and round blue eye.
Breeches and braces and coat of him too,
Shirt on his back, and each clodhopping shoe
Had shrunk to a nicety—button and hem
To fit the small Sammie tucked up into them.

There was his Mother, too ; smooth, clear cheek,
Lips as sooth as a blackbird’s beak,
Pretty arched eyebrows, the daintiest nose—
While the smoke of the baking deliciously rose.

WALTER DE LA MARE

“Come, Sammie,” she cries, “your old
Mammikin’s joy,
Climb up on your stool, supper’s ready, my boy.
Bring in the candle, and shut out the night ;
There’s goose, baked taties and cabbage to bite.
Why, bless the wee lamb, he’s all shiver and
shake,
And you’d think from the look of him scarcely
awake !
If ’ee glour wi’ those eyes, Sam, so dark and
round,
The elves will away with ’ee, I’ll be bound !”

So Sam and his Mother by wishes three
Were made just as happy as happy can be.
And there—with a bumpity tail to wag—
Sat laughing, with tongue out, their old dog,
Shag.
To clatter of platter, bones, giblets and juice,
Between them they ate up the whole of the goose.

But time is a river for ever in flow,
The weeks went by as the weeks must go.
Soon fifty-two to a year did grow.
The long years passed, one after another,
Making older and older our Sam and his Mother ;
And, alas and alack, with nine of them gone,
Poor Shag lay asleep again under a stone.

WALTER DE LA MARE

And a sorrowful dread would sometimes creep
Into Sam's dreams, as he lay asleep,
That his Mother was lost, and away he'd fare,
Calling her, calling her, everywhere,
In dark, in rain, by roads unknown,
Under echoing hills, and alone, alone.
What bliss in the morning to wake and see
The sun shining green in the linden tree,
And out of that dream's dark shadowiness
To slip in on his Mother and give her a kiss,
Then go whistling off in the dew to hear
The thrushes all mocking him, sweet and clear.

Still, moon after moon from heaven above
Shone on Mother and son, and made light of love.
Her roses faded, her pretty brown hair
Had sorrowful grey in it everywhere.
And at last she died, and was laid to rest,
Her tired hands crossed on her shrunken breast.
And Sam, now lonely, lived on and on

Till most of his workaday life seemed gone.
Yet spring came again with its green and blue,
And presently summer's wild roses too,
Pinks, Sweet William, and sops-in-wine,
Blackberry, lavender, eglantine.
And when these had blossomed and gone their
way,

WALTER DE LA MARE

'Twas apples, and daisies and Michaelmas Day—
Yes, spider-webs, dew, and haws in the may,
And seraphs a-singing in Michaelmas Day.

Sam worked all morning and *couldn't* get rest
For a kind of a feeling of grief in his breast.
And yet, not grief, but something more,
Like the thought that what happens has happened
before.

He fed the chickens, he fed the sow,
On a three-legged stool sate down to the cow,
With a pail twixt his legs in the green in the
meadow,
Under the elm trees' lengthening shadow ;
And woke at last with a smile and a sigh
To find he had milked his poor Jingo dry.

As dusk set in, ev'n the birds did seem
To be calling and calling from out of a dream.
He chopped up kindling, shut up his shed,
In a bucket of well-water soused his head
To freshen his eyes up a little and make
The drowsy old wits of him wider awake.
As neat as a womanless creature is able
He swept up his hearthstone and laid the table.
And then o'er his platter and mug, if you please,
Sate gloomily gooming at loaf and cheese—
Gooming and gooming as if the mere sight

Of his victuals could satisfy appetite !
And the longer and longer he looked at them
The slimmer slimmed upward his candle flame,
Blue in the air. And when squeaked a mouse
'Twas loud as a trump in the hush of the house.
Then, sudden, a soft little wind puffed by,
'Twixt the thick-thatched roof and the star-
sown sky ;
And died. And then
That deep, dead, wonderful silence again.

Then—soft as a rattle a-counting her seeds
In the midst of a tangle of withered-up weeds—
Came a faint, faint knocking, a rustle like silk,
And a breath at the keyhole as soft as milk—
Still as the flit of a moth. And then . . .
That infinitesimal knocking again.

Sam lifted his chin from his fists. He listened.
His wandering eyes in the candle glistened.
Then slowly, slowly, rolled round by degrees—
And there sat a mouse on the top of his cheese.
He stared at this Midget, and it at him,
Over the edge of his mug's round rim,
And—as if it were Christian—he says, "Did 'ee
hear .
A faint little tap-tap-tap-tapping, my dear ?
You was at supper and me in a maze,

WALTER DE LA MARE

'Tis dark for a caller in these lone days,
There's nowt in the larder. We're both of us old.
And all of my loved ones sleep under the mould,
And yet—and yet—as I've told 'ee before . . .'

*But if Sam's story you'd read to the end,
Turn back to page 1, and press onward, dear friend ;
Yes, if you would stave the last note of this song,
Turn back to page primus, and warble along !
For all sober records of life (come to write 'em),
Are bound to continue—well—ad infinitum !*

VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS

GO, NOR ACQUAINT THE ROSE

Go, nor acquaint the rose
Nor Beauty's household with that grief of thine.
Stand-not in wait with those
Who with their knocking trouble the divine.

But thou, let Beauty be,
Dread distance of her chanced slumbers keep ;
If then she follow thee
While thou art treading noiseless from her sleep,

Rose then, and wafted rose,
Like summer past and summer's breath still
there,
Shall pay thee all she owes,
More than she ever yielded to thy prayer.

TO IDLENESS

To idleness the day is owing,
Said the sun-sleeper, pastor of his dreams.
Over far lawns my flocks are flowing,
And by untroubled streams.

I see them, if the noon spill splendour
Through the half-lifted posterns of my sleep.
I see them not, no tale I render,
No shepherd of my sheep.

But when dark dews have seared the vesture
Of spent repose, and on my brimming sight
Float wefts of stars from looms of nature,
Fair industry of night,

Fast now and faster flies the spindle ;
Amain I drive and shut the huddled pale,
And count the fleecy hill and kindle
The torch and tell the tale.

SEA-COUNTRY

THE thistled dunes have lulled the shore,
And with the thistles corn-stalks grow ;
Now brims that ocean-murmur o'er
Into a music none might know,

Till Eden for her peace drew near
These storm-ports of the watery globe.
Soft breathe the salt-sown pines, and here
The snake-stems wear a whispering robe.

These coverts, paved with rushy green,
Were planted for the turtle's bower,
And faintly hums the breeze between
Crab-orchard and sea-pasturing flower.

Here, in his twisted arbour-pale,
The marsh-bird warbles, as the sea
Had lent unto his voice a sail,
And wave-drops for fresh melody.

'Tis the lark's race ; did he not win
The rippling steps of music's throne,
How clear the dancing wave within
Were heard how many a voice less known,

How many a voice, ere this one slake
His thirst with cup that music yields,
And on the mortal silence break,
And not these fields.

DREAM NOT OF ME

DREAM not of me, fair child :
My life is like a dark and wandering wave,
And thine a freshet leaping from the rock,
Transparent, undefiled ;
Come not from thy moss'd cave,
Cold-savour'd calm and soundless source to meet
So soon the heaving and ungoverned flood
Whose washes gut the grave.
How many forest-feet
Are planted in thy path to turn aside
Thy supple journey, and to bring thee near
Places more mild and sweet ;
Be thou Meander's bride,
So to steal where his ambling water fills
The reedy plain and be discovered there,
And in his bosom hide.
Circle the little hills,
Water the inland flocks, for I, even I,
May only cry thy name in the dark sea,
And none to hear my cry.

THE DESERT MINSTREL

Now there's no star to pierce the dusky space
And in the endless fields no pale flower-face,
Of scythe or ploughshare no accustomed trace.

A little longer gaze and thou shalt find
But few faint symbols left to have in mind ;
These too must vanish from a world so blind.

Now I will pipe to thee a little tune,
The smallest ever heard beneath the moon,
A witless song and one forgotten soon.

Two notes, or three, are all the range of it ;
With voice like this a sleepy bird doth flit
From perch to perch, more quietly to sit.

But 'tis a sweet, sweet piping ; there is pain
In each mute interval and thou shalt strain
Thine ears to hear the fugitive again.

What dost thou, bird, what message bringest thou
From what forgotten world ? Thy journey now
Is not from field to field or bough to bough.

I think it is no bird that I hear sing,
For there's no flitting by of coloured wing
Nor shadow here and there of such a thing.

VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS

True, O my heart ; 'tis I who pipe to thee ;
On no such reed pipes any one but me,
Who am a minstrel in eternity.

What wouldst thou, O my heart, of far or near
Delight possess ; visit what dreamed-of sphere,
Or by my music have created here ?

Ask what thou wilt, for here the sunless deep,
The sunless silence and undreaming sleep
Do all their uncreated treasures keep.

Dead memories, lost imaginations, these
Cold monitors and faceless mysteries
Mine ancient piping from their thraldom frees.

Wild ages hence, amid the atom-rain,
Worlds shall be built to that forgotten strain,
The theme of ancient piping heard again.

And I, my heart, must still thy minstrel be,
On my waste reed, in deserts, pipe to thee,
The troubled captive of eternity

'TIS NOT THE MULTITUDE

'Tis not the multitude
Of valour, which, when war
Rose like a moon of blood
Above the golden bar
Of England's harvest hills,
Poured out, a slow calamity,
Across the subdued sea,
A blast for swollen ills,
A scourge for warlike pride,
An untried arm against prepared wrath.
And still to the sheer side
Of doom they clung through long duress ;
Hewing a reckless path
To an unseen summit and a visionless,
The peace for which they died.
It is not this that lights
The dull pall of my dream,
Upturning through the night's
Squalor, a happy gleam,
An exultation swift
Growing as dawn in other lands,
At wave of eastern wands.
It is a voice like the down-drift
Of a fair early morning rain

VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS

Sown by delicious hands
On leaves and hidden grass ;
Our England's virtue, new-discovered
By those who through her greening chantry pass ;
Her voice again,
The lyric of her dead.

VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS

APRIL, 1917.

To Edward Thomas ;

Killed in action on Easter Monday.

I

I SEE him on our threshold stand again,
The wayfarer and bidden guest and friend.
But now our importunity is vain,
He will not enter, has not time to spend.
Yet still he stands. O friend, grave as of old,
Wistful and proud, how like our friend art thou !
The half thy spirit's burden never told,
Thou didst not then, and need not tell it now.
Then wherefore stay ? What can be left to tell,
That thou wilt neither from our vision go,
Nor enter with us, not yet bid farewell ?
—Nothing ; for we for whom thou waitest know
How thou wert not alone, and will not be,
In all that England of eternity.

II

Let but the path turn sharp from what has been,
And sudden fate cry in our hearing, " Not
—Again : O, never more "—then is it seen
How ours was never as the common lot,

VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS

Never so desolate as to despair.
More like, our nature's farthest reach from pain,
And utmost of our spirit's peace was there,
In that hand-clasp which will not be again.
O Death ! such is thy doing, to undo
A labour that at best seemed but begun,
The household task of faith, that grew and grew,
But never its bright face in splendour threw
Across the dusk pale of oblivion,
Till sunset fell and dreaming night came on.

III

And now the nights of our remembrance hold
The treasure once locked in thy daily sight.
Their steep and starry deserts keep the gold
Which we have spent so sparing, while we might.
Atoms of suns gone down are gleam and star
And all the gathering of the nightly glade.
So to thy eyes the old world's wonders are,
In lands wherein thou art a pilgrim shade.
Ghosts with thee go into that soundless gloom,
Ghosts that make not the neighbourhood of
fear ;
These are our loves, gone with thee in our room,
As in thy place thy great love lingers here.
Go we with thee, such ghosts as we appear,
And not the cold companions of the tomb.

VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS

IV

Our England is become—our England green
With these late April skies of island blue—
A simple shrine set in a waste terrene
For him, and the heroic yet to do.
O then, at last, when to these booming strands
Her storm-winged galleons bring the remnant
home,
And hearths are burning in all English lands,
He, too, shall find one burning, if he come,
The chief of victor shades, to them who keep
That shrine, grown like a garden, sometime wet
When dewy memory starts from winter sleep ;
Sometime like a dim ordered pleasance set,
Where he, a wanderer from the clement deep,
May walk in peace again, and not forget.

V

Not those too frail-hinged blossoms, but the
flowers
Of friendship summer-grown and strongly set,
This harvest of June's ripening was ours,
Sweets gathered, but the fruit ungarnered yet.
Not now in orchard-affluence of age
Shall we with hasteless footsteps burst the rind
Of truth, but on a barer pilgrimage
Along the winter hedgerows, little find.
Thus the fresh prophecy of loss ; but turn

VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS

These lips of doubtful witness into stone
—O Ruler of our faith !—if hope unlearn
Her task and leave life's fallows wasteful strown.
For Autumn of her season has this share,
To burn the fragrant weed of sorrow there.

VI

Glad am I when the boisterous chaffinch runs
Early to bed ; and fairly housed within
The shady porch of night's dominions,
The thrush doth all the world for audience win.
Then nearer seem across the mild terrain
Those friendly-peopled listening-posts of death ;
Silence has still a sound ; the mortal strain,
Failing, has captured an immortal breath.
So shall we often look to twilight now,
As though the sun some gentle tyrant were,
With not too light a hand upon the brow,
And small remission for his labourer,
Till evening with her perfect voice prefer
The grace of silence ; and we are as Thou.

VII

Such halting travellers as we ever were,
By the fair speechless shores of brimming streams
We meet again, and for interpreter
Draw near the sylvan keeper of our dreams ;
The same who all night long was used to graze

VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS

His herds, like those in druid pastures seen
Through darkness magical or starlit haze ;
Viewless himself, unless on upland green
An elfin form pursued with nimble feet
The shadows trooping from the western hills.
Him we may follow now, whose swift retreat
Is stayed ; for thine a footfall that instils
Not fear ; and I, by thee companioned, greet
The same shy spirits by their native rills.

DECEMBER

The west wind builds upon horizons low,
Clouds gather numbers of the storm ; through
 skies
Blue-cavernous, their hurried remnants flow,
As if white multitudes of paradise
Gave place to armies of the spirit, caught
From emptying fields of mortal sacrifice.
—'Tis so, to-day these English heavens are
 fraught
With a vast oarage of faint argosies ;
The joys of many a summer, many a day,
Those thronging decks descry, eyes not as ours
Fixed on these shadowlike earth-drooping flowers
That on their winter lonely stalks decay.
The pilots of the sun make swifter way,
And from their bulwarks gaze on time's last hours.

A. HUGH FISHER

THE STONE-BREAKER

THE wind blows cold by Dortray's Mill
And cold on churchyard bones ;
But colder yet on Ember Hill,
Where Inskip breaks the stones.

He gathers them from lonely fields
Where, high upon the ridge,
Some farmer in some former scheme
Of barren acreage

Ploughed up the virgin springy turf
To learn by anxious toil
You cannot grow a generous crop
On unproductive soil.

That dense sweet turf, those unpeaked hills
So famous for their flocks,
Are rarely tilled, though Inskip reaps
His harvest of the rocks.

A. HUGH FISHER

He seldom meets a face except
His own in dew-pan glass,
Or shepherd's with his panting dog
Alert upon the grass.

From Petersfield to Beachy Head
There is no dwelling-place
Other than Inskip's humble shed
That could those crests deface.

White clouds or cawing rooks that pass
Affect him, if at all,
As little as they do the grass
Whereon their shadows fall.

He never wonders why or how
Or looks beyond his lot,
Or meditates "If I were King,"
Or acts what he is not.

He sleeps without a dream at night ;
Works hard for little wage,
And builds his flints to that stick's height,
His master's casual gauge.

Sometimes he comes on arrowheads—
His master pays for those ;
Though just precisely what they are
Old Inskip hardly knows.

A. HUGH FISHER

And yet some man who shaped such flints
As none could now alive,
Through countless generations gone
May still in him survive.

Or is it blood of ancient Tyre
Or cities lost in sand
Passed on through ages of desire,
That throbs in Inskip's hand

As here in rugged shape he stands
One man against the sky—
The stone-breaker on Ember Hill,
Who asks not how or why ?

Profound the peace in which he dwells
Of stillness immanent ;
So smooth, so rounded are those downs
As lives that are content.

OVER THE CORN

OVER the corn
A little wind's running :
Running, oh ! running !
The little wind dies.

Oceans of splendour
Shining and sunning—
Just themselves sunning
Under the skies.

Somewhat had varied
In minute measure
That harvest treasure
But for that wind.

What once has been
There is no power
For a single hour
Quite to rescind.

Our eyes are darkened
In mists of grieving
And unbelieving
No longer see.

A. HUGH FISHER

In love and sorrow
All that we cherish
Seems then to perish
No more to be.

Yet love that came
In tears or laughter
Is part thereafter
Of all life's gold.

There is no ending :
Forlorn we wonder
Yet naught can sunder
The wind from the wold.

A. HUGH FISHER

IN AN INDIAN CITY

WITH one foot spurning
The potter's turning
A wooden wheel to shape the kneaded clay :

Will grass grow richer
For a little pitcher
All sadly broken on a windy day ?

The goldsmith's blowing
His tube, and glowing
The metal's moulded to a tiny star :

Who will look fairer
To be its wearer,
When someone buys it in the old bazaar ?

The shuttle's flying
As day is dying
The old old pattern is but half begun :

A cloth to pray on—
For a child to play on
And crow again at knitters in the sun.

THE BODY IN THE WOOD

FROM shrouded skies with mournful sound
 Slanted the raw rain,
Whipping the river vale
 And the fields of winter wheat :
It turned the laugh of the hills
 To a wan grey smile of pain
But though it stung his face
 The shepherd scorned its beat.

A coughing chorus now
 Uprose from huddled sheep,
A raucous noise that drowned
 The song of the little bells.
Some, bolder, push their way
 Beyond the cloven steep
Into a beechen copse
 Of dim dry dells.

For these the shepherd sought
 In the shelter of the wood ;
But little did he dream
 What soon his quest would bring.
Into that pallid gloom
 He had not gone a rood
When suddenly he came
 Upon a dreadful thing.

A. HUGH FISHER

Out of his throat escaped
The wordless cry of fear :
Wrung by a like dismay
The sheepdog too gave tongue.
For there upon the mould
With beechmast for a bier
Lay a man's body
More foul than dung.

What he had been death
Had changed into decay :
What was left retained
Hints of what had been :
Hair so brown that told of youth
Teeth in bold display,
Limbs of manly build
Nowhere small or mean.

Idly telling now
Truth but twice a day,
Hung on loosened chain
The watch he had possessed
Golden coins fallen
From rotted pockets lay
Near one gnawed thighbone
Fronds of fern caressed.

Those holes that once contained
Seeing and brightness

A. HUGH FISHER

Now drew the shepherd's gaze
Nearer and nearer :
Till a mere gossamer
Of infinite lightness,
Touching his own cheek
Turned him to all that was dearer.

Breasting the brushwood then,
Stumbling towards light,
Out of the wood he came
Calling though none should heed.
On he went down the steep hill,
In headlong flight,
Anywhere by any way
That to live men might lead.

No loss of human kind
Had yet assailed him ;
Though at the lambing time
He had seen ewes die.
Watching a wounded hare
Cry till its eyes grew dim,
Veiled in the glaze of death,
Had not seemed cruelty.

Now from forgotten days
Unheeded pinions flocked
Darkening the skies of his mind
So that it wandered in vain.

A. HUGH FISHER

Knowledge had curdled joy :
All life was mocked :
Death gave the gladdest song
Grief for refrain.

None knew or after learned
That dead man's tale.
Nor would the shepherd claim
His gold but left it alone.
Fearing some future day
He should have to wail
“ Finger ! Finger ! Not at me
Point your lean bone ! ”

ROBIN FLOWER

THE PILGRIMS' WAY

WALKING from Reigate where the Pilgrims' Way
Leans steep against the hill,
White memory of a million feet gone far
To find another shrine than that they sought,
A deeper rest than in their wayside inns,
And a long darkness gloomier than their yews,
I chanced upon a wood,
A wood inhabiting a little valley,
Climbing the slopes with its adventurous trees
And scattering lonely birches here and there.
It was a summer morning of low sun
And mist half risen ; and over all the ground
From blade to blade of the dew-sprinkled grass
Hung little delicate webs
Tilted this way and that as the blades leaned,
Light floating carpets spread for fairy feet,
Grey fabrics million-diamonded with dew
And flashing with unnumbered fires. And
suddenly
A thought thrilled in my brain : " Here, yes, just
here

ROBIN FLOWER

All those years gone those pilgrim feet went by
Brushing the morning's webs. Their happy faces
Shone in this light, their morning talk and
laughter

Echoed among such lone, such clustered trees
And singing and shouting they

Went up over the lip of this low valley

And set their faces to the hill

And, treading that white trackway of the chalk,
They passed into the morning and were gone."

THE FAIRY WOOD

It was the Fairy Wood :

We called it so, for all we knew of good
And beautiful and beyond belief remote
Dwelt in those brakes of foxglove and bright fern
Whose feathery birches seemed to poise and float
Over young grasses sung through by a burn
And birds made music in that solitude.

Not far away the tide

With the changing weather roared and moaned
and sighed,

And that salt savour in the branches hung
And that blue splendour flashed across the green
And sea-blue and leaf-green together clung
Inseparable, and the skiey blue between
Made a third rapture in that singing pride.

For colour seemed to sing

In that young shade and living light of spring ;
And in the happy birds and chattering stream
And whisper of leaves and that sea-breathing voice
And winds that walked the pathways of my dream
And in your notes that made all these rejoice
Song seemed no less than colour on the wing.

ROBIN FLOWER

THE DEAD

THEY had forgotten that for which they died,
Ardours and angers, valiancy and pride,
The blows given for blows, the blood, the stench,
The grenade scattering death in the dripping
trench,
The humming death and the droning death in
the air
And the sad earth pitted and riven everywhere—
They had forgotten all; and now gathered
together
Like flocks of birds fluttering in the serene
weather
When the exhausted summer day draws to an
end,
Enemy by enemy going as friend by friend,
Rejoicing and rioting there, truants from life,
Forgetting mistress and friend, children and wife,
Released from hate and love, mated or unmated,
Wondering at how they had loved, how they had
hated,
Spirits alight and alert, circling and flying
Over death and life, being done with living and
dying,
Being free of the flesh, glad runaways from that
prison,
Eager for joy, avid of light, from slumber arisen ;

ROBIN FLOWER

So enemy going by enemy as friend by friend
In the level light of the quiet evening end
They flew and mounted and dwindled and so were
gone,
And the night drew down and stars came one
by one,
A wandering wind began to mutter and sigh,
And the earth lay lonely under a livid sky.

EPIGRAMS FROM AN ANTHOLOGIA
HIBERNICA

(9TH-17TH CENTURY)

I. THE SCRIBE IN SPRING

OVER my head the woodland wall
Rises ; the ousel sings to me ;
Above my booklet lined for words
The woodland birds shake out their glee.

There's the blithe cuckoo chanting clear
In mantle grey from bough to bough !
God keep me still ! for here I write
A scripture bright in great woods now.

2. THE ROAD TO ROME

WHO to Rome goes
Much labour, little profit knows ;
For God, on earth though long you've sought
Him,
You'll miss at Rome unless you've brought Him.

3. A SWORD

As clowns to kings, as pennies to a pound,
As serving wenches to princesses crowned,
As kings to thee, to sweet songs catches roared,
As dups to candles all swords to my sword.

ROBIN FLOWER

4. O CHRISTE FIDELIS !

My Christ ever faithful
With glory of angels
And stars in Thy raiment
Child of the white-footed
Deathless inviolate
Bright-bodied maiden !

5. THE OUSEL

He whistles in the willow tree,
Descanting from his yellow bill ;
Gold-beaked, black-coated, that is he,
Stout ousel and his trembling trill.

6. A VISION OF THE NIGHT

O CHASTE and fair ! O sweet and rare ! O slave
of love and duty !
Whose clustering hair falls stair by stair down all
thy house of beauty,
Thy shadow bright at dark of night went by
where I was sleeping,
Thy form, thy face, thy peerless grace in slow
procession sweeping.

7. AT MASS

AH ! light, lovely lady with delicate lips aglow !
With breast more white than a branch heavy-
laden with snow !

ROBIN FLOWER

When my hand was lifted at Mass to salute the Host
I looked at you once and the half of my soul was
lost.

8. SCANDAL

SNOW-BREASTED star whose shining eyes are bold,
With ivory-gleaming teeth and locks of gold,
Mock not a sister fair who steers awry
Till thine own vessel in safe harbour lie.

9. SHEILA

THAT fresh face and tumbled hair
Light my melancholy mood
Though the people cry : Beware !
Wooing her you get no good.

Lose or win her, what care I !
Loveliness must needs be wooed,
Though the jealous people cry,
Though of her I get no good.

Though I get no good and woes
Dog my footsteps everywhere
Till about my pillow flows
All that golden flood of hair.

'Tis Sheila's back that puts the bards to rout
And her cold shoulder throws their music out ;
I rush through madness to my soul's undoing
And yet I get no good of all my wooing.

10. FINIS !

FINIS to all the manuscripts I've penned
And to life's fitful fever here "The End."
"The End" to limewhite women golden-tressed
And in Christ's hands at Judgment be the rest !

THE LOVELY LADY

SWEET Jesu! was't to prove Thy power, or was
it in repentance
For all the sorrows of the Gael under Thy heavy
sentence
That for the salving of their wounds Thou sentest
down from Heaven
This lightsome lady, lovelier than the bright
Pleiads seven ?

For those rich tresses curl by curl gleam with a
pearl-bright shimmer
And tremble still, meandering down to where her
white feet glimmer,
And there arrived they take no rest, but turn and,
lightly springing,
They soar towards her head again, like bird-
flocks upward winging.

And there her bright brows palely shine beneath
that golden border
Where sunrays strive with liliated hues in strange
and sweet disorder,
And to that lovely lady's cheek they lend a comely
brightness,
While the blood coursing neath her skin contends
to flush their whiteness.

ROBIN FLOWER

A magnet, sure! has touched her eyes, those
keen and crystal lances,
For kingliest heroes fall a prey to their resistless
glances ;
And though those veiled orbs seek the ground
'tis only to dissemble,
A thousand hapless captive souls caught in their
meshes tremble.

Her lips are sweet as honeycomb, crimson and
fine and slender,
They close about her little teeth that gleam with
pearly splendour ;
And when they ope there issues forth a lightsome
speech unbroken
As when touched lutestrings stir and tell their
melodies unspoken.

Her neck is whiter than the swan that in the
golden weather
Bathes in the foam of breaking waves her bright
and downy feather ;
There's nought to add or take away, 'tis perfect
in its making,
For Christ's self wrought it straight and fair
when she to life was waking.

Her sweet round breasts are virgin still, for no
rude hand has smutched them,

ROBIN FLOWER

Like whitest egg-shells newly-laid that lie where
none has touched them ;
Her chaste and comely form is bright as may
when spring winds fan it,
So slim a baby's tiny hand, it seems, would all
but span it.

All fever-wasted folk that long have lain in sorrow
stricken,
Till all their wits have gone astray in gloom no
hope could quicken,
When cunning leeches all despair to heal their
constant sadness,
My lovely lady passing by dispels the cloud of
madness.

(Diarmaid Mac Muireadhaigh, 17th century.)

ROBIN FLOWER

THE BLACKTHORN BROOCH

No rustic blackthorn brooch should rest
Above the shining of that breast
Were there, O red lips of sweet sound,
But one gold brooch all Eire round.

Of fiondraine it should be made
The brooch that ties thy lovely plaid,
Or marvellous pin of smithied gold,
Sweet singer ! in thy mantle's fold.

Thy cheek's pale amber claims as right
A fair pin in thy mantle bright
Of golden or of silvery hue,
O thou most loyal heart and true !

Blood of my heart ! I'd set no pin
That many-coloured mantle in,
O mistress of all hearts ! but such
As showed the master-smith's own touch.

(Early 17th century.)

A CURSE

(Here is a poem made by a farmer of Fingal, abusing his nag because it threw him into a deep, dirty pool just in front of a girl he was going to court.)

You brindled beast through whom I've lost her !
Out of my sight ! The devil take you !
And, 'pon my soul, this is no jest,
This year I'll rest not till I break you.

Satanic Ananias blast you !
Is that the way you learnt to carry ?
Your master in the mud to hurl
Before the girl he meant to marry !

The everlasting night-fiend ride you !
My curse cling closer than your saddle !
Hell's ravens pick your eyes like eggs,
You scarecrow with your legs astraddle !

And it was only yesterday, too,
I gave the stable-boy a shillin'
To stuff your belly full of hay
For fear you'd play this trick, you villain !

I gave you oats, you thankless devil !
And saved your life, you graceless fiend, you !
From ragged mane to scrubby tail
I brushed and scraped and scrubbed and cleaned
you !

ROBIN FLOWER

You brute, the devil scorch and burn you !
You had a decent mare for mother,
And many a pound I've spent on hay
To feed you one day and another.

The best of reins, the finest saddle,
Good crupper and good pad together,
Stout hempen girth—for these I've paid,
And breast-plate made of Spanish leather.

What's the excuse ? What blindness caused it.
That bias in your indirections,
That made a windmill of your legs
And lost for good my Meg's affections ?

With my left spur I'll slash and stab you
And run it through the heart within you,
And with the right I'll take great lumps
Out of your rumps until I skin you.

If ever again I go a-courting
Across your back (may Hell-fire melt you !)
Then may I split my fork in twain,
And lose the girl again as well, too !

(*Circ. 1700.*)

JOHN FREEMAN

I WILL ASK

I WILL ask primrose and violet to spare for you
Their smell and hue,
And the bold, trembling anemone awhile to spare
Her flowers starry fair ;
Or the flushed wild apple and yet sweeter thorn
Their sweetness to keep
Longer than any fire-bosomed flower born
Between midnight and midnight deep.

And I will take celandine, nettle and parsley
white
In its own green light,
Or milkwort and sorrel, thyme, harebell and
meadowsweet
Lifting at your feet,
And ivy blossom beloved of soft bees ; I will take
The loveliest—
The seeding grasses that bend with the winds,
and shake
Though the winds are at rest.

JOHN FREEMAN

“ For me ? ” you will ask. “ Yes ! surely they
wave for you
Their smell and hue,
And you away all that is rare were so much less
By your missed happiness.”
Yet I know grass and weed, ivy and apple and
thorn
Their whole sweet would keep
Though in Eden no human spirit on a shining
morn
Had awaked from sleep.

THE YORKSHIRE HOUSE

I

HE came before the sun was risen up,
And the long grass was wet and celandine
And cowslip and close-hooded buttercup.
He crushed them as he came, and gave no sign

That he saw dew or grass or flower or cloud,
Or heard the wind or felt its waking breath.
With shoulders stiff, cloaked head intent and
bowed,

He crossed the meadow and strode up the path.

Older the stone walls were than any trees
Around, and stronger than the broad-breasted
oak ;

The house rose as a rock and slept at ease.
He listened, but no sound the stillness broke.

He pressed the door : it opened and he stepped
Quietly in the quiet of the house—
Almost as slowly as a dial-hand crept,
Then by the small bed stood. . . . But dared
not rouse

The sleeping child, not daring what he would :
His arm hung stiff and cold, lingering there
Knowing his strength all strengthless, as he stood
Caught like an icicle in a still frore air.

Quietly and hastily he turned away.
His shadow strode before him on the grass
Flung down by the first brightness of the day,
And the crushed flowers rose ere his feet could
pass.

II

He came when June's high-clambering flower
was dew'd
And heavy and the woodbine, yet unclosed,
Shone moonlike mid its cloud—each night
renewed
In whiteness ; and again the stone house drowsed.

No one was stirring, though the stir of years
Had a little deepened the broad doorway stone
With many footsteps. But now nothing stirs
Except the cherry boughs tossing up and down.

Softly he moved and stood beside the bed
Where he had stood thirty long years before,
And moved his lips—in vain : no word was said ;
Lifted his hand—in vain : it had no power.

The sleeper slept on. Then that figure went
Heavily from the house into the light
That washed the stone and on the mosses bent
Green bows and gold ; but his eye shrank from
sight.

JOHN FREEMAN

The purple shadows bloomed on the caved hillside
Then dimmed away because the sun was up.
The narrow valley cleared, grew bright and wide
With full green quivering in its crystal cup.

III

When next he came the roof was bent and black,
And cloud was bent low over hoary green ;
And half bare boughs would rattle and thrash
and crack,
And the house stood infirm and aged and mean.

Red creeper leaves and golden beech leaves,
drifted
From the high copse, lay with their splendour
mingled—
The last splendour of the year ; the jasmine lifted
Its warm green bosom and with the frost-wind
tingled.

An elm had fallen in the hedge, and lay
Long after in the crushed hedge where it fell ;
An unhinged gate flapped noisily night and day
In any wind against the orchard wall.

He saw it all and hastened to the door :
The worn fine moulding here and there was
broken,
The latch slid easily ; the once firm floor
Groaned at his foot with all of age unspoken.

He saw a grey head pillow-propped, and heard
Hoarse breathing ; then he raised his hand again,
And his lips moved—but still there was no word ;
The sleeper slept on 'neath a gesture vain.

IV

Then he returned when February's flood
Had made a hundred runnels where was none.
The leaden road shone with its sliding mud
In the white light that hinted prisoned sun.

Last Autumn brambles tangled round his feet,
Every long bough unburdened its wet gems ;
Except the white light there was nothing sweet
More than the intertwisted jasmine stems.

The gate lay in the grass. The path was hidden,
Green strangled green in the garden everywhere,
And in the orchard swept on unforbidden.
He saw a starling from the window stare.

Was every window eyeless, and the roof
With two great black holes yawned, as though a
proud
Winged horse had struck the house with cruel
hoof,
Rising to pasture far beyond the cloud.

JOHN FREEMAN

The door was wide. In every room he peered
And peered, and came at last where the man had
lain.

. . . Now but the bones were lying, as he neared :
The gesture, the unsaid word, no more was vain.

Ungarmented, unfleshed, the bones lay all,
Lying where he died like that uprooted elm,
And wanting no more earthly funeral,
And no wrought sound to break the tidal calm.

The Enemy gloomed : “ Where is my enemy
gone ? ”

Then stumbled to the door, and fell and rose
And fell once more on the grass and there lay
prone,
Until the March night-frost his chill heart froze.

And Spring came. Then the bindweed wrapped
him round—

No shroud so strong. The worm that moves
below

Perpetually stirred till, with no sound,
The house sank ; and the Spring flowered there
anew.

THE ASH

THE undecaying yew has shed his flowers
Long since in golden showers.
The elm has robbed her height
In green, and hangs maternal o'er the bright
Starred meadows, and her full-contented breast
Lifts and sinks to rest.
Shades drowsing in the grass
Beneath the hedge move but as the hours pass.
Beech, oak and beam have all put beauty on
In the eye of the sun.
Because the hawthorn's sweet
All the earth is sweet and the air, and the wind's
feet.
In the wood's green hollows the earth is sweet and
wet,
For scarce one shaft may get
The sudden green between :
Only that warm sweet creeps between the green ;
Or in the clearing the bluebells lifting high
Make another azure sky.

All's leaf and flower except
The sluggish ash that all night long has slept,
And all the morning of this lingering spring.
Every tree else may sing,
Every bough laugh and shake ;

JOHN FREEMAN

But the ash like an old man does not wake,
Even though draws near the season's poise and
noon
In heavy-poppied swoon . . .
Still the ash is asleep,
Or from his lower upraised palms now creep
First green leaves, promising that even those
gaunt
Tossed boughs shall be the haunt
Of Autumn starlings shrill
Mid his full-leaved high branches never still.
If to any tree,
'Tis to the ash that I might likened be—
Masculine, unamenable, delaying,
With palms uplifted praying
For another life and Spring
Yet unforeshadowed ; but content to swing
Stiff branches chill and bare
In this fine-quivering air
That others' love makes sweetness everywhere.

THE CAVES

LIKE the tide—knocking at the hollowed cliff
And running into each green cave as if
 In the cave's night to keep
 Eternal motion grave and deep—

That, even while each broken wave repeats
Its answered knocking and with bruised hand beats
 Again, again, again,
 Tossed between ecstasy and pain,

Still in the folded hollow darkness swells,
Sinks, swells, and every green-hung hollow fills,
 Till there's no room for sound
 Save that old anger rolled around ;

So into every hollow cliff of life,
Into this heart's deep cave so loud with strife,
 In tunnels I knew not,
 In lightless labyrinths of thought,

The unresting tide has run and the dark filled,
Even the vibration of old strife is stilled ;
 The wave returning bears
 Muted those time-breathing airs.

—How shall the million-footed tide still tread
These hollows and in each cold void cave spread ?
 How shall Love here keep
 Eternal motion grave and deep ?

THE BREATH OF SWEET

Now did wallflower breathe
Where most was sweetness wanted. Clear and
sweet

It sprang out of her breast upon the air,
Like a bird flying beneath
High white clouds where
The blue floats in a broken cloud amid the white.

Now did wallflower breathe,
As if the earth in sudden sweet
Poured out passionate heat.

. . . Or smell or bird that from her bosom leapt
Where the deep-glowing petals slept
Upon her bosom's heat :
Or bird or smell it was some heavenward thing .
Flying a sudden wing
Across the morning hour, making all fair more fair.

O, if but wallflower breathe
Its sweet unageing and intense,
Then if death neared her (as I passed her) blind,
The smell might thrill his nerves with sight and
make him a little kind.

But no ! No earthly and no spiritual sense
Would stir and make him less than death
Or less than blind ;
Though in her bosom wallflower burned with
sweet
His cold shade beneath.

IN THOSE OLD DAYS

IN those old days you were called beautiful,
But I have worn the beauty from your face ;
The flowerlike bloom has withered on your cheek
With the harsh years, and the fire in your eyes
Burns darker now and deeper, feeding on
Beauty and the remembrance of things gone.
Even your voice is altered when you speak,
Or is grown mute with old anxiety

For me.

Even as a fire leaps into flame and burns
Leaping and laughing in its lovely flight,
And then under the flame a glowing dome
Deepens slowly into blood-like light :—
So did you flame and in flame take delight,
So are you hollow'd now with aching fire.
But I still warm me and make there my home,
Still beauty and youth burn there invisibly

For me.

Now my lips falling on your silver'd skull,
My fingers in the valleys of your cheeks,
Or my hands in your thin strong hands fast caught,
Your body clutched to mine, mine bent to yours :
Now love undying feeds on love beautiful,
Now, now I am but thought kissing your
thought . .

—And can it be in your heart's music speaks
A deeper rhythm hearing mine : can it be

Indeed for me ?

THE SEARCHLIGHT

SEARCHING amid the high
Secluded spaces of the dusk-bowered sky,
It streamed from the worn grass to the fresh
fields of the dark.

A glow crawled on the bare
Earth as the light rose wheeling high in the air,
Flashing within that vaster arc its silver arc.

The silver snaring light
Netted the thousand moths that out of the night
Flitted and dazzled upon the margin of its beam.

As the gold stars they were gold,
Or beech-leaves falling in October's gold ;
They were gold leaves wind-shaken from a silver
stem.

When the light was lifted
Vertical at mid heaven, large moths drifted
And sank down the deep well where the light
burned most white.

On the burning glass they burned,
Fluttered, rose again and fell and to smoke
turned :
Their smoke rose in the light where other moths
shone bright.

JOHN FREEMAN

. . . Like leaves or stars, no matter,
For leaves and stars and moths at last will scatter.
When the light shuts, dark, dark those aery
hollows lie.

In such an unnatural beam,
While the dear earth lies locked in a long dream,
Like netted moths millions of English spirits fly.

JOHN FREEMAN

FLOWERS

THIS June evening sky
Blooms with such lovely flowers
As earth in happiest hours
Had wished for hers.

The west wind all day
Sent white clouds after white,
But evening's rarer light
Makes beauty more.

Born in a high cold air,
These evening flowers die
As in an Arctic sky,
So soon as born :

Soon as a happy dream,
Or blooms that water shakes
And as it makes unmakes ;
They brighten, fade.

Then for their season too
Starred is the heavenly mead
With flowers of heavenly seed,
Blue, yellow and white.

JOHN FREEMAN

THE DOOR

I HAVE looked through the door
But may not enter.
Flowers, trees, grasses grow there
Green in the spring,
And I know unseen rivers flow there.

Jasmine binds the door
Standing ajar.
So sharp rises the smell there
Of jasmine flowers,
I am bound as by a painful spell there,
And the starry vines
Bend over all my sense.
Blackbird to blackbird calls there
And shakes wet wings
By tributary stream to stream that falls there.

I at the door see, hear,
But may not enter.
Nothing to me is strange there,
But nothing's mine
Save unconstrained thoughts that range there.

Yet there I remember
All that was dear,
All that in childhood grew there ;
And recognize
The beauty I knew not I knew there.

JOHN FREEMAN

O starry door
I may not enter.
By day and night I come there
Because there only
Is my desire, and my spirit's home there :

Because there only is One
I would behold,
Moving like a tree there
Or bird or flower ;—
Or the very Unseen I may see there.

JOHN FREEMAN

BROAD BE THY LIGHT, O LAND

BROAD be thy light, O Land, like water bright,
Thy peace like water deep that seems to sleep.
Like woods thy soft clouds wherein the light nests
warm ;

Let shadows on thy meadows move like sheep.

Thy birds are lovely birds and lovely voices,
And lovely airs they sing in the rainy spring.
Silver hair thy streams, drawn through tangled
dreams

Of trees and meads and trees that shake and sing.

Thy harvest fields that lie 'neath the full-moon sky
Through all the moony vale are silver pale.
Broad in thy light, O Moon, the land lies bright ;
Asleep or musing deep is all the vale.

There should no angers move on the face men love,
Fear should not be there, nor sick despair ;
But clear and steady eyes and old histories,
And thought invisible made visible there.

Art thou awake ? Thy silver hair doth shake,
Thy breathing stirs the airs that drowsed all night.
Be thy heart near that is to my heart dear,
Broad be thy light, O Land, like the sun bright.

JAMES GUTHRIE

THE STORM

SHUT out the storm :
A lit candle in the house
Will seem as warm
As high noon is to us.

Come in and rest :
A little love will be as good
As a dove's nest ;
And we will eat some food,

And then have sleep—
So may warm body and warm heart
Us cheer and keep
Till morning, when we part.

Shut out the storm.
O, turn it when it ventures, lest
Your house get harm
From its chill, or your breast.

JAMES GUTHRIE

THE WHITE HEAT

THE overburdened trees droop down,
The pulsing heat afflicts the grass
That is burned brown,
The throbbing hours pass.
A lark rises, but he sinks soon ;
The staring sun's invariable noon
Has not the old
Kindliness, when clouds let not down
A shower's cold.

His step upon the stones I hear
So plainly. It is as though he were
Adam, the first man who trod
Alone abroad ;
As though the hollow void was worth
No toil on earth ;
Life scarcely won
From deserts stricken
By the sun.

Stayed here by some magic,
I see the apple-clusters sicken—
Their fall is tragic.
Blight corrupts the dead ;
Even the dead
Draw from earth's hidden places
A whiteness like their faces.

THE LIFE AND THE FLOWER

The roses gone,
There is yet one that waits,
So frail, so frail,
To bloom for me alone.

How slow, how slow
Her scented leaves unfold ;
Before her lore
Of love is told, I go.

As red she grows,
The more do I grow pale ;
My life I give
To be the reddening rose,

Whose bloom shall be
For other eyes than mine,
That, praising her,
Know not their praise of me.

JAMES GUTHRIE

DREAM

MESEEMED it was a chamber tall
Wherein I stood, and on the wall
The glass of pictures in the gloom
Echoed the window round the room.
Far upward wound the cold white stair,
Far down my spirit wandered there,
As light or shadow on the door
My errant fancy outward bore,
And faintly caught, as if they strayed,
Came children's voices in, afraid.

One lay upon the mantled bed,
So still and cold I thought him dead ;
But ever thus in wakeful sleep
I must my lonely vigil keep
Until They come—but who or whence
I know not—and shall bear him hence.

THE WITNESS OF THE LONELY

OF my sad moments, when I mourn within
How far I fall
From man's inheritance, how greatly sin ;
Of the enchantment earth may yield,
As though the grasses of the field
Grew not at all,
But of a lightened human heart
Were its glad springing part ;
Of sombre mood ; of haste and ease ;
Surely these fields and trees
Are witnesses ?

JAMES GUTHRIE

TO THE SWALLOW WHEN DEPARTING

THY path is barred by mountain and sea,
The land of the lotus is singing to thee,
Swallow,
O swallow, away !

Is there the glint of a star to guide,
A face beaming far, or a hand waving wide ?
Swallow,
O Swallow, away !

To thee are the way and the glimmering light,
And thou with my heart and the summer in
flight,
Swallow,
O Swallow, away !

JAMES GUTHRIE

GOSSIP

In the withy pool I sit,
Weaving water-rushes :
When she sets her foot on them,
Out the water gushes ;
So that when she walks again,
Tread she gently ;
Tread she gently
When she walks again.

'Tis a riddle that you read :
When my neighbour sees it,
She may, knowing of the hurt,
Then begin to ease it ;
So that when she talks again,
Tread she gently ;
Tread she gently
When she talks again !

TO EVELINE

I'LL wed you with the apple-ring
That floats within my cider-cup :
It lies low down to hear me sing ;
But, when I drink, it rises up.

We best had made this bargain first :
That some such passion then must raise
A joy in you to meet my thirst,
And you be prone to have my praise,

In case my song should make you shrink,
Or you prove wrathful when I drink.

THE WIND

I WONDER at the Old-Man Wind /
Who presses my door with his hand ;
Forever is his grey beard kind,
And his cool heels on my upland.
Do not weary,
Though I weary,
Old man, cold man,
Storm man, warm man ;
Following the yellow sheaves
With sly beggar-beds of leaves.

Here, safe between my own four walls,
I may mock on and be at ease,
Heedless of uninviting calls,
And sally outside when I please.
Do your knocking
While I'm mocking,
Old man, cold man,
Fright man, night man ;
Piling, in your stormy brewin' ;
High trees and houses in a ruin.

I'm sorry for the beggar-man :
He has no place to rest him in,
No coat for warmth, and, in his can,
His watered liquor has got thin ;

JAMES GUTHRIE

No pipe wreathing
With his breathing,
Old man, cold man,
Worn man, torn man ;
He needs a bed that's dry and slim—
May there be such an one for him !

THE CLOCK

THE clock makes words without a rest ;
A little stillness, then a shock :
The silences must break their breast
Upon its rock.

And have their flow so short a while,
In dreams without the thrill of pain ;
So soon their broken waters pile—
And run again.

With such grim gaolers at its side :
One high, one hoarse, with sudden blow,
My thought may never wander wide,
Bound captive so ;

But only come in eager jet,
A pulse, a flood that passes by ;
And will the narrow borders fret
Till it runs dry.

Or, till Life's fuller rhythm fit,
Grown calm to know the most, the best,
Give to the ebb and flow of it
A sense of rest.

OF EDEN

HE builded Eden for our souls,
Of silver strands and radiant flowers
Dreamed in the cool of early showers
And leaping light from aureoles.
Then, angels sang to us, or ran
With glittering footsteps, till the sun
Was weary, and night had begun
To weave the precious sleep of man.

Since they who shared these youthful things
Are lost to us, the shadows crowd :
We make our sorrowing aloud,
And half forget our ancient wings,
Thinking (poor shrunken men of clay)
This earth of ours a ruinous,
A dark and a neglected house,
And joy a bygone mystery.

JAMES GUTHRIE

THE NIGHT

How good to wander on ways known
To me and the sweet night alone ;
The day forth, all its singing flown

To make more deep its song with mine,
And its far wonder a divine
Enchantment and a cooling wine !

I drink and sing : I have and give.
The hours, so cold, so fugitive,
Are warmed to me, and made to live.

RUTH MANNING-SANDERS

SONG FROM "LOKI"

O naked hunted thought,
Throw down thy torment here,
Hush, hush, pant not, despair not,
Sleep is near :
Her house is empty of dreams,
Her arms of fear.

O wandering weary flame,
Parched is the world for thee,
Quench thy hot light, come drink
Of the deep dark sea ;
All quiet, sightless, deaf
These waters be.

O torch, whose breath but lights
The dark thou fear'st to see,
Fate brings thee where the deep
Still waters be ;
Fate flings thee from her hand
To quench in me.

RUTH MANNING-SANDERS

Fall, fall, a ghostly flame
Leaps swift to meet thee here,
Come, come, shrink not, delay not,
Peace is near.—
The torch whose light is quenched
No dark need fear.

NIGHT

WHEN the rude tones are sped,
And the dust lies, and the pestering flies
Creep to the hollows of the cooling thatch,
And day's too fiery head
Calm night hath pillowèd,—
Soft, loose the latch ;
Now that the breaths of earth all incense be,
Come, my Belovèd, walk the world with me.
Empty the village street,
The houses veil
In mystic, pale,
Low shimmering dress their daylight seeming,—
The time our sense doth cheat,
So rare, so wondrous sweet
The robe of dreaming
That vests the cloud-white flower and silent tree,
And shadow-hill that screens a whispering sea.
Lo you, the sands are bare ;
With rise and fall hushed, musical,
The waters chant, the white moon glides
 beholding
Her sparkling image there,
Each wave a mirror fair
Up to her holding,—
Night is for those whose hearts all tranquil be,
Come, my Belovèd, walk the world with me.

AGE

WHERE the old lamp swings from a hook
And monstrous spiders look
Out from the corners of each broken pane,
Where their dingy webs have lain
From spring to spring,
Gathering
Dirt, and hollow eyes
And wings of luckless flies :

There an old and smiling man
Labours out his span
Of days that shorten fast, and they all three,
Lamp and man and window be
Time worn,
Battered, shorn
Long ago of pride,
Ageing side by side.

But a dusty splendour drifts
Through the panes, and shifts
Along the bench as seasons travel by
And when without in freezing sky
Day falls dead,
The lamp will shed
O'er his tools a ring
Lit for labouring.

RUTH MANNING-SANDERS

And the years, one after one
See the same work done
Slower only, but with heart as great,
Eye still true, back straight,
With need but this
For worldly bliss,—
Tools, a store of wood
And each day's task made good.

J. C. SQUIRE

THE BIRDS

To Edmund Gosse.

WITHIN mankind's duration, so they say,
Khephren and Ninus lived but yesterday.
Asia had no name till man was old
And long had learned the use of iron and gold ;
And æons had passed, when the first corn was
planted,
Since first the use of syllables was granted.

Men were on earth while climates slowly swung,
Fanning wide zones to heat and cold, and long
Subsidence turned great continents to sea,
And seas dried up, dried up interminably,
Age after age ; enormous seas were dried
Amid wastes of land. And the last monsters died.

Earth wore another face. O since that prime
Man with how many works has sprinkled time !
Hammering, hewing, digging tunnels, roads ;
Building ships, temples, multiform abodes.

J. C. SQUIRE

How, for his body's appetites, his toils
Have conquered all earth's products, all her soils ;
And in what thousand thousand shapes of art
He has tried to find a language for his heart !

Never at rest, never content or tired :
Insatiate wanderer, marvellously fired,
Most grandly piling and piling into the air
Stones that will topple or arch he knows not
where.

And yet did I, this spring, think it more strange,
More grand, more full of awe, than all that change,
And lovely and sweet and touching unto tears,
That through man's chronicled and unchronicled
years,
And even into that unguessable beyond
The water-hen has nested by a pond,
Weaving dry flags into a beaten floor,
The one sure product of her only lore.
Low on a ledge above the shadowed water
Then, when she heard no men, as nature taught
her,
Plashing around with busy scarlet bill
She built that nest, her nest, and builds it still.

O let your strong imagination turn
The great wheel backward, until Troy unburn,

And then unbuild, and seven Troys below
Rise out of death, and dwindle, and outflow,
Till all have passed, and none has yet been there :
Back, ever back. Our birds still crossed the air ;
Beyond our myriad changing generations
Still built, unchanged, their known inhabitations.
A million years before Atlantis was
Our lark sprang from some hollow in the grass,
Some old soft hoof-print in a tussock's shade ;
And the wood-pigeon's smooth snow-white eggs
were laid,
High amid green pines' sunset-coloured shafts,
And rooks their villages of twiggy rafts
Set on the tops of elms, where elms grew then,
And still the thumbling tit and perky wren
Popped through the tiny doors of cosy balls
And the blackbird lined with moss his high-built
walls ;
A round mud cottage held the thrush's young,
And straws from the untidy sparrow's hung.

And, skimming forktailed in the evening air,
When man first was were not the martens there ?
Did not those birds some human shelter crave,
And stow beneath the cornice of his cave
Their dry tight cups of clay ? And from each
door
Peeped on a morning wiseheads three or four.

J. C. SQUIRE

Yes, daw and owl, curlew and crested henn,
Kingfisher, mallard, water-rail and tern,
Chaffinch and greenfinch, wagtail, stonechat, ruff,
Pied warbler, robin, fly-catcher and chough,
Missel-thrush, magpie, sparrow-hawk and jay,
Built, those far ages gone, in this year's way.
And the first man who walked the cliffs of Rame,
As I this year, looked down and saw the same
Blotches of rusty red on ledge and cleft
With grey-green spots on them, while right and left
A dizzying tangle of gulls were floating and flying,
Wheeling and crossing and darting, crying and
crying,
Circling and crying, over and over and over,
Crying with swoop and hover and fall and recover.
And below on a rock against the grey sea fretted,
Pipe-necked and stationary and silhouetted,
Cormorants stood in a wise, black, equal row
Above the nests and long blue eggs we know.

O delicate chain over all the ages stretched,
O dumb tradition from what far darkness fetched :
Each little architect with its one design
Perpetual, fixed and right in stuff and line,
Each little ministrant who knows one thing,
One learned rite to celebrate the spring.
Whatever alters else on sea or shore,
These are unchanging : man must still explore.

PROCESSES OF THOUGHT: I

I FIND my mind as it were a deep water.

Sometimes I play with a thought and hammer
and bend it,

Till tired and displeased with that I toss it away
Or absently let it slip to the yawning water,
And down it sinks, forgotten for many a day.

But a time comes when tide or tempest washes it
High on the beach, and I find that shape of mine,
Or I haul it out from the depths on some casual
rope,

Or, passing over that spot in quiet shine,

I see, where my boat's shadow makes deep the
water,

A patch of colour, far down, from the bottom
apart,

A wavering sign like the gleam from an ancient
anchor,

Brown fixing and fleeting flakes ; and I feel my
heart

Wake to a strange excitement ; so that I stop,
Put up my paddles and dredge with a careful net ;
And I catch it, and see it stir, and feel its weight
And pull till it nears and breaks from the water
wet.

J. C. SQUIRE

And my eyes dwell on that old abandoned thing
Recovered by chance. For the shape I had
found so dull
Has crusted and changed in secrecy and silence,
And its surface shines like a pearl, most beautiful.

PROCESSES OF THOUGHT: II

IN bed I lie, and my thoughts come filing by,
All forms and faces, cheerful, serene and sad :
Some clear, some mistily showing and fragmen-
tary,
Some altered in size or shape since last they were
seen.

But O last, you group of merry ones !
Lord knows when I saw you before, but I met
you once,
The whole collection of you, impudent-eyed ;
And now, rosy and grinning, with linked arms
You go swingingly by, turning your faces to mine.
I laugh aloud ; you bad lots ; you are a secret,
That nobody else knows.

And you it was that made me break the pro-
cession
(While memory gave me still the power of
summons)
And call up all I could of a half-hour's thoughts
To parade them across this proscenium of my
skull
In the order they came in, more carefully recog-
nizing
The old, and remarking which have developed
or changed.

J. C. SQUIRE

And as for you, you rogues, I am almost certain
There are one or two more of you now than once
there were.

Good-bye! Good-bye! Dance through the
dark door

In to the life that somewhere else you lead.

And one day I shall all unwittingly call

Some word you know as a signal, or you'll see

Someone else coming my way; you'll suddenly
follow,

And you'll appear again, quite possibly

Bringing new friends—who are sure to be just
as bad.

AIRSHIP OVER SUBURB

A SMOOTH blue sky with puffed motionless clouds.

Standing over the plain of red roofs and bushy
trees

The bright coloured shell of the large enamelled
sky.

Out of the distance pointing, a cut dark shape
That moves this way at leisure, then hesitates
and turns :

And its darkness suddenly dies as it turns, and
shows

A gleaming silver, white against even the whitest
cloud.

Across the blue and the low small clouds it moves
Level, with a floating cloud-like motion of its own,
Peaceful, sunny and slow, a thing of summer
itself,

Above the basking earth, travelling the clouds
and the sky.

ROWLAND THIRLMERE

THE SQUIRE'S SON

(Lake District dialect.)

I's an ald woman noo, an varra laame,
But I's reet fain to see ye, Sir. I's lost
Up here be mesel; wi nut a bit o' saame
Or butter, an nut a card fer me in t' post.

Ye're a girt, strappin lad: ye favver t'Squire:
He gev me yon Dutch clock—lang sen, ye kna—
T'gowk sings, an while I sit an luk at t'fire
I thinks o' t'bird that pushed ye oot o' t' Ha!

I miss yer fadder. Sek a heart he hed—
It was a double heart, an ye may see
Wet eyes roond here, if a chance word be said
About him, lad. He seemt a prince to me.

But noo we've anudder doon at yer ald hoose:
He wants his rent to t'day: he's got queer ways
And dark, that chap! Nut even a flitter-moose
Could flay me mair than does his yallow face.

ROWLAND THIRLMERE

That mushrum man gat brass in a neet, me lad ;
But oor dear Squire dropped his ; and noo he lies
Lost in sum battlefield. Ah ! it's ower sad
To think of him : he hed sek big, blue eyes !

Me pear-tree's nipped—ah yis—but t'throssle
sings,
An t'ivy-beads hev ripened black ! Well—well—
It's a straange warld, an Aprel cums to things
Ower sharp sumtimes, when t'apple-blossoms
swell.

Last neet t'ald meun com up ahint them firs
Like a faace ; an t'frost's white fingers touched
me trees ;
Just as a thowt—which offen cums an stirs
Me heart to frettin—med me shaake at t'knees.

I stud at t'dooar an hard them foxes yelp,
Feightin doon in t'copse : this auld dog barked—
O sek a noise !—He com to me a whelp
Fra yer fadder.—Then a poacher's flash-leet
sparked.

I was flayed ; an hoo I wisht that I met hear
T'Squire's kind voice just then ! An noo, an
noo—
A bit o' that genrous man *hes* cum, me dear ;
An, lad, ye mun let me kiss ye anyhoo !

A GLOW-WORM

I HELD a glow-worm in my hand
While the first night of June
Stole the broom's glory, and shed rust
On hawthorn boughs too soon.

There was a gleam of fairy fire
Under a roof of grass,
Near a wild rose-tree, freshly decked
Which would not let me pass.

I stooped—a wingless insect slipped
Into my palm and lay
Restless—a living lamp—a small
Fragment of vanished day.

.
But shall I find my love, who wa
Beyond the sundering sea,
With a bright hope upon her face
That's more than lamp to me ?

TWO LOVERS

THE inextinguishable fire
Of spring, that hid awhile in snow,
Is blown to flame ; the thrushes quire
In a wakened world, and ever higher
Towards light the skylarks go.

Those whispering lovers feel the stir
Of the warmed earth : they do not heed
Old folk whose hearts are heavier
Than theirs ; but, as he stoops to her,
My wounds of memory bleed.

They've left their cheerful crocus-days
Behind, and see still sunnier time
Before them—with the rose-hung ways
Bright with a happiness that stays
For ever in its prime.

Yet this, perhaps, is the great hour
Of life for such undisciplined
And amorous youth. While yet the flower
Of love is fresh, they have the power
To climb the very wind.

ROWLAND THIRLMERE

Their eyes will surely never see
Joy nearer : when the spirit craves
Rapture, 'tis nighest. They are free
To-day and rulers, who shall be
Haply, hereafter, slaves.

W. J. TURNER

CLERKS ON HOLIDAY

THE long black trains are stealing from the city
one by one,
Packed tight in corridors they stand, their holi-
days begun,
Tall, white-faced creatures blinking in the dead,
unnatural light ;
Phantoms on to their eyeballs leaping out of the
flying night—
Trees, lamps, stars, gusts of rain, all jumping
in the brain.

They rattle through the evening air, hats, sticks
and luggage, all
Unreal as clowns upon their way to some quiet
country hall,
Their dumb, high mournful faces dead as flowers
with moon-white eyes,
When the soft humanizing sun has sunk in chilly
skies
And vaguely a thin wind frets the trees' dark
silhouettes.

W. J. TURNER

By midnight they are driving down a narrow
country road ;

The thick trees watch on either side the horse
and his dark load ;

The trees come close about the horse, they seem
to talk together ;

The moon is floating in the sky, light as a white
owl's feather—

Quiet jut the village roofs amid the clanging
hoofs.

They enter the low farmhouse like men moving
in a dream,

Who see great stars beyond a room and, in the
candle-gleam,

They stand beside the window and their blood's
spring-reddened tides

Leap up in that black world to where, soundless,
a frail moon rides

In a thin vapour sea of hill and rock and tree.

They know not why they gaze upon the moon
with troubled blood,

They tremble, for their brains are bright with
its transparent flood ;

Alone they walk in dark-wreathed woods, like
men fast-bound with spells,

W. J. TURNER

To where the faint, immortal cry of travelling
water dwells,
Whose cuckoo voice outsings the noise of mortal
things !

The voice of water falling down from leaf and
fern and stone,
The voice of hidden water on a pilgrimage
unknown,
The tiny voice that calls shut up in miles of solid
rock,
As if within this world's stone walls some other
world should knock,
And press unhurrying by with a strange unhuman
cry.

. . . .

All day they stare among the trees that stand
beside the pools ;
Hour-long only a leaf will fall, and on mossed
boulder stools
They sit and feel the drip of time, so infinitely
slow
There is no motion in their minds, nowhere for
time to flow ;
And from that inner gaze fade years and months
and days.

W. J. TURNER

The leaves are rustling overhead as they sit bowed
and still,
A crooked line of restless ants climbs up a little
hill,
A thrush with head cocked on one side is showing
one bright eye,
And sunlight mottling all the ground in silence
flickers by ;
Deep-sunken in a dream trunks of men and
forest seem.

The sunlight plays upon their hair and flits from
place to place ;
The sunlight stirs within their bones, and gilds
each pallid face
Bending to falling water and the scent of the
coming rose ;
And blooming softly through the wood the
spring wing-footed goes ;
Like flowers strangely bright their faces are
alight.

And thrush and robin, birch and oak, the hot
sun's dancing rays
Work their strong magic in the brain, dumb-
still they sit and gaze ;
And beauty blinds them and they hear spring
winds sea-hollowing blow ;

W. J. TURNER

Into a far and passionate land with wild starved
looks they go—
Return! no land can give the life you fain would
live.

Return! return unto your desks and mount
your office stools;
Till none remain within this quiet, that broods
round forest pools!
The moon will shine on when you're gone, still
will the water fall,
And other faces in the wood shall answer its
faint call,
Shall wander through hot noons followed by
slow-paced moons.

. . . .

And sitting deep within the sun I watched them
die away,
I watched their bodies fade like clouds upon a
summer's day,
I watched the green boughs waving as in their
graves they lie,
Their small white faces crumbling as they stared
into the sky,
And O the sky was bright with an ecstasy of
light!



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