

POEMS.

(1980-2018)

By

WM. THOMAS SHERMAN

~*~

*Without breath there is no life;
Without words there is no breath;
Without poetry there is no freedom;
No freedom? What's left but death?*

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1604 NW 70th St.

Seattle, WA 98117

(206) 784-1132,

wts@gunjones.com

<http://www.gunjones.com>

Author's Note.

These poems were written as early as the 1980's, and from that time up to and including the present. They are arranged in this volume in what is more or less the chronological order in which they were written; except with respect to the first portion of this collection, i.e. up to and including "Envoi"; in which (although still containing my earliest verse) they are not placed in such strict sequence. A good many of the poems have, at a later time, gone through some greater or lesser degree of rewording and reworking; and it's not impossible I may still further re-do or revise some or other of what you have here.

My ideas and views on poetry and writing poems over these years have understandably gone through not inconsiderable change and development. Yet for all that I have learned and improvement made, I still seek to progress to someone and something better as an author; just as I would wish and hope to be true of you reading this is in whatever it is you do. This said, I have to think these poems are at least good enough, else why publish?

Please accept then what follows for what might prove your amusement, if not enlightened enrichment.

Wm. Thomas Sherman
Seattle, Washington

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THE ART OF POETRY

I.

Eyes open
in my heart and mind!
May ideas I find
uniting forms without,
with spirit within.
In a word,
let words begin!

The Muse cannot be forced,
she sings only when free.
But her voice
will come finally
to hearts overflowing,
seeking harmony.

Hers is a test of self-giving
to prove one's spirit
is light enough,
the base world to transcend,
towards Truth
ever to ascend.

What is sung is not empty dreams,
but a call to perfection,
renewing people's lives
whatever their direction.

II.

Though towers decay,
monuments crumble,
and castles fall into the sea,
Poetry and Truth live on
surviving mortality.

The Night is deep,
the Day does shine,
the world is round
and on proceeds time.
Filled with wonder
wrapped in rhyme,
try the rainbow to define;
put infinity into a line.

IMAGINATION

Boats green,
blue, yellow,
and red,
with white sails,
there's one place

them you can see...
inside your mind
-- so go find.

IN THE AFRICAN KINGDOM

In the African kingdom
in the explosion of the sun
they sit on a fallen trunk,
amid the grass
while grains of sand
shout back sparkling.
Necks and shoulders gleaming,
sweat of the jungle breathing,
the tree tops' shade cools
laughter in life's foliage.

CATS' POEMS

Jeebo's Poem

I see the little birds
go tweet, tweet, tweet,
then to home I go,
to sleep, sleep, sleep.

Timina Kitten's Poem

Mew! Mew! says Tim Kitten
my feet are black, my fur is striped.
I am a tiny, lovable cat,
but tough for all of that!

Hindman's Poem

I take care of the two little cats
because I am big you see,
friend of animals *and* people alike
everyone loves to know me!

HYDE PARK AFTERNOON

What Spring brought so benignly,
Summer fervor rouses finely.
Leaves reflecting light glimmer
above a pond which shimmers.
Fountains gush forth with power,
to fall in resplendent shower.
In chairs folk recline, steaming in the heat,
others rest in a cool, shady seat
exploring the world in a magazine or book,
while ducks find shelter in a leafy nook.
Like the kayaks skimming the waters of the lake;

a fleet of geese leave ripples in their wake.
A jocund pup jogs with master alongside,
pulling the leash by which he is tied.
Horses trot, their noble heads high,
silhouetted against noon's blue sky.
On through the day they prance.
and no less proudly, singing sparrows dance.
Grey pigeons coo and strut with not a care,
until a small boy scatters them in the air.
Flowers red and violet bloom,
which with fresh grass, fill the air with perfume.
Children on swings and ladders play,
while elders forget age, taking in day.

YOUTH AND ECSTASY

At a canter then a run
Ecstasy charges forth,
in glory rearing.
From the first
he reaches a wild speed,
this mount of fortune,
the moment's flaming steed.

They makes their way
above the mortal air,
the rider exhilarated
beyond all care.
Leaping fast upon the winds,
upon the cloudy main,
letting fall to earth
all memory of pain.

Yet though his senses
from pleasure would burst,
he knows well from the first
that this momentum vernal
will not be eternal.
He knows these sights
these beautiful things
are ephemeral and temporary,
like songs one sings.

From out the corner
of speeding eyes,
he sees a lean shade,
upon a distant constellation,
Death pensive, waiting,
punisher of sin,
Death, not hesitating.

The starry rider throw a bold fist;
Death, for now, vanishes in a mist.

Twice elated the horseman bounds,

reaches a dizzy height
enjoying the ride
for the fleeting thing it is,
the sky now opens,
all of heaven seems his.

There he meets a golden maid
who with flowers and a kiss
sends him home reeling in bliss.

He gliding slows
into the sunset breeze
toward hills below;
thinking on the date,
he must return
to battle Fate.

PEACE AT DUSK

In a cottage, in a thicket,
at a hill slope's edge,
whose sun was a candle
an old man lived.
Amongst fond toys and books,
he passed thoughtful years
witnessed the fall of snows
that hides hares and reveals owls;
beheld budding branches
wreathing beloved robins' nests;
watched Summer beams,
hurry the fish in the brook,
or viewed darkening Autumn
lay gold and red across his doorstep.
Though the world was once in his hands,
he resigned himself happily to God's,
and grateful of wonders,
treasuring memories,
strode the seasons of his soul.

THE TYRANT

The tyrant will do
one charitable deed,
just so he can steal from
a hundred in need.

He appears good
to conceal crimes and lies,
that he might better stifle
victims' groans and cries.

All fair competition
he will avoid having to face,
then murder or maim

those who'd dare take his place.

Though his own ruin he creates,
mournful the suffering he leaves in his wake.

OBSTACLES

Life evolves
seeking to transcend
mechanical laws.
A spirit to breathe and love,
with obstacles
like greed and ignorance
of others needs,
we find ourselves
with saddening tragedies
which neither time,
or forgetfulness can erase;
which make us callous,
thoughtless and despairing.

THE DEATH OF THE MURDERED SAILOR

Winds unleashed,
waves whipped up,
the foam surging
crashing on black rocks,
in frenzy
as the fury of hell
converges on my soul.
Helpless below
the enraged storm;
my foundation,
once thick inches of stone,
now bubbles a lava cauldron,
seething with rage.
My mind's sails burst
in thunder like a hurricane's,
gusts shriek doom,
while I go mad
longing for the morrow.
Earthquakes crack open
chasms to an abyss,
and infinity looks on
devouring all being.
Horses bolt neighing in air,
lightening cast, nights howls,
from out the dripping mists
the unsought past appears.
Flapping gulls' dance wildly,
under a darkened sky
now rent in two.
My soul bursts with visions
of futurity and gloom.

Yet I still yet see!
Yet I still yet hear,
one with a sunset,
violent and strange.
Blood flows burning,
yet now all cools
as the winds subside
into whispers and sighs.

TEMPEST FROM THE PAST

Seen from a quiet room
the Ages yawn,
exhaling a storm
amidst the sleeping morn.
Into the deserted streets run
native spirits, memories of sacrifice,
howling with the winds,
whose cries will sleep
when Justice returns
with Nature's lost peace.

ANCIENT LIVES

When thousands of years past
it was the present,
zephyrs whistled through
Lebanese cedars;
someone slapped a timbrel
to their hip,
moaning, longing.

From Luxor on a woven barge,
they sailed in steamy air
water lapping
the boat's sides.
Someone in the bow
dreamed that the sun
had raised his soul
up into the sky.

In the desert she sat
tending docile donkeys,
something to do
on her way through life.

In the temple of the god
fumes of incense arose
from a silver cup.
The priest had told the king
that two black ewes
need be slain,
and offered up
to appease defeat.

The ancient mourned
that the ancestors had been forgot
in a dusty street of Carchemish.
Weeping, coughing, alone he died
under the icy beams
of a midnight moon,
while next morning,
the world strolled by in silence.

Out of Jabbok they road
with letters from the all powerful
Assyrian king
to seal a bargain with the south.
Along the way, lions charged up
ripping bleeding lines
over the horse's hinds.
One messenger was lost,
but the rest sped on.

The slaves of Akkad,
made the bricks,
with feet covered in clay;
then arose
to receive fruit
brought by a maid
from the valley.

For biting his nose off
ten shekels were fined.
Yet for only an accident,
it was instant death.
A curse was pronounced
and he was hung from a pole.

She wore tiny hippos
made of lapis lazuli
around her royal neck,
too young
for tomorrow.

With his charts before him
the astrologer
had been following
a flickering star,
by a bronze lamp's flame.
Then in amazement it seemed
it had disappeared.
A grave omen this!
And solemnly scrawled
What he didn't see
on his wet clay tablet.

The merchant proudly viewed
his completed tomb,
completed before he should die,

sniffing his emerald ring
that held perfume,
fingering the ringlets
of his long beard;
as he awaited
the arrival of his friends.

The ship smashed up
upon a reef,
and a month's harvest
of barley and grain
fed thousands of
round eyed fish,
while emptying
the belly of a town.

In Lagash,
Two slaves made love
inside the small hut,
to the sound of cooing
doves boxed in a cage.

Circling, the young princes
laughing
drove their gold plated
chariot cars forth.
Lifting spears in imitation
of sires in battle
or on the hunt,
they route an invisible enemy
across a flashing river.

In the cold stream,
the maidens of Kush
bathed, their feet and ankles
under the hot splendor of noon.
Stern faced the eunuchs kept an eye,
for wanton wayfarers.

Near the city square,
the old campaigner sat
with bandaged, festering arm
from whence a Hatti's arrow
had been pulled.
Surely he thought,
what stories I can tell,
of valiant acts
of midnight raids;
of spears and shields
burnished in the blinding sun.

The women wailed;
their lord was dead!
A mournful procession
of veils and tears
following the bier

to its final resting shrine,
past a palace
where someone was born,
launched upon life's puzzle.

They talked of planning
a murder
behind the granary doors,
as one came rushing late
into the secret meeting.
Fearful of getting caught
in conspiracy,
they yet are bent on revenge.

Through the mountains,
across the river gorge,
shepherds of Uratu
lead flocks of sheep and goats
in the chilly dawn.
Bells jingle,
a horn sounds,
while a future waits
of pastures rolling.

HYMN TO BEAUTY

Engulfed by shadow,
Beauty, I seek you.
I beseech you in your love
our falseness mend,
our blindness end,
sunlit clouds to roam
onward to your home.
Passion with art instill,
instruct in us good will.
Give us grace,
humility teach,
one day to reach,
that summit sublime,
the reason for time.

THREE SECRETS

I
Were there no gravity
we would all be free.

II
There is no up
There is no down
There is only
the all around.

III

The mind is an endless sky
filled with thoughts like stars.

FUTILITY

In an abandoned country house,
where the wind blows
through gaping windows
past glass strewn
upon the floor,
in the corner of a room
a grain of sand
is sent reeling into infinity.

NIGHT REVERY

A bracing sight ---
this bright racing night!
Clouds bath in moon's
softest glow,
while rushing on the air they go!

Yet beyond this scene
are stars and worlds unseen,
silent, glistening sights
of blue, red, and silvery white.
And while these vapors
billowing on high,
glide wildly and wide
light dotted
valleys and hills below,
lie in hushed concord and peace.

Soon again those colors will shine --
gone the cries of lost souls in time,
echoing far across space,
at last in their resting place.

ATTRACTION

How do you do what you do?
How is it you of all get through
more than all fame, crowns,
or all the sounds of music do?

As if by some miracle
you draw me to you
with your voice and eyes,
make a strange spirit in me rise,
so that to lose my life
seems nothing at times,
if all I could have was you.

You steep me with wonder
in your presence and sight
that I would gladly drowned
in your sweet beauty's light.
If I only knew you were good,
if I only knew you were true,
what wouldn't I do for you?

BLISS

Roses of pink and orange hue
are like you,
and when near is your voice,
inside I rejoice.
Come garden of flowers
beside me be
and let me hear bliss.

TO A YOUNG GIRL

You radiate amid all the gray,
that hangs like brume
on a crest fallen day,
as a daffodil just brought to bloom,
with little help of solar rays,
glows in yellow glory
above the foggy haze,
in love's timeless story.
Though all around is shrouded o'er dull,
you breathe a beacon of delight.
Instead of drowning your gleam to null
the rain of time makes you grow bright.
And though we cannot forever be,
your beauty proves eternity.

SONG

At the end of the storm,
when the wind is warm,
meet me my girl
by the rustling trees
watching changing shadows
of the deep, becalmed sea.
Enchanted night,
chasing the dawn,
you and I
will lie on this lawn
waiting for the sun to toss
it's bright head in air
and wake again
my love so fair.

SPRING

Fragrant wysteria trees
in the month of May,
let forth a slow unseen spray
of perfume enticing me;
obscuring in my heart
what it is my mind sees.

Oh, delicate blossoms of the trees
whose branches toss gently in the breeze!
Wherefore do you tempt me
with hope it seems can never be?

LIFE WISH

Spring ephemeral has been here a while.
The sun, moon and stars pass the time,
and I know it all cannot last longer
than a dream.

I respire happily now
in things so beautiful, so free,
but weep thinking
it cannot always be this way.

THE WATERS OF LIFE

Rolling, turning
having no sides, no top, no bottom,
the sky around us
like some great enormous river,
in which we are atoms,
and galaxies, planets and stars,
are but glowing particles
drifting along, so slowly
as to be by us unseen.
Onward rolling, turning
to an infinite clock,
the wide breast of
the universal waters
flows even now.

Strange empty space,
scoffing, incomprehensible, unending,
suffusing all existence
in mystery -- and what possibility?

THE MERMAID'S TRANSFORMATION

Never ending to the eye
rolls the mighty surging sea,

set on by sun, moon and winds
heaving for all Ages
in all passion's tumult.

In hollow depths below,
cycles of lives play out their briny span:
throbbing and pulsing blindly
to feed and procreate.
Yet there too a slow peace moves
soundless as an embryo,
where fish swim to and fro
through grasses waving
through pink coral sleeping
in waters cold and deep.

A mermaid awakes
arising from the sea weed and surf;
the wind whistling about her:
waves and wet hair
aglow in the sun's
iridescent fire.

Then high above the stars appear,
and from beyond them
heavenly choir she hears
rapturous music
calling forth love most true.

The ocean feys blow on shrill pipes,
bellow on conches, crying out,
to arrest her ascension
to the celestial dimension.
Yet she succumbs not to fear
gives them no ear,
but yearns toward the sky,
her soul lifted high,
changed, transcendent.

HEART'S REGRET

His heart's zeal was for one alone
to only Laura was ardor shown.
Amy who loved him was ignored,
love her he would not afford.

Laura was aloof, coy,
yet cuteness itself to any boy.
Amy was gentle and meek;
more innocent you could not seek.

Where Laura was, where Laura went
was all John's thought passion rent.
While sweet Amy kind he did forget,
but, like her, was caught in a net.

For Laura full of anguish he would be,
days languishing was he,
for her who saw him as fun,
yet neglected the truer one.

Alone one night in bleak despair,
he thought of her who was all his care,
Laura, who deep fondness in him awoke,
but not of her whose heart he'd broke.

Yet to fair Laura he meant very little,
for all his raging she gave not a tittle.
In hollow sorrow he then did shrink
wishing deep from Lethe's stream to drink.

In dejection to heaven he help implored
praying aloud to his maker and Lord,
humbling his spirit for solace to feel
a miracle his sore heart to heal.

Asking forgiveness for his sin,
he collapsed dazed by emotions within,
when up he looked above him to see
a good angel in air floating free.

Veiled by a mist, she smiled,
at once both cheerful and mild.
How strange this heavenly grace,
wore the sweetness of Amy's face.

A feeling overcame him throughout,
a serene felicity to vanquish all doubt,
that God had sent this vision
to rescue him from grief's prison.

What he saw he scarce believed
though grateful was he to be relieved.
But where was Amy forgot?
Where was she who he'd loved not?

Gone where he could not her find
save in memories of the mind.
Yet from this girl who he had spurned
a lesson for life was learned.

ROBINSON CRUSOE

Here I, Robinson Crusoe, lie
in my thatched hut
where the wind
blows in from the sea.
I listen, forlorn
of seeing another again,
no one to hear from or greet
save that Spirit from within.

Oh goodness of heaven,
why then is there me,
but to worship truth in stars on high,
or love those unknown
ever distant beyond the waves?
Servant of your grace,
grateful for your bounty,
abundant is your kindness,
but wherefore me?
To worship and adore
you who are life and creation,
is the hope that is my rescue.
Though alone I weep a soul apart,
I am one with You,
in your ineffable glory.

Oh kind star smiling on me,
shining there with sweetest luster,
oh rose, oh jewel glowing
in the gentle blue sky,
could I but reach you with my touch,
what elation mine would be!
Yet better is now the consolation
of praising your Holy name;
praying for those in need.
May I lose myself
in faith, purity and love;
following your sacred purpose
for lost friends
one day to be found.

THIS DAY

There are days I feel a limit
as a soaring bird must sense
when gravity grasps it
as if it were its own.
Though each tendon burst
to pass the aerosphere,
in part because I breathe,
I'm confined here;
each day waiting,
for blessedness to come
and bring me strong wings
to ascend Freedom's bounds.

But I remain aground,
gnawed with pains
cutting deep like an axe, wondering
why more days should be wasted
awaiting sorrows to be tasted?
And surely I thought,
death cannot be more than
a trick of fear and unknowing.

But conscience took me aside,
and asked how could I
abuse hope and life,
and forsake the faith
that love will make all well?

Opportunities are never really gone
until freely given up.
And if after all troubles I can move,
I will still laugh, cry and love.
I will not singly moan the loss
of what is mere illusion
of all that is called real.
For once the lies that hypnotize
are shorn and rent,
and Time's guise is removed,
all that is truly eternal
all of which we are that survives
all that is living and beautiful
all that is left
is God.

I resolved that though
struck by a hundred fold woes
yet still I should strive
and stay alive
for those I love.

Yet solitude can be too
much a burden that at times
one questions keeping on,
and comfort it is to know
there is such a thing as choice,
and we do not have to live.
But better to remember
the patient flower's seed
resting in the earth's darkness.
It drinks droplets
which the clouds downpour,
and then bid by love's sun
rises from below,
its form changed
into new life.

LOVE IS LIFE

Love is life
and eternal love is eternal life.
Because there is a limit to
human love - humans are not perfect,
we must love God, who is perfect,
in order then to develop our power and ability
to love perfectly mere mortals.
Jesus is the greatest manifestation and embodiment of love,

therefore we love Him in order that we can love all.
God, Love, Nous, are the order and harmony
of the universe.
Without Love, how can there be true unity?
If human love is finite
it follows that human life is finite.

In order to love
we must be able to forgive.
Caring for others
is a manifestation
of our love toward God.
Yet no caring is so great,
as that love of God put in us,
to suffer willingly and forgive.

DREAM OF HEAVEN

She ponders the sounds
of bells chiming slowly,
gentle notes rising,
falling softly,
like her breath.
Music becomes a dream
and in thoughts she sees
friends laughing and playing
in an open field
where a golden sun
beams happiness unending.

EXPECTATION

In life's wide canvas I saw you,
one among so many
in the midst and flurry of lives.
Passing through indifferent days and years
you leapt out to me from the colors moving,
blessing me with purpose.

If there were no separation
brought by faction, war and circumstance,
what joy could be ours I know,
raising each other up,
sharing with each other
the mutual wisdom
we possess of joy.

ENVOI

Away from the lightening flash
that illumines clouds
of a tempest distant,
the boatman stands

his vessel drifting
Toward the horizon's reddening band,
remembering friends found and friends lost,
passing the twilight shore.
He feels his heart enrapt
with what was and is;
sees before him the gleam of stars
reflected in the swirling tide;
regards the world
with a serenity and calm
unfelt, unknown, before.

URBAN CIVILIZATION

Drab stone and mortar,
leaden, callous streets
gird round an energy
that has no soul;
has vigor, but is guarded
like a prison,
has bustle, but chokes your breath.

Is this the congested fate?
Too much it seems there is
no escape
from the polluted river
that rises by the hour,
by the minute,
by the ceaseless round of cars, traffic, buses,
vanishing around corners
flowing harshly
in the wailing, huffing tumult.

Hardly a second even to ask
if you are making your own decision,
you keep moving, moving
hoping that if and when you reach home
all will fall into place
in your only living space.

BIRTH OF DREAMS AT DAWN

When tremors of shade sigh moaning
and morning triumphant comes,
firelight of eternity,
with the winds taking hold of
the dark and the light,
zooming black and gold arrows
in the hour's fancy,
pristine dawn is born,
born from out the shadows,
before easing gently
into the way-laying calumny of day.

Leaving the trees
to hop and fly
robins warble defiantly
the victory of the Almighty,
such a in insistent song
that clearly great joy contains.

Oh rousing, Oh happy birth
over rumbling and dread!
Oh bravest music which incites
the soul to dearest hope and dreaming!

TO YOU

Say you took a chance
of loving everything
and in the end were proved a fool;
made a clown of yourself
wagering wrongly,
and became a laughing stock of time,
and you were shown
a person worthy of derision
by those demons
that are able to contain all knowing
and play with men like toys,
I would stand by you
and be the loser with you.

I will not likely ever know you
who read this,
But I love you with belief
simply because you could love.
Surely, it is the wonder
of your searching and mine
that has created this world,
this very moment.

What we share is endeavor,
And because of you
I have let myself feel much happier.
Do then the same for yourself --
by me.

TEARS ON A SNOWY SEA

Alone on wide dark waters
breathing the moist icy air
tears surge up from
bottomless depths --,
alone, alone, so completely alone!
Frigid seas swelling,
a heart weeping,
an arctic breeze stirring,
a love yearning whispers,

my heart from its wandering
to joy complete and freedom unending:
joy complete and freedom unending
distant and far from you
in the cold blue night,
yet comforting and present
like a longed for embrace.

ASTRONOMY

They say what is in us
comes from stars.
Doesn't it seem then
that if we look up
at the night sky,
that which glistens is you,
that which shines me?

The dark is endless seeming,
so menacing and strange.
Yet no matter how far
the telescope looks,
we will always find
color and light,
if we but see
with eyes of beauty,
that love which glows eternal
without and within.

THE FINCH SINGING

So affectionate is the tiny finch,
how his little song it smiles!
All the great world
seems hushed all around,
when the air is filled
with his "I love you" sound.

A dash of red
guilds feathers humble brown.
Yet such modesty
hides a golden sound!
For so happy, so assured,
is the music of that bird.

How I adore that baby song of love:
calls two, or three, perhaps four,
a plaintive yearning in each one,
then a merry warbling:
so innocent, yet so refined.
my heart laughs, yet respectfully.

A dash of red
guilds feathers humble brown.

Yet such modesty
hides a golden sound!
For so happy, so assured,
is the music of that bird.

Those poets wrote poems about
birds they loved.
I read those poems,
but missed the bird for the poem.

Yet when I actually saw,
When I actually heard,
It was clear to me then,
no poem can match the bird.

SUITES AND SONGS, ETC.

A Collection of seven Poems written for, or dedicated to, the very beloved and respected Sally Ann Howes.

First Suite.

- I. To Sally Ann Howes**
- II. Of Names**
- III. Acis and Galatea**
- IV. Phillida and Colin**
- V. A Riddle and A Reply**
- VI. The Rose Song**
- VII. The Shepherds**

Additional Poems:

An Understanding.

Last Request

To Sally Ann Howes

I was young, a child when I first saw you,
yet I somehow missed you at that time.

Only lately,
I saw you again
and discovered how
that, back then,
I must have been
something blind.

After when I came to dream,
it was less than to see and hear you.
In my heart and mind
I think I know beauty,
but not even in my memory,
let alone imagination,
can I adequately bring to mind,
catch the full hues,
suggest the breath, the bounds
of your real loveliness.

It must be like love then when
one's feelings of wonder,
(against one's will!)
are lifted aloft,
making one dizzy from the height,
like this kind of seeing and hearing.

Is this really mere mortal life?
Did I not instead
pass away in the night
and awake in Heaven?

And yet if alive,

this debt to the Almighty and creation
for this joy and delight
is almost death to me even so.
The brightness and giving
of Spirit and Nature in you
causes me to blush and moan,
makes me feel spoiled,
so that the surprise and weight
of this debt is almost death to me even so.

The sun illuminating
flowers secluded in a garden;
The wind whispering and singing,
the leaves and flowers dancing,
just yesterday I felt like them.

Yet in trying to get on with
the hard business of life,
wanting to avoid distraction,
I had not been seeking this.

Some Remarks on this poem:

As is most appropriate with a poem or piece of music, it is not quite she sung that is being celebrated, rather it is most pure Grace, and Beauty. Yet in all fairness, Grace's, and Beauty's tasks to move and inspire us become almost nothing, for the artist, when the study is such as this. There are, I know, people who would dismiss this sort of idealistic perspective as not "real life." But real life, as commonly spoken of is actually a broad generalization. Every rare now and then there are, in "real life," people who just don't seem always to fit because they are just too fine, too exquisite to us. In truth, they are *too* real. Yet since the day-to-day world is often so troubled and afflicted, it becomes all the more necessary (I find) to place the special thoughts and feelings such a person evokes in Heaven (via prayers, songs, or poems), or, else drawing them in more deeply into one's heart. There is great joy and satisfaction to this since we know the person is, in some way, safe and secure there in these places, even if lost to those who perhaps can't see them properly.

Of Names

If I am too familiar, please forgive it
since perhaps it isn't you,
perhaps it is something about Life
that moves me,
but that in you
Life sings as sweetly as it ever once did,
is smiling as it ever once was.

I see laughters, friendships, loves
fallen off the years,
still present, still here in you
so that when you are gone
it seems life will be gone too.

When alone,
I will not say your name,
must call you something else,
lest sweet flowers called your names
be sullied by thoughts of the world.

But what then shall I call you?

What else, but Life?

Acis and Galatea

Galatea: But you must be one of my family.

Acis: I will serve you forever if you will always love what is good and true. Let Love, Beauty and Goodness be triumphant if but my part has been only to have served them.

And Let me then
dress you in music and song,
and when I am away from you,
I will always think
of that far song
which is our truest lives
in which we see can always see each other,
that perfect music, harmony,
gestures, glances, and motions,
which lives forever
though we are apart.

Oh Time flow more swiftly,
speed the tyrant's departure
and make us free again.

Phillida and Colin: A Dialogue

Colin: Yet can there be music when we are apart?

Phillida: Not only can there, but there must be;
loud and resounding as any,
filling throughout the skies of Love
though it be of sadness insupportable.

Yet you know, you cannot be truly gone from me.
You are deep within my yearning for all joy.
How then can I forsake joy?

You must think of what you owe and in what our true unity lies.
For many years a flame which offered you vision
turned out to be false.
Yet in place of this comes
That which is Real and True
Always there, but away the while:
Love based in Goodness and Duty.
Think on these and I shall be with you.

Colin: But this is not enough,
better the darkest abyss of despair,
than to know less than
your present self
which is both Hope's and Ecstasy's raiment.

No, no, you still do not see.

You are as much as the whole world to me,
more than the whole world,
and all of time as well,
if only I but give you
the slightest mind.
So much is this
I must at times beg Heaven's mercy.
Please a while longer.

Phillida: Yet stay then, and lay beside me. Soon I must go.

A Riddle and A Reply

A Riddle

This beauty of hers shames me too much.
What shall I do? I cannot possibly love her as much as the depth of it within me feels, else I will despoil my own affection with too easy zeal.
If beauty is something of value to love,
surely there are other ways to match beauty for love in this.
But what then if I free all people, do all good works, build every great tower, achieve every kind of benevolence to all? She will then be at my behest, and I no longer her slave.
But what then? Can the pride of any man's achievement ever truly exceed in esteem and worth the world's most beautiful woman?

A Reply

Who then shall see beauty?
And who shall protect her, and her children who are her all?
And what power has beauty without harmony?
And what harmony is there where there is mistrust and strife?
And who then holds the keys to unity and strife but you?

The Rose Song

Nestled rose bud
looking up from within
the sun setting aglow soft skin,
awaiting to awake to glory and me,
what day shall you bloom
to set again our hearts free?

I remember those days
which still thrill my soul,
held by no hesitation. .
Children would sing laughing songs,
love was our destination.

And where to go to was now
not another time and place.
We were happy in the starry breeze,
the morning and the sunset's kiss,
so overflowing, so pleased.

But the dark storms came.
How could we have known,

to have sailed past
the looming tempest's blast,
before being tossed about,
dejected, downcast?

The Shepherds

Thyrsis: Is it true, as they say, that when they met words and music arose, indeed born, as if by a miracle?

Menalcus: Yes. For when he saw her with eyes properly open, his heart gained its true voice. The first word it spoke was her name.

Thyrsis: What was she to him then?

Menalcus: I think he saw a little lamb in her. For he cherished her deeply with the greatest love and gentleness.

Thyrsis: She was quite pretty wasn't she?

Menalcus: Indeed.

Thyrsis: So now please tell me, what was it that happened?

Menalcus: There are powers in the world, both well meaning and not, which seek to distort love and what it is. For this reason pure and truest love must be very closely guarded and protected. But unfortunately times then were mean and heartless, and there was little time and opportunity for this. The world therefore could not long have them, and those attendants of Love, the young girls who waited upon her, then wept to see peace and liberty taken from their mistress.

Thyrsis: Yes, but how much can a person truly love another? Surely there is a limit?

Menalcus: Among mortals, you are correct. But in this instance neither was the fault hers or his. It was the world that brought about the separation.

Thyrsis: Hmm. (skeptical) The world was too hard on them? Perhaps you are mistaken. If what else you say is true, perhaps rather it was they who were too hard on the world. (pauses then sighs) What then shall we say of love?

Menalcus: The past is not for us to correct, but perfection may, with courage and faith, be sown into tomorrow. Believe this and those times of joy and wonder will even yet come again.

Additional poems:

An Understanding

They could never compensate for woes.
Yet, at least in this my life,
I will ever have cause for bliss
If I can but let you to know
you are most truthfully
one of the best things
I have ever seen: simple as this.

*But keep this to yourself
because the world
will never understand or believe my real meaning.*

To think (if I had known you earlier)
I could have been some kind of friend.
Can't I murmur smiling regret inside,
even if still grateful toward life and happy for others?

Many times love must away,
and one must wrestle with the world,
so that you are uncomfortably out of mind.
Yet I must not see too much of you,
because to see you is to desire you,
and such desire has no end.

It is Goodness and Beauty in you
I must love most, then yourself.
It is for you to live to be beautiful, by nature.
So only by what is pure, right, and true
may I possibly serve and adore you.

And you are Happiness.
And if happiness, which is you,
can be made more happy,
my happiness will be Joy.

And then say:
Love, Life, all Goodness: may I do my Duty,
May I be what you most need me to be!

Last Request

I asked the commandant who holds us prisoner if I could at least have her receive my letter and allow her some kind of reply. After all, I said, what with your killing us all, and life passing us by, surely this is a small request. He said he would permit no such letters.

Perhaps I can explain to *you* then.
It is not really necessary she love me,
circumstances are too strange I grant you.

Ordinary kindness, routine politeness is sufficient.
It's just that I love loving her so much,
that few things else move me so.
She understands music
so I think she will understand this.

When I thought of making her happy,
everyone and everything she loves
had to be made richer
because she loved them
But if she loves them,
how can they ever be made richer?
They therefore should always be happy.

I wish someone would apologize to her for the way the world is.

I would do so myself, but as you can see...

I thought of her now and across all of time.
Then it struck me like a revelation:
she is radiant as the dawn.

What gall, what spite I cannot hear from her.
I will therefore love her in my prayers.
In my journey towards the Good,
I yet have hope and faith
to see her there.
And while death is prepared,
please tell her for me,
with this kiss invisible she will know
that she will ever live
in the furthest reaches of my soul,
a space not here but forever.

A Suite in addition to the First, written for Sally Ann Howes

Contents.

- 1. His Grief**
- 2. Before Sunrise**
- 3. A Miniature**
- 4. Proceeding**
- 5. Berries**
- 6. True**
- 7. There are Beauties**

His Grief

Thanks to these photographs,
I think I have been cheated of my life.
So many things fate
(much too carelessly I think)
has tossed my way,
and with these pictures,
of course, it's fate once again.
Just wonderful. Just great.
For now, as figures
in the great chronology,
I am not able
to have known or met
this woman, this girl.

How most certainly
blessed and fortunate
were those who did.
It can't be denied.
All that I have now to ask is,
how am I live?

Before Sunrise

Not long before sunrise,
I went to leave food
for the small birds to find,
upon their waking.
To my surprise,
a gathering met me
so blustery, so free,
a stir rather tickling
so soon, so early.

Though houses stayed napping,
great winds set leaves flapping.
All of charcoal and black
was the sky high and back;
with diamonds gleaming alight
in every color, direction and sight:
chatting , humming,

whistling, some drumming.
Oh so much the trees longed,
to be swept up with the throng,
tossing about shades of desire,
as if to join the singing fire.
Then brisker than the air
was the absence of all care.
The howls into a hush glided;
all melody and din subsided;
clouds pale yellow, some orange-red,
one of them shouting, southward sped;
when behold, the horizon rolled,
turning the world into gold.

My goodness, I thought,
What pageantry! What play!
Do all these know her too in their way?
If so, more glad am I,
more glad than this sky.
And the next thing I knew,
I sang too.

A Miniature

Poise commanding,
meekness disarming,
eyes celestial,
that voice spectacular,
visions of your hair,
your cheerfulness,
small fingers perfect,
majestic limbs,
rising up in a bouquet
which enshrines
an unpretentious heart
most definitely
causing love.

A queen, yet a doll,
goddess, yet mouse!
Nature's brilliance,
Life's sweet too!

Inscription:

One could live
on memory,
did hearts not long so.

Proceeding

Remember I must
this most extraordinary liking,
first sprang up deep inside me,

and is like affection divine,
lighter than soul and breath,
yet mightier than the day itself.

Should shallow thoughts
lure me too much astray,
I am chastened by a very good angel,
who has as much as reminded me:
“Here now...it was by
this ethereal wisp within
That you were first smote.
If you *really* love this woman,
then to *this* fire be true.”

Cast upward
was a warming sun
whose rays shone
through my heart,
and reflected you back to me.
I then became some kind of mirror
who with silver pen,
is caught up
in a very agreeable daze
trying to write of
all flowers, all ribbons,
all jewels, all fountains,
all rainbows, all glimmering,
all wistfulness, all sighing:
glorious plans,
fondest dreams,
would over flow
with each yearning.

But what seemed most true,
was that I should cherish you.
For howsoever I might ever be prized,
You *magnificent*,
you *incredible* are always better.

Only let this
your very nice poet
be ever there for you,
(no matter how glum things are),
the most care free of rivers,
ever pouring forth
in orchards, bright forests and meadows,
to love you in all ways needed or wished.

You should ask:
“How can *this* be?”

Because, as I will tell you,
ineluctable glee is mine
every day and always,
since something within,

a blessing from Heaven
come unawares,
more than music,
more than light,
revealed you to me.

Berries

He: Once I saw swallows fluttering, along a fence. A mother was feeding her baby a berry. The round fellow was already out of the nest. But she still fed him through his mouth. Poetry, you know, can be fed to a person in kisses like this.

She: Yes, but I like how you write.

He: And I how you think. What are you thinking?

She: I was thinking how truly grand what's little can be.

He: Like swallows?

She: That's right! You're right!

True

Isn't apart sometimes together?
Isn't together sometimes apart?
Isn't this something of a dance?

What of all the tomorrows?
Who'll say where time goes?
Will judgments never fail?

Having given it much thought,
I don't really believe I could
be your only you, nor you my only mine.

Certainly often, and even for a life time,
but I 'm not so sure one can really be
the satisfaction of another always.

A person can be *love*, *harmony*, and *virtue*,
which are what do satisfy us always,
yet who can fathom *variety*?

So should you *love* him (and not me),
then it is *him* you should love,
this I insist.

Indeed, stay as good as you are,
and if he's not *too* bad,
I will love him well myself.

Perhaps a comrade
he'd turn out to be,
and lay down his life
as I would for he:

which is to say for you, true?

There Are Beauties

There are beauties,
we didn't yet see,
and isn't there too,
more still to be?

To give is the best thing,
to give is all living.
But do sometimes take,
as a way of your giving.

For you to love life,
like never before,
if I could but this,
I'd never want more.

I'd show you the mountains,
the misty air by the sea;
on the islands we'll view
the moon over tea.

The seagull high soaring
sky and water rules,
while starfish and crab
swim in low pools.

Craggy, rock towers,
in the ocean still stand,
but an Indian long-boat,
lies cast on the sand.

Recall then that day,
as they wept the while,
though approaching the end,
to each other smiled.

For when times are lost,
and beauties can't stay,
they remain inside us
awaiting someday.

SONGS, etc. written for Sally Ann Howes

Contents.

1. **Flight and Home**
2. **Candid**
3. **Another**
4. **Small Smiling**
5. **When Music Comes**
6. **Appraisals**

Additional Poems

Tiger Jack's Escape

Everybody Sing

In the Past

Hope Along the Way

Flight and Home

In the longing and summit
of flesh and the spirit
are joys all easily see:
waves racing the shore,
passion which scales the heights,
clouds which float and fall free,
hearts even cry
if their loins are denied.

Yet when I saw her
I did not want to think this way,
it made me want to cry, she is so beautiful.

She is that golden flight and home,
something perfect, something higher,
yet touching the amiableness of earth.
She doesn't know how beautiful she is.

Until her, life was something less.
Let me then be more.
In me it is a fault,
thinking I really know better than her,
let me learn from her own wisdom,
as I flatter myself she learns from me.

And though she say otherwise,
she is someone so grand.
Can I, no one, ask for the rainbow?
No, it's best to wait for her in dreams.
But let love be where still it yet might.
May I, and humbly, with those glorious girls
who also love her, scheme
to see her always in the warmest embrace.
And if we're out of sorts or the time is not right,

may we bury ourselves in far away night,
rather than risk the slightest fall
of that comfort and bliss,
which are our all.

Candid

When all's said and done,
I can't help loving you.
So don't blame me for it.
Will you love me too?
If so let's go,
I can think of so many heavens
for such as might be us.
If not this a compliment take,
I'm not hung up about being so serious, so close.
But it was dire to have just a little of you.

There are only two things
In my life that makes me truly sad,
losing the kids who died,
and not hearing from you.
Nothing else would I let myself weep for,
but will do my duty like I told you I would.

But if I cannot hear from you,
why is this world here?

Another

She is not all women,
yet she's all women to me,
as the dear Lord,
and by rights of the free
he has given me,
to make her.

It might have been another,
I might have been her brother
but only *she* is the one,
and more beautiful is none.

We are not every day
who we were, or who we'll be.
Mortals like us
know who we love
can't always their way see
we love when we can
and we turn.

Some people suffer because
that is now the way;
people prosper
that's how it is.
But now's never really today,
what really lasts is in us

is what's good.

Small Smiling

Just look at those adorable eyes.
Why are they smiling so?
They couldn't be more than four or five:
so small, so unknowing,
such overflowing, such glee.

Those eyes both show faith
but in what are they believing?

When you see such as these, so helpless or fragile,
how could you not think of caring so much,
they are so trusting, without fear,
who cares for these here?

Maybe all this is just a show for them,
and because we love them so.
But still there can be
a little happiness for you and me.

When Music Comes

Music's not right
if things are all wrong,
like when we're too busy,
or the mood is all gone.
Yet know though we're deaf
and that feeling's away,
music somewhere
goes on, and still plays,
every hour, every minute.
But when it again comes
what are two in it?

They are hillsides arising
in a peak heaven kissing.
two stars colliding,
sending night missing,
more bright than the brightest sun,
love is like this
when music comes.

When music arrives
incense is whirling,
making fragrant the moment
of tender unfurling.
Yet though it can't last,
and tomorrow ends song,
music we don't hear
still plays, still goes on
every dear hour, every dear minute.
But when it again comes
what are two in it?

They are blue birds alighting
in a sky there and waiting,
two daffodils tossing,
blowing away hating,
whether we're singing or we hum,
love is like this
when music comes.

Appraisals

As has been said
many times,
best treasures
are rarely seen
at true worth.

You know too
that playing the world
is sometimes fine.
Sometimes it isn't.
It's good for some things
and not good for others.

For all fine intentions,
the world in its spinning
can sometimes knock down
love between two friends.
They should avoid then,
and as best they may,
taking care to stay above it.

What you have
the world rarely has.
So don't feel shy,
when dealing with it,
of pricing yourself too dear.
A man might sell all he had
just to get a special pearl,
when why look at you,
I think that's what you are.

Additional Poems

Tiger Jack's Escape

For Sarah Lopez

Kitty Kat started,
Did you hear?
Tiger Jack got caught in a pipe!
Did he get out?
Oh yes, he did.
He didn't want
to be in that pipe.

That boy got stuck,
but didn't know how.
Mewing till they came,
he was *so* glad
to get out!

Everybody Sing

For Heather Ripley Glaisyer

Clouds bearded frown,
cold and frost bite,
the sun is a prisoner,
the ground's still and white.

The sparrows in a bush
though hidden now see,
gather warmly together
perched patiently.

Then one cries out:
"Everybody sing!"
All at once,
with "cheep, cheep, cheep,"
how loudly it rings!
The quiet can't keep!

"Oh dearest my heart,
what laughter you bring,
no matter how gray,
my life's always Spring!
For now then,
and forever more,
you are the one
I will always adore!"

In the Past

For Katy Burchell

Velvety darkness descends
bespeckled with gold
of red candle light
like dreams overcoming stillness,
which look above and beyond years.
You call to me as I seek you,
yet I miss you in the dark,
so up now after I fell,
what's now left to tell?
The party was still going
when we left with.
the lamps hung alight,
drunken stars fallen with night.
Coming up on the sea air
sand and grass
when we got there,

glinting crystals like glass
that house beyond reach,
alone by the beach,
light as a feather,
now safe together.

Hope Along the Way

For Basilea

We are so rushed and driven on,
not enough time to know the value of it all:
except in halted moments
catching one's breath in the hurry,
little time to look, little time to see,
till again we're flung on in a flurry.
Oh how much more then
those pauses must savored be
because now in that moment is you,
and all this trepidation,
to fulfill obligation,
to get past pain,
all this now seems
so I can see you again.

And when you are only sometimes there what do I think?
You are there but you are not, and I think of music that moves,
I think of problems to solve, things that are curious or to me funny.
Yet in this somewhat thinking of you I know you're not there.
Which is just as well, because you *aren't* there.
Why should I die then more than is strictly necessary?
So I merely die as I do these days,
and this death must be just as one.

But then oh if *you* felt sad too,
I simply would not let you.
"You cannot be this way,"
I would say,
"you lift my hopes
you soar my day.
No, the only thing bad
is your being faraway."

End of Suites and Songs.

CONVICTION AND ASSURANCE

What is it if
swans stroll sidewalks,
and eagles streets,
royal yet forlorn captives
of the wild man of the steppes?

More than shame, of course.
Not much better will it be if
such birds out fly us
in being so wonderful.

Until some hello,
be you as they,
and I will be too.

DEO GRATIS

With some prayer
having been put into it before hand,
I thank God,
that I now give thanks to Him better
than I did last year.

True, the improvement
wasn't so ample.
But what sweetness there is
in even a little growth that way.

So, please dear Lord,
grant me by next year
to thank yet better.

DECLARATION OF A FREE SOUL

I was born happy and will be happy if I feel like it --
while doing the right thing as best I can, and as God gives me to.
Furthermore, I will endure no power in the world
frightening me with irrational fear;
or tell me that because certain people think such-and-such,
that such-and-such is necessarily so;
or tell me I don't have the choice to believe what I want to believe;
or that I don't have a choice in doing the right thing or not;
or that I can't choose my thoughts when it comes to yea or nay.
I am honestly one of the happiest people in the world,
and if I am ever really unhappy,
it is invariably because people who embrace
or give into upside-down thinkings
most belligerently cause me problems.

OCCASIONAL PRAYER

Not mine,
but thy will be done, Lord
Make me good,
keep me from foolishness.
Give me humility
Grant me grace
May I be grateful
Ever loving greatly.
Like you dear Lord.
Amen.

TRUE INFINITE

You know *this*, but don't know *that*.
If you'd known that (and not this) would you *really* be any different than you are?

It seems that *how* we deal with what we know (not so much *what* we know) that our real and deeper selves can be affected. People, like atoms, will normally only change and interact on the surface. If the heat of a given person's love or desire is great enough, can our own nucleus, or core selves, be affected?

We are not really what we know so much as what we love, and only in this sense would knowing this, or not knowing that make any difference, that is to say if the knowing significantly affected what we love. But it (or they) would have to really be something, now wouldn't it?

Sometimes when *this* is *there*,
it is no longer really *this*.
If somewhere else,
it might become merely *that*,
or perhaps something better.
Place and role is everything.
In a different place *everything*
can or could become something else, but apparently not just *anything*.

Everything must stop at the infinite, and this includes all that ails you – even time and death.
Where then will we find the true infinite?

For the scientist and cognitive philosopher, the infinite, unless assumed to be a notion innate and intuitive to us, can only be a logical, theoretical, or practical construct.

If not innate to us, this construct cannot be the true infinite.*

Religious faith, on the other hand, sees itself in a position to insist that the infinite is real and might call or link it to God, Brahman, Nirvana, the Tao, *li*, bhakti, Christ's love – all of which understandably allow of wide interpretation and degrees of comprehension, and often times are expressed by what they are not.

** Note. Some nominalist philosophers, such as Chrysippus, have distinguished between the infinite versus relations or processes which go on infinitely: dismissing the reality of the former while maintaining the feasibility of the latter.*

So by this view, if you like it, the One (or else the universe) is not infinite or the infinite, but *is* infinitely divisible.

TO LIFE ONCE MORE

Strewn across ages
like debris in a desert,
sacrifices made,
the babe laid,
the tears shed,
the prayers said,
lessons taught:
was all for naught?

Should we our hands up throw
because we *don't* know?
Accept all as destroyed,
and settle some place in the void?
Or will Eternal light and grace
gather all in an embrace
who gave love their trust:
the caring, the abused, the just?

Oh but a revolution I'll take up
to save all forgotten weeping,
yet humble to that Providence,
gently the course of things keeping,
asking courage, faith, and patience,
to keep our hearts from sleeping.

Oh you dull! You deceived!
Was not your birth
fresh and smiling
as any joy filled leaping?
And were you not loved
but didn't know it?
Yet now have you
allowed yourself
to be mired in time,
mistaking time for life.

Awake, know your birth aright,
and live again anew!
Arise once more that Spirit
of all that's Good and True!

THERE AREN'T WORDS

I am a lunatic
To love her so much.
But she is so cute
-- there just aren't words.

I am a villain
To want to possess her.
But she is so lovely

-- there just aren't words.

I dream and I long
Yet what good does it do?
She makes me write this
-- but there aren't the words!

PRESENTS

I'd send her
a flowery bouquet
that glows so gay
that were it night
you'd think it was day;

and proud painted horses
on a toy carousel
playing music box music
to make her feel well.

And with
all this rest,
loud wheezing chimes
of baby birds
in a nest:

hearts full,
sounding
high,
to where
one day
birds fly.

MEANTIME

You don't *really* need me,
nor I even you.

But oh *so* wonderful you are!
And you are so wonderful.

Only after I landed
did I realize
I'd been flying.

So if I don't
another poem send
know I think of you
as someone
loved ever to no end.

But the noise,
things too dreadful to speak...

So let *this* sleep,
it will keep.

(There's no point *now*,
now is there?)

IF ONLY ONE PRAYER

If I had only one prayer,
It would be that those I love,
whether they're far or near,
know there is always someone
to whom they're always dear.

If forlorn, forsaken
I myself must be,
So be it!
Sinner as I am,
God's will be done,
Lord have mercy!

Only let them always know
They're always adored
And never for granted taken.
Though memory sleep,
May love ever awaken.
Though our mind forget,
May our heart be ever theirs.
Keep them dear Lord
In kind, most loving care.

WEALTH

The more a person is loved
the more they are worth.
But when we love
the humble and good,
the whole world
is made more rich
than all the riches it possesses.

Take delight at this instant
in the sum of all pleasures goodly
and all real happiness that's ever been,
and in your love of them
all these goodly pleasures are yours,
with joy enough for all beside.

Now, what now more could you ask,
but true freedom and peace?

THE EMPTY FRAME

Instead of a picture
I put up an empty frame,
and now in it
I can see anything
(except nothing.)

THE AGE ACCURSED

Would that I died ten years ago
than to have seen what I have seen.
Such betrayal, such baseness,
such falseness, such cruelty!
Of good, there was very much and more.
But the stink, and rot of indifference
that ate and eats its way
into most everyone and everything --
Would that I'd died ten years ago
than to have known what I have known!
How blessed and at peace must it be
to have been spared this vile age!
The dead no more need remorse.
But Lord pity us who lived!

MAKE NO PEACE WITH HELL

What do you think
doing the right was ever for?
To please some dictator?
Doing the right and morals
are what make real happiness possible.
Though he glow with powers,
and look and sound like Jesus,
believe no angel or ghost.
And if he forces himself on you,
and will not leave,
once and for ever
when told to,
pray for his damnation.
Forgive all and everyone else,
bear your cross,
but, with sobriety and grace,
curse all lording spirits
that give the least hint
of threatening or bullying.
But you fear him you say.
Fear more giving in to him.
For he was never happy.
And how will you be so
if you live your life
according to him?

WHAT BUT?

If God manifested himself to sight,
it must be as a blooming flower,
for what is more beautiful?
And if he was sound,
what but the most heart
soaring harmony?
If an animal, then innocence and good nature.
If as a man, then a hero and honest friend.
If as a number, what number could he not be?
And if as strength
what but peace unending?

AMBUSCADE

Yes, of course
it's possible!
My goodness!
How dreadful
and ungodly
to think otherwise!
Only you'll have to
take out those two angels.
And to do that,
you must arm yourself with
justice, truth and reason;
since swords,
as you know,
really do cut.

“ODE TO HELL,” or the Anti-Aircraft Battery Hymn

He glows a dazzling white
from the blue on high
surrounded by angels
and smiling
with a picture
of a real lamb
on his golden crest ---
yet without
the least shred
or pulse
of real heart,
wisdom,
humility,
or humanity
to be found in either himself
or his angelic followers.
Seen afar from deep space,
they must look on the globe
like an Emperor's
imperial entourage

proceeding majestically,
and across
the cloud adorned sky,
from
Los Angeles to Seattle;
and on their way
to spread the gospel of blind fear,
in thunderous
Dolby Ó Surround-Sound.
May his be the stink,
the rot,
the confinement,
the torture,
the poison,
the human rights abuse,
now and forever.
Amen.

TO AN ANGEL

When you took that bribe
In fear,
And sold that child
In tears,
Did you realize you
Were selling also
Your heart and soul?
Smog that glows,
Slave high in the sky,
Golden ghost,
Your life is a lie.
Time is on our side,
Because truth forever abides.
If then we are true,
And before we do,
You, coward, bully, will die.

IF IN THESE TIMES

And if in these times,
we missed out
on the world,
what did we
end up missing,
but insincerity,
betrayal,
phony baloney?
All you ever did
that was really worthy,
All you ever made,
You did it for someone else.
It could not have been
for yourself.
You may not believe it,

but somewhere,
apart from your problems,
there actually is a place
where there are no problems,
and with (believe it or not)
a place that is yours...
Only they way it is,
we're under attack
for some reason,
so...
we'll just have to deal with it.

DEBTS

He gladly threw in his lot
with the lying dead,
because as far as money,
they were never in the red.
But little did he realize,
when finally put to bed,
in order to pay them back
they would have his bloody head.

AMBITION

If you are unknown to fame
Make with Love your name,
For any star needs a fan.
That's how the thing began.

Animals
Have been very good,
And some people too.
You can't save all of them,
But you can save a few.
Make them a queen
Or crown them a king;
Wanting their happiness,
More than any other thing;
Wishing them safety to no end,
All their cares to mend.
For what is more worthwhile
Than to forever be a friend?

Or think how someone is forgot;
That someone sore needs caring.
How unbecoming! How ridiculous!
Now give up this self-staring!
Be you a heart than shines,
The very star of devotion:
For no hero is more fine
Who seeks in this promotion.

TO A FOOL

Not Life, but Hell's to blame.
But you blame Life as if it were Hell!
Stop listening to Hell,
and start listening to Life!
Forswear the reign of finitude,
that spawn of evil, and prison of our hours.
Cease your cowardly lies and secrets,
and see and speak the eternal!
Paul was like you,
a fallen, murdering man.

Yet look, through courage,
what became of him!

As for waters of nectar,
and flowers from Heaven,
what good is all this,
if truth's outlawed,
and the justice uneven?
And with skulls in the ground
of the people you killed,
how can you think
it was God whom this willed?

ON ENDURING TIME

They were so glorious
Yet now have fallen silent
In the valley left behind.
Will they come again?
Will this dry spell never end?
I knew him.
He had heaven to give,
But they would not let him live.
How much in the way of tears
Did it cost to get you here?
Yet what was all this,
To any weeping of his,
That we could not be happy
Without drowning in the sea?
Yet he was cast aside
As if he never was.
If you are like him,
God will survive in you
And you in Him.
We can't always help in our time.
In our time we cannot always see.
In our time, we sometimes die.
In God's time, God sees.
In God's time we are and will be free.

THE MAN OF THE AGE

Give me that man
who will not criticize
a ghost, angel, or rich man,
because he's afraid of them;
Give me a man
who will look to lights in the sky
before reasoning;
Give me a man who cannot think for himself;
but always turns to others
to find out what he thinks;
Give me that man who is so interesting
he is always forcing himself on people;
Give me a man who will join
in the persecution of attractive people;
Give me the man who has so much wealth
you know he has been up to no good;
Give me a man who will wear
a baseball cap with a death's head emblem,
and I'll give you a man of the Age.

THE FLAG THAT'S TRUE

What did it matter,
Whether whole or in tatters,
As long as you waved
Against lying and false fears?

What difference was it
Exactly how you appeared,
If in the breeze you fluttered
Someone's hope of being free?

How many stars,
How many stripes,
Whether white, red or blue,
What are these exactly,
If those with you
Stand for truth and being true?

You are there
Where there's compassion,
Where people are fair,
Where people for love
Are willing to die.
Only there
Can it be said
That our standard flies.

From injustice and crime
You protect
Both the high and low.
Though beautiful it is,

This cloth
Is but your shadow.

May you never again
Be brought to bear
Against the friends
Of nature and the land,
But only those who betray them,
Spurn reason and law;
Who refuse to understand.

WISHFUL THINKING

I was so glad when he turned into the wolfman,
and ran running fast as his legs could take him,
far and away and over the hills,
never to be seen or heard from
ever again.

THE REASON

If we met,
It was truly in love.
But that love truly
Is now to love them,
So they can be happy
As we are,
Even more and by far
Than we are;
Giving them wonderful gifts
Such as were our lot,
From people who loved us:
Who'll ne'er be forgot.

THAT BLEST MOOD

I can take,
I can leave you.
You are by chance,
yet not by chance,
like every other,
yet like none other,
here, but beyond reach.

Yet when I get home,
on grassy cliffs
above the bay
and all is finally still,
I'll finally dream
my best dreams,
and my best dreams
are dreams of you.

FAREWELL

We blossom, ripe, and decay,
The music begins to stop,
All is passing away.
In looking back
On once resplendent day,
The memory of you which shined
Is now an image divine.
Oh, won't you come again?

Yet powers are indifferent,
Callous and cruel.
Fate decrees what will be.
And sad it is to think that
Though birds sang merrily,
We'll never meet again;
Heavens hoped for
Never known;
Adrift on an empty sea.

So in goodbye then,
Let me wish you the best poetry,
Because you are poetry to me.
For when I think of you --
Grottos, deserts, stars,
Forests, beaches --
You are so much
Of everything I see!
And if but in this twilight
There's just a hint of melody,
I will in some wise know
Some of what was to be.

HE GAVE HIS HEART TO DEMONISM

He wears a mask to hide his face.
"The Phantom of the Opera knew no disgrace!
For how could such be
If his face they cannot see?"

He listens to an ancient ghost,
Whose gossip is his greatest boast,
Who every time he's shown the door
Says he's nothing to live for.

*He gave his heart to demonism!
Rumplestiltskin is his name,
Being interesting is his game.
And if they don't do these things a certain way,
He's afraid he'll go to Purgatory.
But Oh can anybody tell
Why he thinks there is no Hell?*

He spies on you, he spies on me;
From foreign terrorists we must be free.
Religion, and magic are his favorite shows,
And putting in your head a radio.

He gives our President just the plan
To rid us all of terrorism.
Then an anti-war protest orchestrates
For the very plan he detonates.

He gave his heart to demonism! (etc.)

THE PROMISE

Some lands
are old, beaten and sad;
beaten and sad for ages,
because of demons:
brutal, scolding revenge.
Love wrecked ---
abandoned, still,
now filled with silent sorrow.
Oh melancholy,
that sits on time's porch
looking out:
a wind blowing through
portals of years,
the hollow of souls,
yet longing, still longing
clasping, still clasping,
the still seed of life
beneath the tyrant reign.

DECEIT

Dearest lamb,
Did they not see?
Did they not know
The greatest good
Is joy and innocence
Beside you?
Did they not know
That in murdering Truth,
Life's murdered too?

And even to this day,
Because of some lie,
We still die:
For only truth
Has lasting breath.
And ever was it.
And is still now,
That falsehood
Brings us death.

CHRISTMAS POEM

The ocean is so deep and so wide,
its thousand echoes have never known you.
It roars like a lion,
nor all of mankind does it care for.
You in the center of your world
mean nothing to it.
It roars like a lion.
What does the ocean care about the world of man?

Yet is such power greater than my love for you?

Our ship can seize the wind.
Like Pompey, we can even
clean the seas of pirates.
But without a lighthouse,
how would we get home?

A tongue of fire burns
false thoughts and pride in my mind.

I want you to be happy.
But only if you're good.
The more good you are,
the more I want you to be happy.

A song for Christ.
A song for the innocent.
A Christmas song.
We adore you Oh Christ,
for by your holy cross,
you have set us free.
You were the one who suffered most,
let us praise and celebrate you.
You were the one who suffered most.
Let our greatest happiness be rejoicing for you.
May we bring you the best of the gifts you gave us.
You stood the test, who suffered the trial,
who were ever so good,
were abandoned by all
as happens to the innocent and murdered.
We are ashamed to celebrate with the liars,
and will have nothing to do with
the betrayers of good,
who march on to false riches and false laughter.
Because you who they murdered are real happiness:
the real happiness they don't know.

Love beyond the obvious.
This broken pot.

This flower did not shake the universe,
but is a sign of he who does.

My cat is like a fine painting that moves,
yet no money follows her.

A part of the land,
they are like the land
and the land is like them and humble,
making grass baskets to sell to strangers.
How ever did such people
get so far out here in the jungle to live?
Now could we live as simply and as innocent.
They greet with a friendly face,
for nature has a friendly face.
But gods are cruel, man is cruel,
and so nature hides.

DESIRE ETERNAL

It seems there's no way to speak,
so that words, like a bright sun,
would once and forever
drive away the murk
beclouding consciousness.

Defining seems often too confining.
For when we try to say
what we really mean,
words fall short,
are misinterpreted,
till even wisdom itself
is anonymous and forgot.

How long will you fix
to that burning star?
How long will you pine, broken heart,
resolved on regret till all ends?
For how long can you stay
dreams of life that pass away?

In the different folds of awakening,
we try to keep track of many things.
Yet like towers on a summer shore
a sea steadily draws them in.

Volant gold glides and slides
amidst cloud crevices in the sky,
as the earth swings its weight spinning,
so that the sun to us comes round again beaming
dynamic, celestial!

How goes this spiraling song
that we cannot come along?

Gods wake
from sleep ambrosial,
while we in their bodies

must carry on;
that they might
be alive to slumber in bliss.
Like cells flowing alive,
now suddenly dead,
we make up their
sommolent being.

Oh powers,
whose seconds are our centuries,
let us feel your real,
that ecstasy which time
has not yet to us revealed.
We who are mortals
will care for each molecule and cell
that works or goes
to keep this life together.
May fortune and truth bless us,
we cursed ignorant.
May reclining Justice
awake now forever!
May stars above us
hear our cries and laments!

Open up the welkin, rend the sky!
Exhibit that peace eternal
for which eager spirits long,
without which vision
we'd be people of mud only.
Give us then reasons for hope,
free of illusions,
identifying with the Ideal!

FORT CASEY U.S.A.

What battles were fought
the globe around
terror shaking the earth in war!
But Casey your mighty guns
ne'er saw the foe.
Why did they build,
such a stalwart fort well armed?
Indeed such peace is yours;
for having never fought
your victory is without peer!

SPARROWS

Gusts gathered,
then so strongly blew
that all the branches tossed wildly,
and the leaves
all shuddered and shook!

But Lord love them,
they tightly clung on,
and sang yet again,
chirping in unison!
From where such hope?
From where such faith?
All the world
begins with these little ones,
because for my life it does!
Love give them a kiss on each cheek.
They know only of one thing to sing.
But one thing that's true, true!

TO VAN GOGH, EMILY DICKINSON, ET AL.

Lament not me
if I alone
and neglected expire,
since the best freedom
ever meant
escaping him
and that miserable liar.

And why worry
what others think,
who can or will not
examine
what is false
and what true?
Yet, ahem, worrying
about what I think,
he thinks I do.

THE OWNER OF SORROW

From him and his ilk sprang all tragedy.
He carries with him the memories
of unfathomable weeping,
and it is sadness yet still
which keeps him aglow in royal state!
In the piercing light
of his blinding brilliance,
he doesn't think tears matter
(or so at least he says.)
And for this reason
he's the world's king.
Some (falsely) say he's God.
Some say he's the Devil.
Who and whatever he is,
where is there any
man enough to fight him?
Some are rich
because they are his friend.
But what happiness is that

which has its bottom
in all sorrow?

JERUSALEM RESTORED

Earth, scene of an unending crime.
In the wars of conflicting desire
who will win and for how long?

How different it would be
if things were different!
Yet as they are,
a friend is a stranger.

Is a temple built by Herod God's temple?
Certainly, it is Herod's temple to God.

"Cut the phone lines, block the mail,
Morpheus our king is here!"

In the corridors of mind
he took the wrong door.
Realizing his mistake,
he stepped back.

"In that room things are bad,"
he said. "But *that* is not
all rooms."

ECONOMICS

A jewel of heaven is what to hell?
Something to plunder,
yet claim as nothing,
or worse
declare the public enemy.

A jewel of hell is what to heaven?
Something of value,
but which hell stole,
or worse
holds an unwilling hostage.

Then someone shouts:
"Heaven and hell
henceforth are abolished.
There are no distinctions!"

EDITORIAL

Freedom spills gradually
in drops along the way,
not from some turbaned Arabs,

but from a suit and tie mafia
mired in the occult;
murdering children and families,
stabbing at the nation's heart
in secret and silent screams.
Illusions and fear
are used to control and hold power.
Ours is a new Great Depression
yet with rather than without money.
While the President is ordered away
to see to the needs of a foreign land,
our own country needs leadership
like never before.
But the media won't let us have it --
or choice.
And as years pass
the land of the free and home of the brave
becomes for many a circus prison camp
glutting the lust of magic's god
who is else forbidden happiness.
That is not a human mind or heart
that speaks on TV.
It is the counterfeit conscience
of the bribed manikin or hypocrite hireling.
Appease or fight evil,
you can't have it both ways.
Yet what enemy of evil is that
who won't allow the truth?

SAVED

Ever rising waves
In the blasting gale we brave;
Rains beating down,
As we roll along,
Fleeing a watery grave.

Our ship sore leaks,
Timbers pained creak,
Tossed to and fro,
As along we go
And shredded sails shriek.

When others too soon
Have lost their life,
Can I hold my own so dear?
If I do drown,
Lord with pity look down!
May we not forget their tears!

SAME HEAVEN, SAME HEART

Though we
Go through life

As if we never met;
Though the world
Keeps us apart;
We are like each other,
Let's never forget,
Of the same heaven,
The same heart.

Maybe
These days and times
No one is adored.
Yet in tomorrow
There's a new start.
For there it's something else.
There we're so much more,
The same heaven,
The same heart.

Where we come from
Is greater than all the weather.
And though the whole world
Forever ends,
One day for sure,
One thing's for sure,
We'll be together,
We'll be together friend.

AWAITING

Don't feel that you can't certain things do.
It's just that now we are too wracked, distracted to.

Though now they gloat and now they jeer,
How will things look in future years?

They beat us so far in law and money.
But we beat them in being happy and being funny.

And think of those who died at their hands:
Adorable, precious. Are they not our friends?

We prefer to be free and live in peace.
For them violence and tortures never cease.

Because ghosts have their ear they do not give.
But who can tell them how to live?

We may be downtrodden when all is done and said,
Yet at least we know the living from the dead.

THE ALL WITHIN

We worry so much,
What he thinks,

What she thinks.
But if they are fearful,
If they're all liars,
Why be on fire?
It's truth alone
Will take us higher.

Sometimes we're frantic,
Over this,
Over that.
But if time does its job,
We'll be bored before long
Of all of those cares.
Hope alone
Will get us there.

What good is the globe,
Deaf and blind,
Lost in mind?
Why travel at all,
If we can't be at peace?
Love alone
Gives us release.

We can choose what we see.
We can choose how we see
The reason we choose
Is so we'll be free.
Look deep inside
To see where we've been,
'Cause inside
Is all places and scenes.

WAITING TO BE EVERYWHERE

You were born to love.
Why were you born
If you could not love?
But the world was betrayed
And love went away.

You need love to live.
Why were you born
If you could not live?
But what can you do
If others prevent you?

We couldn't love everyday.
We couldn't love always.
But the day we did
Wasn't that a day?
Hold on to what's gone,
When forever longed.
Though no one cares,
It's still there

Waiting to be
Everywhere!

Love lives in the truth,
A wind rising up cliffs
To lift you higher.
Yet if lies and fear reign
Can Love come again?

WHERE E'ER I GO

The world takes my body somewhere,
And my body somewhere my soul.
Although my soul prefers to stay in place,
It goes where e'er they roll.

Then Reason calls me to my Mind,
Saying is world and body all?
Ah thou soul without kind Love
world and body pall.

Oh then body, Oh then world,
Where ever now we go,
Comes with us dear true heart,
Though you care not, nor know.

TWO FUNNY OLD DUCKS

Two funny old ducks,
Turning now gray,
Yet quacking so jolly
Like they did yesterday.

Boldly approached
As I sat by the shore
"A fair bite to eat!
We want nothing more!"

The bread that I tossed
They snatched in their bills,
Then quacked and quacked on
Till they'd had all their fill.

You are so old,
Yet ducks, no misgivings?
"No, sir, we have not,
Because we fear not living."

SECRET KNOWLEDGE

From the land of death
they who were once children
come in darkness

to destroy -- if they cannot rule,
lying in wait
in the dust bin of false religion.
They slew the fathers and mothers,
like they slew
the grandfathers and grandmothers before them;
putting in their place
the puppet and the slave,
who did not know the betters they replaced.
Our generation came along
hoping to continue
the heritage of our forbearers.
But, as before, they surprised
and murdered us too,
and also as before, it all took place
as if nothing happened.
You who come after
who would fight for life
and being able to really live,
know that we tried, but lies, fear and greed,
killed us also who came before you.
So that now no one can speak for you either
unless you do yourself.

THIS IS IT

This is it.
They are that.
(Are you ready?)

All was.
Some were.
They were.
He was.
I was.

All is.
Some are.
They are.
He is.
I am.

EARTH

In her sadness,
the earth makes to appear
gracious and cheerful.
Yet when you see
how very beautiful she is,
you see in truth
she has every real reason
to be happy.

Only who cares?

What do they care about?
They don't care about her.
They don't care about anything.
And if you don't care then,
except for myself,
I guess no one does.

Seeing what she is here,
is different from seeing her
where we forgot her:
beyond the haunted kingdom,
over the garden wall,
in eternity.
There she has no fixed bounds.
There she has no end.

Rigid, yet fluid in the motion,
the feeling of knowing
rushed through me like rivers
rising from showers.
We have
fire, water, air, and earth in us too,
and like her
can with harmony and peace
be all of these forever.

LET ME STAY IN THE SUMMER

Let me stay in the Summer;
In that space serene,
Where the cares of the world
Don't matter;
Till Autumn unfurls
Its colors in whirls
To calm and to sooth them.

Let me stay in the Summer;
In the race clouds run,
And processions of light
Don't shatter,
Till downpours excite,
Bringing respite,
To the parched waiting earth

Let me stay in the Summer;
Where it's hot and still;
Where sweet living abounds,
Nor scatters
Till the rising winds sound
And herald around:
"The time of mirth draws near!"

THE TRUE VISION OF THE GOOD

I cannot but hurt
when I hear a child
or an animal cry.
Could I but smooth their care!
His mother of a thousand years ago,
how that beauty persists in this child!
And think how any creature
could be loved, loved, loved,
without injustice to another.

Yet most will die many times
before at last they last expire.
How strange it is going through life
to have suffered more than one mortal wound!

Nor do all fruit, leaves, and flowers
grow the same,
though they come from the same tree.
Some are small.
Some are large.
Some pass away before their time.
Some get what they need, some don't.
Some have strength and vigor
but must seek the light
from out the mass
of bombed and burned out rubble.

Out on some corner,
or off on some exit,
begging with a sign
in the rain,
grizzled, fat, or lean,
weary eyed,
determined.
Determined toward what?
You are part of the trip to eternity,
to goodness.
Yet the world belongs to these no more.
except as the shadow of hope.
And where is even that shadow?

Why did I grow like this?
Sorrow can at times
take me up like a flood,
and I can but flow with it.
Then I awake
washed ashore
on a bank of quiet solitude.
Quiet late at night,
the cool drops
begin fall and clatter.
Quiet, alone.
a rustle in the ivy,
a stir in the leaves,

are all that matter.
Oh to be never
taken unawares again,
and instead stay and live here always!
For no matter no still,
no matter how quiet,
we must leave a space
for the unexpected.

But if so, what is the true vision of the Good?

So many times we saw them up and go,
full of hope and promise.
The knowledge that something
could or might happen
thrilled us every time.
But in their case,
it did,
and fear fully realized:
full of hopes and promise,
shooting toward the sun,
then like a comet or shooting star
exploded in pieces on the ocean.

And to think how some wept before they died,
knowing that they would not live...
Yet others not only accepted calmly,
but even welcomed death.
All in one great number,
All for one great name,
alone and naked they rose and died.

And yet what were they going to do?
Live?
Live, live, live...
The Heaven I want to go to..
Could I love and treat and care for another
the way I would want to be loved, treated and cared for?
Could I but smooth their care!

When it was paradise,
it was paradise for the animals too.
What on earth then did we do?
A strange, pretty bird I never saw before
appeared
and alighted deep between some branches

in the time and place of poems and poetry.

You smile,
and smile you may.
But there is such a place.
But is it only I,
or do you remember too?

Love and Reason are the rock of ages.

Nature is children and childlike,
even in gray aged wisdom,
as great as any one is.
And with that cute face!
Quench then what is negative.
Be without resentments.
Quell animosity,
and see
All in one great number,
All for one great name.
Go where they love,
see what they see,
know empathy,

even some Monday morning.

IMPROMPTU

Even though suburb raised
Or city dwelt,
There always use to be farms.
Then something happened,
and they went into a machine.
There's a place for us,
Or there isn't.
That's just how those things are:
Hounded and stalked
By a toxic waste site;
Private interest;
Muffled silence;
Sweetness and light.

WINDS FROM THE SOUND

Oh ancient song, lead me along
To sing what only a heart knows;
Like a rooster who crows
To the waking stars
In the sky of a thousand suns,
That for all progress,
For all our alarms,
Sea, sky and earth
Hath not lost their charms!

Animals watch winds as they blow;
In soft silence sitting below.
The rushing gusts flow
With yearning long gone
From someone's breast in the past;
Revived now in mine.
Then love weary grown,
I find my heart moan
For rest and a home.

VICHY AMERICA

Radioactive holiness
which erases your memory
and your guilt

“I am the Lord Your God...
(from Frank Herbert’s *Dune*)”

Wasting everyone’s time...
It’s pretty rich to be monsters of this kind.
“I need a billion dollars to torture enough people.”

And you are to me as,
and indivisible from,
the blubber and fat
of the Great Hooligan
sitting atop and astride
the freedoms of mankind.

JAILBIRD

Hunkered down;
Mums the word
When I’m around;
No one has come
To free this bird.
But I’m shining inside;
Waiting to shine,
And with my friends
Light up the world one day;
Ready to go all the way.
I could. I would,
Feeling up in a down world.
Oh to see faces again
Of those I loved, and then
We’d prove them all wrong,
And resume our song.

TO C.M.

Though sufficient precaution
I thought I’d provided for;
Never allowing my guard to sit,
To my dismay, consternation, and more,
She scored on me a direct hit!
And my heart, despite all pains I’d took
To avert that sweet avidity,
Was led a prisoner, elated but forsook,
Into that captivity;
Where iron chains weigh not more
Than tears hidden that adore!
How long one can endure such things,

I honestly don't know.
Once more I find my heart a going
Where I did not want it to go.

THE SOLUTION

I told her if there were a way to say it
Without saying it I would.
She said she *would* free me
If some way she could.
Then a pause.
But no on second thought,
Don't worry *I'll get over it*.
I'll have to, I said.
Think that I would take you
To an impossible head?
For how could one love beauty
And then not love you too?
And what good painter
Would not be a great lover too?
No, no, the solution's simply this:
In times like these
There's a thousand things to do.

LESCHI

Was he not handsome?
Was he not brave?
He would have it too good
Being right too.
So they sent him to his grave.
Long before he'd awoke on a land
Owned by none;
The sun lit up
The white birch on a blue sky;
While a seagull or hawk circled overhead
Under a placid moon and dim stars.
And though the sky still glows a golden glow,
The land is no longer free.
The world glitters on the surface
But rages and foments within.
It has the glory of light
With little true warmth or feeling.
Yet Nature shines love throughout
Wherever she is not spoiled by man.
But something even greater than she
Was the peace and strength of her son,
Calmly accepting an unjust fate,
Like the rugged pines that had outlasted time.

IN PASSING

I want to be there for you,

But don't know what to do.
I think you'd know this,
But don't know that you do.
So if you thought I did,
I did not forget you.

Forgetting is sometimes good;
Even when years roll by.
But if ever I care,
If ever I can fly,
I'll fly with you,
And never forget you.

It could go a hundred ways.
But however it goes,
No joy to me is more
Than that which you will know.
And though I am not there,
I cannot forget you.

TWO (SEPARATE) MINIATURES

She is right to love me
because I would give her everything;
not for my sake or for her sake,
but for beauty we both cherish

If it truly were the days of old,
I would have to, like some
Viking with an armed band,
have come taken and captured her
-- but only to kiss her!

TO S.B.

as the weariness of struggle
was draining me dry
I wanted water to flower
just a few last poems

yet my prayers were heard
for Heaven by way of you
rained in bursts
sending me a flood

now as my garden blooms
and butterflies have homes
inspiration thanks you
for the precipitation

TO CONTINUE

What is most good about someone

is what is most infinite.
When one realizes they need the infinite,
and that the one they love needs it too,
even more than they themselves,
only then can they love;
only then can they let go
to care for someone else
also deservedly called infinite.
True love then
needs not be tied down;
indeed cannot be.
For without the infinite
love dies and cannot endure.
And what is the infinite
but patience and charity
healing conscience;
courage in the face of dangers;
trustworthy, loyal, fair;
disregarding of any particular one
save the One;
ever followed, ever pursued;
tomorrow without an image?

WHEN I THINK OF YOU

When I think of you,
I don't think of you;
But think of a beautiful sea.

When I think of you
I don't think of you;
But roam long beaches roaring free.

When I think of you
I don't think of you;
But view far hills with green adorned.

When I think of you,
I don't think of you;
But hear a cooing dove that mourns.

When I think of you,
I don't think of you;
But see clouds at stupendous height.

When I think of you,
I don't think of you;
It's your reflection in a rainbow's light.

And when snowy blossoms
Sing from the trees
Wishing your felicity,
How I long for you so
Where'er I go.

POOR LOVE

An embrace from the soul,
A kiss from deepest heart
Must be sufficient here
For us who are apart.

How poor a love, they'll say!
In this hard world that's true.
Yet where sweet music lives
Such love is ever new.

There songs are always sung;
A rising harmony
O'er leaps the light ether
Above an angel's tree.

Except for breaks and stops
Which halt the lulling strings,
Passions mild will rise up
Till all of heaven rings.

THE STRANGER

He came to town;
He's the stranger.
That's right the stranger.
He's the stranger;
That's all he is;
That' all he ever was;
That's all he'll ever be to me.

He's no friend of mine;
He's borderline.
No one has greater money or place
As long as someone else
Ties his shoe lace.

"Indulge yourself for years."
"Money kills fear."
When he can live his life without me
Is when he can go on
Speaking so free.

In the olden times
They'd have hanged him.
But since more mercy needs a fool,
We'll only see him sent
To reform school.

Yet if he stays set,
Weirder it gets;
Sprites and angels hover round him so;
Some say it's sorcery;

Some Yugi Oh.

REMINDER

Whirring flutter
Of feathered wings,
Oh soul,
Where now is hope's prospect?
Where that peaceful, happy view
We once thought to expect?
Was it not in striving
To see love's faith surviving?
Was it not in truth abiding;
False spirits overriding?
Was it not in bravest daring;
Borne aloft by caring?
Let us then now at this last
All void and emptiness defy.
Let us so boldly long to live
That Death itself may die.

FIRST DAY

Almost helpless,
Just beginning to see;
Looked on at a distance;
What now will they be?

Just yesterday
From the nest they rejoiced;
Each time the parents came
They raised their glad voice.

Free for the first time,
Hopping, not quite flying;
Today they're out;
No thought of dying.

The sun then sets
On a day of new birth;
Filled with promise and hope
O'erflowing with mirth.

What's tomorrow
Who now can say or know?
They begin in wonder;
But where will they go?

FRAGMENTS

Even after a million years,
Eagles still frown,
Yet seagulls still clown
both high soaring.

The golden bowl of you
The ideal of you in a pale blue book
Running off in print somewhere

A pretty girl I never saw
A part of the hills' and forest's awe
Somebody's sister, somebody's wife
It is just as well I didn't meet her
Or I'd love her now too.

THE PEACEFUL DIN

Honk honk! -- Honk honk!
"What loud, strange noise wakens
This cold and damp autumnal night?"

When wonder to behold:
Miles and miles of Canadian geese
Heading south in noisy, distant flight.

Yet like a canopy of clouds
Housing the mists of a mountain
Is the calm left over from the sight.

POTSHATL

A modern house o'er looks a modern bay;
Yet new enough to bring back bygone days;
Strolling down sidewalked streets; past fenced backyards;
Yet the lost past seems not so far away.

Imagination takes me back to then.
I dream; and soon it seems like long ago.
I join free air and wind in swift adventure
And athwart the tall, waving grass we go.

Or from branch to branch we skip, leap and run;
From leaf to leaf memories to beseech;
Toward the black smoke of fires drifting
Where wood is burning on the distant beach.

Come packed canoes in the dawn's dim, red light;
Though the thunder threatens with hints of rain;
They yet bring gifts overflowing to you.
For once more Potshatl has come again.

"Come, come then to the Potshatl my friends;

Where he who most wins is he who most gives.
And as the earth and sea give so shall we.
For he who most loves is he who most lives.

“Though they come fine, rich and filled with bounty;
Yet they will be put to shame my daughters.
For because you are the joy of my heart
Your spirit will be wide as the waters;

“And your pride rise high up as the great sky.
For myself I don’t need so much, that’s true.
My riches are great and already mine,
I need no more since, you see, I have you.

“And if somehow I could I gladly would
Give and give to all those who sadly died;
Finding laughter in their being happy.
Far from forgetting, I weep that they cried.

“But for that very reason let us sing;
As birds do.
And like insects let us dance;
And like flowers let us adorn.
For this is how to greet the morn.
For with just a few or even one good friend,
One can go on making songs ever without end.
May they then soon be our friends!
May they all soon shine;
Even if too we perish;
Even if too we’re left behind.”

MORAL OSCILLATION

You had it.
You don’t have it. (He took it.)
You *will* have it.

He had it.
He has it.
He *won’t* have it.

And *how* did he have it?
And *where* did he have it?

And *how* will you have it?
And *where* will you have it?

But why is all or was any of this ever
an issue? Indeed a crisis? Because,
as it turned out, he needed you --
though you didn’t and don’t need him
(and though you continue to do your best
to be nice to him.)

HE WILL NOT MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS FOR NOTHING

Sherman single-handedly could a hundred defeat
Till spirit people were brought in; him to cheat.
So now while his enemies thrive in wealth, honors and name;
He now must live friendless, in poverty, and in shame.

“Worry not for Sherman,” consoled a voice on high.
“Rather live rich, enjoy yourselves and buy.
For great, after all, shall be his Heavenly reward.”
That’s easy for him to say -- *because he’s not my Lord!*

Please then real Heaven, grant me this request!
May my murdered kids in peace find joy and rest.
As for myself, I don’t ask much -- only to be free.
So would you please tell these ghosts and angels – “*M.Y.O.B.!*”?

GENTLY

What more silent is
Than a family of Juncos
Flitting on twigs and fences
Amid the light falling snow?
It was from such quiet,
Life, I first came to you.
But when I depart, when I go,
Will I that same quiet know?

LEMONS

Go make lemonade;
you’d be a fool not to.
A lemon after all
is for something.
Nor is every bad thing
anywhere near so good.
So that even lemons
can be precious too.

DANCE D’AMOUR

If she were sad I’d forgot her,
She should as well feel regret;
For the other two seasons
I now also forget.
Things should be done right.
In whatever it is we do.
And if we won’t do it right
Then how can Love stay new?
When things are done right,
The joy comes in profusion.
But if not done right

It's all vain illusion.
And if difficulties prevail
And tyranny does not cease;
If we can't do anything;
We'll at least be at peace.
And just so you know
That I ever hold you dear,
I will always be good for you too
Whenever you're not here.

THE VESSEL

With coursing winds to ride,
Dead calms to abide,
Storms to then survive;
How like long sailing
Is being alive.

With reason his ballast,
With purpose his guide,
He keeps his ship tight;
Then welcomes the port
When it comes in sight.

But the sailor who's home
Soon's dissatisfied
Nor likes all he sees;
And seaward returns
Seeking to be free.

TO N.P.

Is there any good word for second?
If no, then I can say as I durst;
And my words need not be peccant;
Since you are one of the first.

Even long ago I loved but you;
Yet did not till now find out your name.
Before these our years are all through,
A poem is the least of pains.

I'll ask, "Do you want me to love you?"
I don't want to (and you know why too...)
But if somehow you want me to,
It's the easiest thing to do.

Perhaps then great love we could pretend;
I'll award you a badge or bouquet.
But if my heart must truly bend
All that's needed is your say.

It takes time to reach a mountain's peak;
It takes time to be up in the sky.

I think there is time for all we seek;
Time to live for what we sigh.

These sighs are heaved for a good purpose;
Else wise they would not be known or be.
Our Maker gave these gifts to us
So that we might give as he.

I pray to God I will be good for you
(And some stupid pride not trip me up.)
But if Time should cause me to forget you,
Or if I fault you for being vain;
It will be not yours, but my blame.
(And so goes this game...)

HALF-RHYMED IN TIME

He shot for everything;
How did he end up with nothing?
And yet they'll say
Not all there is in the world,
Even if one had it,
Can remedy this life's incompleteness;
And for some special few
This great world
Is only a small place
That alone cannot do.
It cannot do
Because *there* isn't
All the peace they are entitled to.
And for all that they've lost,
There is always today
And tomorrow is interminable.

Where are the good going?
Where are they who earned being happy going?
Are they a family?
If so, it's because they have a mother and father.
But if we can't come we wish them well.

Now she must be one of them.
Her beauty echoes off the rocks
Or ripples across a pool.
But if he but look at her
Without the universal light
To that sublime avenue,
It seems he can't quite see her.
And when it is dark
He says there is no light.
But of course there is light;
It's just that for him it is not there.

In order to ascend high above
Or dive deep under
Desire then must abate;

And one must hanging wait
(Just as music needs rests);
Though the impatience is great.

THE HEART IS THE EARTH

The Heart is the Earth
And the Mind is the Sky.
Yet only if I behave myself
Do I construe why
Water is their spirit.
Love is a spirit.
You can feel it;
You can hear it.
The Spirit is Love.

Can any child
Be Nature's child?
Yes, any child
That loves Nature
Can be so styled.
For who loves Nature
But Nature's child?

Yet what is Nature?
It calls me
To the quiet of the fire
On a frigid winter's day;
Soothes all my fears
With warm summer rays.
But if I am crushed
Like a murdered animal,
I feel my humanity.

MORE THAN A MARINE

You do not like it
But let yourself be toughened;
That way you will be stronger
And sooner rid of it.
What is truly good about you
Is what is already inside you
And what is inside of friends
Who love what's true.
Yet you can't assume
Victory will come for you;
Or that you will live to see it.
You will instead probably just die
With the consolation
Of having fought the good fight.
But let this be enough.

Bless these thy gifts, Lord,
We are about to receive

Through thy bounty.
Remember the animals
Who give their lives;
Grant them your peace.
May we this day
Make ourselves worthy of this food,
In how we act and what we do.
May they with time
From their burden be freed
And we ourselves of the need.

FLYING AND POETRY 101

Speed up to avoid being a target.
Slow down to get your aim.
Stay high to keep safe.
Swoop low in order to harm
-- with success consisting of a
somehow happy medium between these.

Or if you prefer a jingle:

To evade, speedily fly.
To aim, go slow.
To stay safe, keep high.
To harm swoop low.

THE POINT

My life up to this point --
Alone, betrayed, poor, beat-up fool
Still seeking the time
When love made the town glow;
With nothing left it seems
But to escape the ruling show.
Can we rage against the ages
And lament what once was known?
Mourn fate past
Yet unable to escape our own?

Music is like (certain kinds of) love;
There is and there isn't time for it.
And people you love are like songs;
You can't always be with them
No matter how so you long.
Love is like music;
Good only up to a point.
Yet in that point is sown the seed
Of tomorrow's today.
Today is so fraught with sorrow
I wouldn't even call it today.
Today then must be tomorrow.

I have no one.

But when I think of
The one it's she.
And how do I know?
Because she moved me.
But when today comes,
Will she be mine?
Probably not.
But she would have been,
And this love is the flower
That bloomed unseen.

DEATH IN SPRING

Poor life,
Why were you born?
Why did you live?
Your passing seems strange
-- you had so much to give.

Though someone once dreamed
Life's happiness for you,
The world had you disowned.
Yet you were so humble,
You were so sweet;
I could have thought
It was made for you alone.
But for all tears that swell,
Your face fading here
Must instead shine far off,
Wherever Beauty dwells.

And now this ice in April,
This sleeping the sleep of ages
In youth,
Makes me ponder
Of my own demise
The truth.

When I die,
I'll think of a soldier slain,
And think of the brave
Whom happiness here passed by.
May the prize go to the victor!
Felicity here to the good!
May God give me but to do rightly;
Just as you did and would.

WHEN ANGELS HOVER

When angels hover
Round a steeple,
They are then
What kind of people?

Though gracious --
Meaning well --
What they want
Who can tell?

Do they know
What they're doing?
Is it wisdom
They're pursuing?

Are they free
Goodness to empower?
Or do they serve
A tyrant in a tower?

Who knows?
Who can tell?
Only truth
Breaks such a spell.

But where may truth
Be found?
Clearly for some,
Not on the ground.

And yet could not this plot,
Where tares now grow,
Become a lovely spot
Did someone care to make it so?

SISTER FREEDOM

At first I wasn't sure
Who it was you were.
Then in my mind's sky,
From afar I spied
A glistening star,
And thought
That's it!
That's who you are!

*A light from out the blue,
Lilacs and lilies spring
Away from you.
In the hollow of dreams,
Gold ladders,
Whistle and bells,
I'm thinking, longing for you.*

Leading from you,
Creation's blessed stream
Shines through.
And now I see too
The promise you aspire to,
Would see that hope realized

You within me rouse -- the true!
That spirit which you stir;
The beacon that is you!

And if tomorrow be anyone's
Tomorrow will be ours!
And the fire of valor that died
Recalled some hurried night;
Oppression's walls crumble down
That all may bask in freedom's light.

SECURITY

No one cares --
But who then cares
If no one cares?
Look in the wrong place,
You're sure not to find
What you're seeking.

Then come a sudden mood,
Come a new circumstance,
A different time around,
How well you fare:
Feet firm on the ground.

As much as are your woes,
If you knew them
Your heart would melt
At others throes.
Is life a mystery?
You know it is.
How could it not be?

And will life always love you
For better or for worse?
That's *my* job --
Your tears to quell,
Your joy to rehearse.

SOLID ETERNITY

There are ways a soul
Knows another soul,
And knows they love them too;
Touching a soulful fineness
That even the most
Keen spying spirit
Cannot scan or read --
Infrequent though they happen.
One day,
Hearing the echo of their presence
In the empty corridor
Of unfamiliarity,

And we learn our felicity
Lay hid all this while unknown
-- but there!
Rare are those
That cause you within to weep;
Grateful then their memory keep,
And before you sigh anymore!

OLYMPIC

What do I care if I die
Since they are
As much as Death to me;
And rather than go on
Dissecting pain,
Set myself free again?
Ah but Life's not mine to lose;
Life's not merely ours.
And promises and oaths
Command our destiny
When reason becomes an arctic waste
And thought cold consolation.
Drive on then, drive on,
Determination
Lifted from within,
And fly me the miles toward dawn.

NATALIE WOOD

A hush befalls
Not heard by all;
Ah here is
Her turn to gleam.
Yet if we insist
On seeing her
Any given now
We sometimes
Get to doubting;
Even though it is right
That we should.
Yet in and over
The landscape of times
That throne is undeniable;
Indeed, unworthy of paltry eyes.
And could we have but kissed her once
Beauty itself must say we're wise!

JUST MY LUCK

Just my luck,
He's a key player
In megalomania,
And because others

Won't be straight,
I can't get rid of him;
Howsoever great
My anger or my hate.
And you know as well,
I can't be making
Such a fuss about myself,
Though a prisoner of Hell.
So a philosopher imperturbable
I must be;
Or like Odysseus
Think of a trick
To defeat him and set myself free.
Yes, I will be weary;
I will be annoyed;
It can't much be cured.
And about all one can do
Is remain calm and endure.
But when it comes
To actually being down
That's not so hard to get around.
The burden of all *that's* on him,
The plague itself, Dunga Jinn.

JOURNEY OF THE LONE CANOE

Why after all anger and despair,
Does the sunshine of youth
Still beckon me forth?
Why after all pride and doubt,
For beauty far off
Does my heart still yearn?
Why after years a captive bound,
Of a pleasant garden
Do I seek home?

I do so long; I am so drawn
Because there is something about
Where the tall green woods
And the gray sea meet;
Something about
Where the earth breathes the wind
And drinks the rain;
Something about
The rising sun
(Who bids it wait?)
Suffusing the air
And making the mountains laugh
In joyous reply;
Something about that burst of gold
In greenery translucent,
Trembling and swimming
In a flood of purest beams;
Something in those selfsame rays
When cast on the waters

And reflected dancing
On the river's granite heights.
Oh, friend canoe, for that repose;
Toward where those western currents roll,
Where pouring from the cliffs
Veils of icy vapors
Mingle in yonder valley's misty folds,
And streams and zephyrs billow
That sequoias and I may be evergreen.

There I am;
Towards there I go
On a trip
To the infinite
I call my own:
Locked to reason's shore
Yet never leaving hope's door;
Even in times sad and bereft.
For just as day in day out
This waterfall
Among the weeping cedars
Steadily descends,
So yet still sometimes hidden tears
Bubble and splash
Murmurs of remorse.
And yet just as assuredly
Am I soon to be solaced
By the great undercurrent of things,
Home of the immutable,
Silently rumbling
Without and within.

And not a voice in the forest is stifled.
Nor the shrieking hawk,
Nor the ocean's lapping waves
Are enough to quell the eternal's din:
The bark of the fleeing elk;
The deer's tender tread;
Snorts of the towering moose;
Cackles of raccoons;
The grunts of bears;
The cougar's growl;
The sea lions shout --
They all cry out
To the common mother.

And after all of this,
There is my joy!
She's my little wonder
I care for and adore,
And always there
Were all else a bore.
I'm there with her in troubled hour.
I'm there when she needs me.
And can I cheer her this way
If I myself don't keep on?

And if one day we part,
Why should I die?
Let death die;
I wouldn't know how to die.
For with these Arms
In which we're held,
How should we know what dying is?

PASSAGE AHEAD

When I think of
The miles we've gone,
It makes me wonder
About the miles to come.
In the sea of people
There are those
Who come and go.
To them --
Peace and hello.
What more can I do?
More I know.
Then there are those
Who are gone.
Our friends are gone!
But who then is here?
No one is here
But mourning hidden away
In the dark, lonely
Silence of the deep.
Judgment is the compass
On time's changing sea;
And if no compass
Where will one be?
Sipping bittersweet molasses
In some caliginous den;
Let that not be me.
True, I sometimes want
To live -- or die,
And I don't know why.
And yet I know
The spirit is the core;
The kernel of it all,
That *they* deem the shell.
But it is we, more than they,
Who are grateful for the day.
Yet sometimes I don't think
I know it -- though I try.
Other times I think I do.
Sometimes it's up and went;
At other times,
"Ah, there -- the true."
Be good then if only
For whom you love
And those who love you.
Yet for a while

I did not know what to think.
Till after many years
Of fretting and of fears,
I realize what fun we had,
Even if, then and now,
Still a long ways away
From being whole one day.

THE LESSON

In your mind, stay ahead
Of whatever's being said,
And predict the effect
So as to not disrespect
Either what is right and true
Or whom you're speaking to.

No need great heights to reach;
Come warmly with honest speech.
For a palace is bare
If no one can much live there;
Far better a cheery home
Where no one feels alone.

Though wrought
Into a glorious state,
Useless words we hate.
Speak to us then
Only from the heart;
That our own
May be made silent
Come the time you part.

EAGLEMOUNT

When brown little sparrows
Perch peaceably in a throng,
Cheerily they sing their song
Of felicity unseen
To whom they all belong.

For though someone's small.
The love that adores them
May be most immensely tall.

That faery rockery
Full of clouds and verdant trees,
Eaglemount, so loved must be;
Where great has become little
And mighty are the wee.

For though very wee,
A giant joy binds them
High atop Discovery's sea.

“When they went a roaming,
Weary to leave all care,
Did the good people visit there?”
Of such a queer query
How could you even dare?

Yet though they'd been near and far,
What a surprise met them
Beneath those western stars.

HEARD IN THE GAUNTLET - A POEM PLAY

Knocked down...
Dragged out...
Beaten in the head...
No more!
I 'd sooner be left for dead!
Oh, how I would
Have all problems and pain
Solved and fixed!
But failing *that*
Go to bed instead.

[Later that same day.]

Would that this noise
Would cease!
Could not my words
Make it stop?
Oh that Life could
Once more be embraced
In its most quiet detail!
But it's difficult to live
If we're always sick
With noise,
And I refused to be beguiled
By others tricks and wiles,
Sprung from their idlenesses.

And for all my own weakness,
I shall no slave be;
A prisoner I might,
But no slave me.
How could I have known
Life would take such turns?
But that's not Life,
That's only my life.
For others,
They don't need
To worry about what I do.

What they say is
They hate to think
Of having to die

While they were
Having such a good time of it.
But if die they must --
Then so be it, so be it...

TUESDAY SERMON

That you haven't been yet
Doesn't mean you'll never be.
If you can't grasp that
You don't *really* grasp infinity.
And who is the truth for
If not for you?
And if it's yours
Why always hide it?
Where you can always do better
Is *right* where you are,
And seeing others
Through the mirror
Of a distant triangle or star.
So, be good if only
For whom you love
Or who love you.
If you got the right going,
Go with the flow
While it's flowing.
But when it's stopped,
Let it go, let it go.
Better to never speak again
Than to go on speaking in vain.

THIS DAY

This day feel a limit;
As a soaring bird must feel
When it must come down
To the gravity of earth.
Though each muscle tendon burst
To pass the aerosphere,
In part because I breathe,
I'm confined to this world here.
And each day striking the calendar,
It seems I wait in vain
For blessedness to come
To bring me stronger wings
That would pierce
The furthest bounds
Of Freedom's firmament.

What then are these recurring pains
Which make life seem a burden;
And cut deep like a falling axe?
What gnaws late evenings
And the dead of night?

Threatening totality
Such that life is wasted
Over woe's temporarily tasted?

Thus asked in my worries and fears,
Born of idle, duped imaginings
Nestled in loss and boredom's care.
Surely death cannot be more than
A myth of fear and unknowing,
-- Perhaps it offers respite.
Yet though death offers escape,
How can I concede the cause
That love will make all well,
And in so doing hate life
And resign myself to hell?

Bludgeoned and starved
To the spirit and sense,
Seemingly left
Beaten and robbed
By time and by life,
On troubled bed did I lay asking
"Where is God this lonely day?
"Wherefore proceed?" cried I.
"Why get up from this ditch
Once more to go
And risk all again?"
So it was I groaned
With dolor's weight,
Ready to detach from the tree
Like a forgotten leaf whose late.

I then descended in sleep,
And in a dream
A strange shade beckoned to me,
And she whispered
With chiding voice:
"Do not languish
In self-filled pity.
Come with me
And see souls of the city."
My mind followed her
And a vision opened
To my inward eyes
Of deformed and crippled
Struggling to make good
With nothing;
Sick, impoverished,
And prisoners in chains
Who had never a chance
For hope from their pains.
I saw one retarded, jeered at
Even as he wept.
An image wafted by
Of a limp woman raped,
While into the night

Her attacker escaped.
I learned of hearts
Who said good-bye
Without ever knowing
A true friend or kiss,
Or even imagined
A thing like bliss.
Dampened faced of children,
Bowed and lachrymose
Came forth
Who could never
Look up with kindness or trust.
There was a whore
Blank eyed and broken;
A drunk wallowing in a gutter,
Blood dripping
From the side of his head,
Less alive than dead.
So wretched and merciless
Was this I dreamed,
That my mind trembled
And in my sleep I screamed.

Then the heavy veils draped closed
And mists of mind obscured all,
The shade appeared once more and said:
“For every decent, yet troubled soul
That wills their end on life’s field
Goodness’ ranks are depleted
One less sword and shield,
And Evils are made the stronger.
Think well then you who weep
What your purpose could be
And why it is you belong!
Though you fail in the fight
Find comfort in doing what’s right;
For in that will you find
Love’s True meaning.”

The shade turned upward
And arose into the air;
Became a golden angel
With pinions bright and fair.

Amazed by her effulgence,
I awoke dazed from slumber
Bubbling like a warm spring
Flowing out onto the surface
Of cooling consciousness.
I strained like a new born child
Dazzled by her beams of light;
Awaking my spirit
From the shadows
Of that somnolent hypogeum.
A breeze from an open window
Lifted locks of my hair

And I breathed in deeply
The vigor of the flowing air,
Still hurting from regrets
But resolved to live more wisely;
To give so as to prove
My love forsaken
Was of actual worth after all.

Opportunities are never really gone
Until freely given up,
And if after all troubles I can move,
I will still laugh, cry and love.
I will not singly moan the loss
Of what is a mere illusion,
Of all that is called real.
For once the lies
That hypnotize
Are shorn asunder
And Time's fleeting guise removed,
All of us that does survive
Is all that is living and beautiful.

Addenda - Below is a previously included section of the "This Day" which was removed in the above now formal version. It's added here as a semi-separate piece.

To exist or not exist,
All one can do is try.
Arrow on me woes
A hundred fold,
Yet still I'll strive
For those I love
To stay alive.
Yet solitude can be too much
A burden that at times
That one wonders
About keeping on.
And it is painful comfort to know
There is such a thing as choice,
When there is no one left for love.
But sink not low so soon
Without remembering
The tiny seed
Deep resting in earth,
Alone in darkness below,
Piercing the soil and rubble
After a cloudy downpour.
Drinking the watery droplets
Till the sunlight bids it rise.
Then surging up,
The seed rends its form,
Bursting out in tender shoots --
A matchless delight
Of flourishing blossoms white.

WINTER DIRGE

The lion who mauled the lamb
Is after slain by man.
But then man must die too
At someone else's hands.

Prepared for fortune good;
While steeled for what is sad,
Yet more ready when glad
Than when things turn to bad.

For December's lonely cold
Bright candles and some wine,
For darkness comes early
In the chill of winter time.

Hear how the wind rises!
The hour soon comes nigh.
Our mornings were hello,
But now evening is goodbye.

And when death comes what then,
Amid these bleak nights and sore?
We'll sing once more vespers
Heard in the days of yore.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Who that will not listen
Ever learned the lesson
Of Troy's fall?

For years he fought
And kept the wall.
Yet one day's sleight of hand
And look he lost it all.

Whoever is most fair and just
He said should rule.
But now say his captors
"No, it is he who best fools.

"And if good you must be
Then die you certainly will.
Oh, you won't be good and die, eh?
Then like us you must kill."

HERE

Did you ever stop
and ask whose stupid fault
this was in the first place?
Did you ever stop and think
the bad is them,
and when they are gone
we have everything else
to be glad over?

For any day
this all could end,
And any day
Cure all things.
Any day all
Will mend,
And it will be
Eternal spring.

We don't need
A somewhere,
For somewhere is here.
No, the problem is
Too much strife and the fear.

Oh, how I long for peace,
And that no war would remain.
Oh, that there was no more fuss
And it was peace again.

SEA SONG

The mew flies in with news
Of solitary ships and barks
Plying waters far off and dark.
And though he laughs so,
My tears in rivers
Still flow and flow
For what happened long ago.

The pennant at the peak...
The yard swinging that squeaks
To a shuddering ruffle,
Till all sound is muffled
And proudly the sail fills,
Tacking towards the lee,
Taking us to sea.

REGRET

Oh, for in us when
Life poured radiant
Toward a golden sea!

But steered astray
By auras and mists
Of a treacherous noon,
The view vanished soon.

Now all that's left,
Now that time has run,
Are the dripping embers
Of the distant sun.

A GOOD POET KNOWS

A good poet knows
There are as many
Highs and lows,
Not to mention
Fast and slows,
In Life
On which to draw on
And compose
As there are
In Music
-- only more so.
And though they'll tell you
"It's all been said,"
Not all of rhythm,
Counterpoint and harmony
Has yet been heard or read.

CROSS

The cross is
An Arapaho's star;
A Sioux's four corners
Of the earth
Wherever you are.

To others,
It's the celestial glint
Of a lighted taper;
Or two roads
Intersecting
The eternal vapor.

To yet others,
Its on what
A sail is pinned
In order to catch

Truth's wind,
On the voyage of ardor
To the longed for arbor.

But for you,
It is a rude mockery;
Just as life
At their hands
Becomes a rude mockery.
And when you starve
So it seems the world itself
Must starve also;
And then the world
Never really had hope.
And you are worn.
And you are beat up
Because they are
Beating you up.
But how well
Could they endure such
Who have no sense
Of right or shame?
They can act like
There is no war.
But there is, there is.
The proof is in these sores.
Yet though your body's broken,
Your spirit,
Unlike theirs, is free.
They've purchased vain security
At the price of their own
Conscience and liberty;
While you now must endure,
Not to get something,
But only to keep
What's already yours.
They are strangers;
They always were.
And because defy them you dare,
The sunshine
Of their false hope
You may forever forswear;
Let their own grief be theirs.

The cross is
An Arapaho's star;
A Sioux's four corners
Of the earth
Wherever you are.

To others,
It's the celestial glint
Of a lighted taper;
Or two roads
Intersecting
The eternal vapor.

To yet others,
It's on what
A sail is pinned
In order to catch
Truth's wind,
On the voyage of ardor
To the dreamt of arbor.

GOOD FOR

Good for some things,
Yet not for others.
And when not good
For everything,
You sometimes
Feel good
For nothing.

But worse
Is not being able
To see whom you would,
But instead some other
Whom *they*
Say you should.

So why this charge?
What was my offense?
When all I sought
Was to live those dreams
That makes one's life make sense.

Life as we wished it;
Life as it is.
Yet go on we must
That the good in us
Might live.

For if we stop
And say "no more,"
Then what on earth
Were we ever good for?

(I joke it's true,
But you know the pain.
Better to laugh it off
Then go through *this* again.)

FEAR

A wee, little moth
With strange blue wings
Alighted on my hand
And would not let go;

As if to say
"If my life is so fleeting,
Why are my wings beautiful?
Let then me be with you.
For I'm frightened,
And don't know why I'm here."

GAME

When things are in place,
Life is fine,
But when they're not,
For Death we pine.
Life is a game.
Death is a Game.
We take turns,
We pass;
The end;
Then another
Life and Death
Again.
And though what we play
Is not what we would,
It's still a game
Just the same.

CONDEMNATION

People, but even more so animals,
Know when God isn't present,
And will flee where peace is gone.
From the lowest plane
To the loftiest prospect,
Whose spirit alone
Is truly great and best?
There is none but his.
But only in faith, truth or reason
Can our souls know this is.

Then there is a monster;
Whom people placate and appease.
To buy false peace
They feed the angry demon
Who fills the air with stress.
He is angry --
So must you be too.
But at who?
Let me think of someone
To hurl my disapproval at,
Or scorn for imperfection
-- as if the only way to live
Is *not* to live in peace.

The condemnation of demonism --

There it is in black and white
For all to see and hear.

THE FRIEND FORGOT

For a hundred years or more,
The giant holly stood next door.
And though the sun comes up today
That motherly tree is no more.

While all trees, like all people,
Are wonderful in their way,
There are some trees,
Like some people,
That are even more so.

Its branches extended many yards;
The trunk nigh a hundred feet high.
By my home it stood close by
Shading us from the burning sun.
But now, alas, it's gone!

It's as if an old friend had died,
Yet whom I did not know before;
And only now when it's not there
Do I realize how much I cared.

I remember how on some days
There the birds would flit and play;
Or high up its limbs
Secrete their nests
Where baby birds are loved best.

In that winged congregation,
How they cackled and made song!
What must that tree have felt
To've been host to such a throng?

Then just yesterday morn I awoke to hear
The chainsaw's grind bringing us tears;
The ancient trunk sawed off
By branches then into blocks.
And now all that's left
Is a stump forlorn
Clinging to the rocks.

MISS SNIP

She was a Seattle cougar
ever since being a little cub.
And though small
she still is,
the royal scowl

in that face of hers
looks to me like thunder.

And I think she would
Pray with you
If she could,
And you asked her to.

ODYSSEUS AWAY

The spirit comes;
it doesn't come.

Then it comes.

But whether it's here
or not here who can say?

We think we are whole,
but we never really are.
For someone somewhere,
somewhere beyond,
there's always some
wonder we never know.

So when the light
is split in twain,
and one becomes two;
all then one can do
is think of you.

EUROPE

If you father loves lambs,
All's good and well.
But if he murders,
Your father is hell.

Where Abraham lived
Was safety and Peace.
But where Lot dwelt
There was no release.

When Helen was lost,
There was a great stir.
When Briseis was taken,
Achilles demurred.

So know that life's warm
With the chalice of faith,
But ends cold and deadly
In a god's fond embrace.

ON CHRISTMAS DAY

On Christmas Day,
The birds I heard
Chirping in the holly;
Like angels are said to sing.
But, oh -- so very jolly.

How small was the babe
That was born this day
For us to all be glad.
How laughs my heart
To hear them sound
In merry round upon round.

On Christmas Day
The birds I heard,
Cheeping amid the berries;
Like angels are said to sing.
But, oh -- so very merry.

Let the little then
Ever have their way
On this most holy day.
And would that we
With love so gay
Could joying sing too always.

CAPTAIN CHRIS

Unless he comes to you first,
A spirit cannot be cursed.
And nothing makes more sense
Than imminent self-defense.
So pussy-foot no longer
And damn his soul in two;
Only be extra sure
To give him warning due.
And though he seem to come
With Heaven's blessing,
Not for a moment let him forget
With whom it is he's messing.
For Heaven is true
And spirits are sneaks;
Do not then hold back
On the havoc that you wreak.

CIRCLE ONE

The sky the father
loves earth the mother;
a love we know in peace.

And so in like tranquility
the planets all
circle the star.

Yet too far or too near
never exceeds just right.

Just as neither he or she
can ever surpass
the just One.

For all are enduring.
Yet special?
There is but one.

BALM

The good souls have moved on to bliss,
But these stayed behind to do us amiss.
Devils and false gods, how them then to defy?
When for Life we are willing to die

Left behind and all forgot?
They were not. They were not.
They took their own lives, true, it seems,
Yet only after being drowned in dreams.

How like poor soldiers slain they were
Did we know the truth that's pure.
While those who bore the cross sublime
Bought the victor's much needed time.

Peace may be all that some have left,
But then peace is all some need.
And there's no greater palm
Than to win that precious balm.

Always peace and only peace;
Only then does hurting cease.

A MONGOL'S TALE

A stately pleasure dome was decreed
Where Alph the sacred river ran;
As a reward for wild, savage deeds
For the clan of Kublai Khan.

For years they reveled in delight;
Did the proud family of Yuan.
The conqueror no longer fights,
But sows peace like any man.

Till one day Fate itself poured
Upon the Mongols in Beijing;

Destiny flooded like one vast hoard;
Led on by the rebel Ming.

Leaving all behind, up north Yuan fled;
Not Karakorum or a town was saved.
All was lost for which they'd bled.
All was lost for which they'd braved.

Now on windy steppes where burns the sun,
Nomad sons make journey on horses sleek.
No thought of stately dome or Alph to be won,
But only the Buddha's quiet to seek.

WHEN JUSTICE?

Using the group
to imprison and murder
those who don't belong
to the group.

Was it worth the money?
Was it worth the women?
Was it worth
a ghost's blessing?

"If you think so little
of doing those things,
you can go through them yourself."
For what were they supposed to do?

Guilty wretch,
the days will come
when all that's left
is your soul,
and dogs will bark
unceasing
throughout the day,
throughout the night...

Mark!

REVERIE

Everyone is snug asleep,
softness reigns, overcast,
but windy,
this late Sunday afternoon,
both living and dead slumbering in peace.

With determination like a needle's tip,
A spider must carefully weave its web.
Just as pine cones must be strewn
necessarily;
just so for you.

But remember that
If you don't really tell the truth,
you don't really love.
And no matter how much
you change *your* tune,
the birds will still sing
as they've sung
for thousands of years.
And where would you be without them?

"But shall the light that is derived
deride its source?"

Yet then the sun is not the source *ultimate*
though terrifying and undeniable its might.

And what is life if it is sick?
If from oppression he won't desist,
you *must* make him your footstool,
and that he might have
something honorable in life to do.

But must you then
wake up every morning
ready for a fight?
Worn out and beat up,
get up and start anew
with hopes and cheers?
Yes, for how many times
in the many ages of man
has pity looked on;
only to have to turn away forlorn
from what it could not help?

As the earth holds you
up on its shoulders,
sustain your brothers and sisters.
Let each who's of good cheer
and good heart
have all that they desire.
But what's for you
you cannot assume.

All you can do
is choose and hope
that if your own love
is worth something;
then perhaps who it's for
may want some.
Then keep that love for her
in a box safe somewhere.
So that if ever she wants it,
it's there.

TO --

True love is forever;
She's no less a beauty too!
But we're stuck *here*,
And the days are too few.

I'd buy her a present.
I would if I could.
I'd buy her some flowers
To do *me* some good.

Oh, that down
Would come this wall!
For what ever did I want?
Just to kiss her!
That's all,
That's all!

ALL ALONG

When feeling *very* bad,
Think yourself as one
Bearing the darkness of a storm.
And if you can get through it,
If you'll be but strong,
Someday you'll find
The sunlight forever lost
Has been there all along.
And even if Life of itself
Is not worth it anymore,
Grace, Love, Truth, and Beauty *are*
Worth dying *and* living for.

SO SAYS THE HEART

She should not have such power.
But I will give her her due;
Saying "That was
Some very good shooting."
Though we do realize
She could not possibly
Have meant to aim.

So that now, thanks to her,
I'm so delirious
I must write this--

When before
We'd gone separate ways,
I was too busy to care.
Yet now it seems
One needs permission divine
(or something like that)
To dream of seeking her hand --

DIVINE PARADOX

If one is never good
enough for life,
what use is living?
A great person
who waited on poor persons
was the greatest of all persons.
Indeed your gallant friend
who loved you
bravely suffered
more deeply and worse
than all that you do,
that he might go before you
that you might know the way;
could you but stay awake
when darkness comes;

could you wait hand and foot
(as you said you would),
when not washing their feet.

NIGHT AND DAY

Ants humble and unseen
Gather food from a mound
Of fresh leafy green;
While gnats astride the sun beam
Whirl in a dance
In a happy dream.

Yet when the lone crow,
On a wire perched,
Waits at close of eve,
Are his thoughts of tomorrow
Or of the day which he leaves?

A jet plane alight
Streams through the night
Far high above diamonds
On a bed of love,
Yet far below the stars
Glistening before dawn.

That dawn that wakes upon
Oranges, reds, pinks,
Purples and blues
Flowering forth in the day.
How together all blooms again!

And had you such joy?
Did your roses grow tall?
And when come night fall
Did not their memory
Look beautiful too?

THE GOOD THAT IS ALWAYS

In this life, it's true,
The riches of demons
Leave a dingy residue.
And yet rarely comes
Justice to virtue.
Oft, indeed, the very
Innocent are slain,
Crying out
For help in vain. Indeed,
The more we get older,
Evil becomes only bolder.
Pity here has fled,
And all that appears left

Is the hope of being dead.
What *then* does it matter
Being faithful and true?

For the soul it seems
There are two doors:
One by faith and honesty
To ecstasy sublime;
Where cheerful hearts
Adore each other
In purity refined.
The second door,
Of lies and decay,
Leads to a heaven
Of false glory
The duped
And deceived to allay;
Or else a punishing grave,
The bourne of willing slaves.

But, of course,
To know even this,
Were it all
So simple and as plain,
Is yet to know so little.
We think we see,
We think we know all.
But there is ever
So much more
We do not know
And cannot see;
Such as a bone or rock
(A hundred miles away no less)
Buried beneath a tree.
Or how mirrors send us back
Exactly what's the same;
How fire lives as air
Or how air burns as flame;
How placid and calm the night sky is,
Yet whose wispy lights ever move
And are not fixed as they seem.
To ascend to wonder's apogee,
You sort through existence
Like sifting through that sea.
One needs all infinity, that's true,
But not in equal portion or degree;
That the good within you may
Echo the good that is always.

In the halls of tradition,
In the pass of the ages,
You give ear to those fathers
That are our honored sages;
While setting forth the sons
To wherever tomorrow runs.
To work is all good;

For honor comes only from labor,
And all disgrace is laziness
That leaves nothing to savor.
Yet work is and ought
Not be an idol.
And as vital is disciplined rest,
Or fond leisure when somehow
The time's *just right*
To joy in the best.
And work may be play
As long as it is work too:
In sum, have a good conscience
That you may have nothing to rue.
See Evil and Good then as merely
Words for acting false or sincerely.
And if by shameless theft
You would Heaven gain,
Receive at once, as is only mete,
"Criminal" for your name.

So many children and animals there are
That require our care, shelter, and rearing.
How stout a man then is that
Who needs be cruel and domineering?
They are not at bottom strong
Who will not the poor and weak protect,
And such who fail the innocent
Reveal innate frailty as defect.
For *true* riches and *true* might
Will safeguard the humblest's rights,
And if the mild or forlorn we cannot shield
Then all Earth's but a barren field.
If love and charity don't hold final sway,
Of what use is our leisure, jokes, and play?

Dirty tricks and violent strife --
Is no way of living life.
Let truth, mercy,
And justice reign
That there might be reason
For sun, rainbow, and rain;
Cherish as many we may
With compassion
Of highest quality.
For no greater force
Could or can there be
But that which loves
And makes all life free.
Towards that sort of power
Must we strive,
If there be
Meaning to being alive.
And even if we fail
And all the world
Is to chaos and ruin hurled,
Souls so loving

Will yet endure
Within the Spirit
Of all that's pure.

Somewhere in its own vision of tender light
Shimmering in tranquil beams, like unto gold,
Lies every one or thing of lasting worth,
Yet which sight few of us ever behold;
Unless we be among the blest of the earth
Looking from inspiration's threshold,
And even then it is but a fleeting glance
Prompted by thoughts much like romance.
So we look to glimpse or catch, therefore,
The shadow of true Heaven in Nature.
Yet so fallen or blind have we become
That Nature too has become a distant one.
Still we feel and know she's yet there
Though obscured by our worry and cares,
And come such time we're no more harried
Then once more Sky and Earth are married;
And the Universe itself one spacious hall
Where the flood of love suffuses all.

If God had or ever wanted to
He could make any religion true.
Yet if He did change
How things ought to be,
How would we know it was He?
The answer to this
Is mayhap hard to see,
Yet in thought and heart are the key.
The fickle senses are oft at best
Limpid mud either moving or at rest.
Which if we look through them for the One,
Can make Him seem as Satan, or else the sun.
Senses then when so tricked or cajoled
Can become sharp knives that slay the soul.
Logic, by contrast, is more divine and pure
Than the pristine freshets of a glacier
By means of it we see the clearer way;
Know false from true as night from day.
Then there is our deepest heart
From which all sincere affection starts.
Love is the beacon that guides us to ought;
That love which cannot be sold,
That cannot be bought.
Right thoughts and right love
Then ever be our guide;
Which tell us that God is innocence,
And that innocence here's been crucified.

The life that lives in the sea,
Which shellfish and whales call home,
In their own peculiar state of peace,
Lie or swim silent and deep,
In darkness beyond our own.

Trilobite ancient, whose fossil we find,
What evil or sorrow could or did you know?
Long ere Man was felled by false mind,
What was death in hidden ages ago?
If less then today, it's only because,
As the record shows (and I will insist),
All animals, even tigers and sharks,
Eat or devour merely to subsist.
Animals were, and indeed, are very good,
And the only beast that ever really was
Is the beast in our midst from outside us
And who does not what he should.

Often it is the little ones
Who have greater understanding.
For while it is normally right
To be of ourselves demanding
And remain ensconced indoors
With keen study and fond books,
It is sometimes wisdom, even so,
Surcease of good habit to brook;
As when the animals call us,
As they sometimes do,
To come forth with them,
And to become like the Indian;
Who delights in and venerates
The blessings of the sun.
For hardly less
Than princely Akhenaten,
Do God's true creatures
Esteem the Dawn,
And no more pious train is there
Than the little animals who dutifully
Leave their hole, nest, or take to air;
Every morn to greet sunrise's span;
Just as did their ancestors,
Epochs before fire and Man.

And as the animals with the Dawn,
Life itself commences with Spring,
And we begin to see flowers appear;
Come out more and new birds
Whose elegant season excites;
Tickling bees and rumbling herds;
Or braces of green ducks
Alighting on the scene
To glide on waves of golden sheen.

Then God tells them
Follow the directions:
Built your nest with sticks;
Look in this crevice for food;
Flee at signs of danger;
The infinite is a place
Where there's always
Room to grow.

Yet why do I feel sadness
Come the day the baby birds
Left the singing of their nest?
Then a few days later,
Although I could not them see,
I heard chirping explorers
Flitting amidst a plum tree.
Some trees, fed
By warm or cool water,
Change their dress
With the annual quarter.
So how must then must
The birds wonder at their home?
To live in a tree's interior,
To fly from branch to branch,
To fly to very tree,
That is one life of being free.
And what if every bird
Did have a name?
But if we knew,
They do, they do...
And the tree
Who knows them,
Its boughs nodding,
Seems to nod assent
When the soft wind
Starts ascending.

Though as sometimes strained
And grim the city gets,
Beneath the raucous din
There is yet
A warm, humming memory
Of the very good known here;
Reminding one of the very good
That yet is or may be done.
Sauntering in in pairs and packs,
The crows still gather as friends,
And like noble savages
Bellow out in tribal unison.
They caw out and reply to
Sacred strophes of jocund song.
And when gray dusk lowers coolly
Then disperses that sable throng.
Day falters; boughs begin to dance
Bright blossoms of radiant white
Sense and thought entrance
In the dimming light.
Now all who's left is a single rook,
Solitary as the dulcet breeze,
Strutting quietly the verdant lawn,
Pensively like a gentleman.
Gradually droplets start to fall,
Tapping gently the leaves green.
The crow thus alights to leave,
And now comes eve.

Soft silver patter of the rain
Turns to a rushing downpour amain;
That spills from the clouds
In watery sheets and shrouds.
Then the lightening flash;
Then thunder distant,
But even so, a happy flood
That brings life to flower and bud.
And when at last the welkin clears,
The kind moon of May appears;
Covering with a halo the roses' scent;
Closing with peace one day's career.

To kiss the robin warbling,
Perched on the roof's peak
When day breaks,
I am too ponderous.
Nor less clarion or beloved
Of a summer's morn
Is the seagull's shout
Skyward borne;
Loud, prolonged, and gay;
Like a trumpet voluntary;
That sounds with merry joy
The royal approach of day.
But once on a morning
When it was dark and overcast,
I a lone seagull
Who too wanted to give thanks;
Who too wanted to laugh,
Yet because the time was not right,
Soon departed in humbled flight.
These regal birds of liberty,
After thousands of years;
Soaring over land and sea
For what should they live?
Of what do they dream?
The young gulls gathered
Ready to do what right deems;
The veteran, afraid just a little
At what his charges don't know,
Has yet plenty of love to lead them
Before on their own they go.
Perhaps what at last he teaches is --
"If each to other you your heart give,
Then ultimately life should let you live."

The yellow butterfly of August
Greets our noontime stroll,
Yet a squirrel scampers up a tree
And robins scurry off silently;
In wary dread
At the sound of our
Approaching tread.
Now if you look down
The shaded lane ahead,

You'll see bushes, trees,
And flower beds.
And if you listen closely,
Hid in them you can hear
Small birds singing cheerily.
Sunny beams meanwhile
Illumine the grass a vibrant green;
While up and down
The long path before us
Lie purple petals of drying lilac
Strewn in a dizzying stream.
No flower flourishes,
Or bud fervidly flowers;
Such as foxglove, fuchsia,
Snap dragon, delphinium,
Thimbleberry, hibiscus,
Marigolds and geranium,
But also feeds and nourishes
The air and the breeze.
And no bird cheeps in isolation,
Howsoever humble their station,
But chimes in harmony and as one
With the music of the Spheres;
And though such music
We cannot quite hear,
We at least feel its rhythm
In the changing of the season.

“Good” then must be love.
Yet what is love?
Love is the feeling
Such as a veined leaf knows.
Warmed by the sun;
Flowing with water,
Filled with life.
'Tis a spark given
That sets one's soul aglow;
Raising it up into
Beauty's heart unseen.
Yet where is love?
Love is everywhere
But where it isn't.
For munificently
He bestows His blessing;
Is such who so can bless;
Saying: “Have faith. Be of truth.
Seek and you shall find.”

Arriving home
In the soft twilight
And the thickening chill of eve,
Tiny bushtits come into sight;
In and out the bush they weave.
Twittering like a cricket,
As they flutter in the thicket.
Lord love and protect it.

Yet more near or close,
We dare not further go.
For there Nature kisses them
In such sanctuary and repose
Which only innocence may know.
Let us rest content then
In viewing them from far,
And perhaps one day we too
May live the calm that they are.

Yonder where the deer step,
An eagle skims o'er tall trees;
Of forest crests and wooded hills;
Ascending to a height
Only to fall and find
Rest in each other's laps;
In slumber deep like
A black mountain bear
Taking an Autumn's nap:
He sleeps where silence reigns;
Only to wake and rise again.
Yet while the pines and sequoia
Are still a coniferous green,
Oaks, elms, and others seen
Are shedding leaves
Themselves between;
Orange, brown, red, and gold,
Just as they did in times of old.

But though too at harvest we
Are now more inclined
On our own couches to recline;
With the year more near
To being run,
There is yet for many still
Much work to be done.
Even among the smallest now,
Dame Nature herself
Displays her busy fancies;
As in the webs
Of the golden spiders
In all their fine intricacy.
Erecting as much
For pride and for shew,
Arachne lays on
The finishing touch
To gossamer
Glistening with dew.
Even wasps and bees
Will collect a bush's buds
Gathering pollen that remains;
While the thrifty emmet
Refuses losing time
To bring home labor's gains.
While we can then,
While we may,

Be our own hearts
Grateful for the day.
And by getting something done,
Be as votaries who plant an offering.

Not unoften are there places
Deserted and forlorn
Not far from where we dwell.
And did we know them,
What pity might we feel
Where life lives but is unwell.
Once after a rude storm had passed,
When the sky looked dark,
Somber and downcast,
I spied a large, beautiful leaf
Left in the road to die.
And could it have spoke,
Might it too have asked "Why?"
There are many such like that
For whom years of hoping
Have brought no relief.
And yet strange to think
How easily might
Have been healed such grief...
But for mysterious chance,
But for odd circumstance.

Was he so blessed
To compensate deformity?
Or had he been deformed
Because he'd been too blessed?
Was it necessary that they die
Because they were so loved?
Or are they now so loved
Because their death
Made us cry?
Oh, for an end to discord
That destroys!
Oh, for an end to fear
That ever mars our joys!
For if not by fire
We are burnt to clay,
Then most surely ice
Will close our days.
Oh, for a humble rock to be!
That we might be unconscious
For all futurity.
To not hurt,
To not be hurt,
To always be at peace,
Will not God at last
Make sharp suffering cease?
Though they dupe our friends
Us to betray,
Life's true trespassers
Are sinister strangers

Sent from far away.
Yet though they us
Into prisoners make,
The chains of slavery
Will we ever break.
For all these trying cares
All along were really theirs.
And the sunshine
Of their false hope
Forever we forswear.

For many then
Troubles are rarely very far.
And even if we ourselves
Don't in woe and worry languish,
How cold and dead we are
To be deaf and blind
To others' tears and anguish.
Although some do regret
Winter's rains and chill,
It is an apt time of year
To value quiet and be still.
And sometimes
The calm snow brings
Is just what's needed
To get a proper sense of things.
For as farmers must
Every few years
Leave fallow tired fields
So that once again
They might fecundity yield;
So the respite
That Winters sends
Gives time to heal, forgive,
And make amends.
What richer tranquility
After all is there
Than a newly snow bound
December morn
In which to walk
And take the air?
Our very breath we can see,
And how lovely are the trees
Adorned with ivory drift
Of purest white;
Lit up by frost,
Moon, and starlight.

Yet for many animals,
As well as many people,
This time of brumal "rest"
Is often one when
When life is most
Hard pressed;
To sleep in cold burrows,
Or lie in damp retreats;

Or perhaps
For food to seek
When there's ever
So little to eat.
How must they weather
Arctic sent blasts
That on occasion
Through Winter pass?
Notwithstanding
Such harsh reasons,
Some animals lose
None of their pluck
In this inclement season.
How amusing
One winter's day
Was the sight
Of two brave sparrows
Formation flying
Within a pigeons' flight!
Even our own furry friends
Some cold weather
Daring show;
As when Fido bounds
In deep downy drifts,
Or when come morn
We find Tabby's paw marks
Trailing in the snow.

Such is but a sketch brief
Of (some of) the mass of life,
In all its myriad forms,
With which the Earth is rife.
And while in and for
All Matter's solidity,
'Tis at last one Spirit
That governs Life's
Promise and floridity;
By Him all spirits
Are overridden,
All must do as
By Him is bidden.
And despite how tangible
The physical seems,
Spirit is the end,
Not the means.
For when and how much
Is there justice enough?
 How far does it extend?
 Of justice,
There is never enough
To satisfy all demand,
But that He permits.
 And though howsoever
Unjust, absurd, or tragic,
A given day of life appears,
Yet it never hurts

To bring comfort or dry tears;
To stand up
And vie for what's right;
Even though surrounded
And engulfed by Night.
And when things
Get too complicate and confusing,
Look to what it is you are;
Choose happiness in the good.
Keep it simple.
Do your duty.
Respect in your heart
What's right.
Be a good son, father, brother;
Or daughter, sister, mother;
And from the murk
Of irrational thought
See back to the Light.

INSURANCE

People tend
to disappoint:
either they didn't
do much of anything;
or if they did,
we blame them for
not doing as well
as they did before.

Meantime, those
we did not *even*
want to meet in life
are killing us.
So we study facts
and wage war
to vanquish
the custodians
of present wealth
and future salvation.

But how does
one vanquish
the dead?

I wouldn't
be cynical.
It's just
I don't want
any trouble.
That's all.
Oh, how wicked a heart
must that be
that doesn't pity

the child
born to all this,
or the good people
who loved and raised us
to do right.

Come the day,
we can't bury
ourselves.
So hopefully
someone will
do it for us.
And mayhap
things then
will make
more sense.

LAMENT

A wind weeps
O'er an ancient sea
At the darkening
Close of day.
A past that's lost
Cries out woe;
Chilled in the breeze
That echoes thoughts
Melancholy.

Come then night
That summons peace;
Bring forgetfulness,
Release!
That all may be silent
Once more!
Come oh sea,
To take life away;
Away from
This hapless shore.

As with speed
Sparrows take flight,
Take flight oh soul to air!
Come oh end to sorrow;
When life's no longer here.

DAFFODILS

What painting or sight
Can match the light
Of daffodils glowing bright;
Breathing fresh as babes,
Steeped in waters of the rain?

How sad it is
They briefly appear
Only so soon to go;
So little time
Of life to know.
Their yellow heads
Like golden bells
Seem to joyously ring
Just long enough
To announce it's Spring.

After them flows forth
A flowery tide,
When white blossoms
Peek from out from trees.
But, oh, poor daffodils,
What you signal
You can't remain to see!

Yet come the time
Spring itself is gone,
I'll remember then
Days when you were young.

HOME

The world is only so fallen as we permit.
And if the world is fallen,
It is because we let it.
And instead of climbing up out of the hole,
We confuse our deluded part for the whole.
You can't say there is no point,
Because if you do, then
What is the point of your saying so?
But evidently your kingdom is not of this world.
You who reject God, the One
As either the beginning or the end,
And instead explain our motivations
By how psychologically wends.
However, pray, did a utopian like you
Ever end up in this world you rue?

After what happened all was quiet,
And no one was left in the silence.
At one time it was home,
And they left abandoning it,
And won't come back again.
And yet now the house alone
Was never itself to blame.
It had for happiness been framed.
Would that God will love it;
Now that they are given up and gone.

It sank into the night's sleep.
Yet the winds wildly whirred,

Whisperings secret thoughts
Which only the trees heard;
Thrashing roofs, walls rattle and shake,
Battering, rattling at the door;
Leaving the leaves to shudder in its wake.
How quiet for a moment it all is
Until the wind returns again.
In its revels like spirits who cannot
Bring good yet who will chide our wrong,
Vagrant demons lurking
Where they should not be.

There the poor thing was left;
Alone, abandoned, still such a child.
She did know what happened.
Someone was supposed to've loved her.
Instead she was thrown away;
And for me to find her mad.
So I tried.
But she died.
In error, in error,
Going down, down, down.
And thus many are forgot,
Known only to the Lord.

Was life, thanks to evil,
Ever worth living?
Maybe not.
Even so, you are in no position to judge.
Yes, perhaps you are right in your despair.
Yet because life is in motion,
How can you rightly know say?
Can you know Time the way God knows it?
While today lies fallow,
Tomorrow's another field,
In which to grow and live.
Fire warms, earth holds,
Water carries, air lifts.
Love seeps in.
Not the way you want or need it now,
But it seeks to reach you all the same.
Looking out from the place everlasting,
And to know those who've died are safe;
Where no strife can touch them more.

Life as they say is a journey.
You can say this, you can say that.
But whatever you say,
You still have to go it.
We do what we can;
We can't hold ourselves to more
Or fuss about what can't be helped.
And yet there is hope in honest truth;
Which devils cannot darken or liars dampen.
Be then in it calm and still as the moon
And proceed majestically like the stars.

When Abram left the Chaldees,
Moving past the desert sea,
What was he fleeing?
Could he have foreseen
His effect on what was to be?
All he knew
Was that he was striking out
To something new.

A new place to live
Where he could be true
By all means.
The ideal is all that's real. All the rest,
Including even Nature, are its flimsy shade;
Ever manipulated by others or ourselves.
Flesh dies, but the Spirit will go on.
You are not the Light. But be as a mirror,
And reflect it to others, and this retain:
Somewhere someone joys in the peace you crave;
Be patient then your soul to save.

TRANSIT

Birds sing almost
as soon as they're born:
each with a song all its own.
Oh, how like the trees;
the tall brush growing
wild on a hillock,
up, up, up in joyous praise!

And can I myself do better
than a soft sun
and a breeze pliant and sweet
sailing me, under the stars,
across a beckoning sea?

For animals, the time is the morning;
busy; singing; flitting; playing;
They look as if they were
made for paradise.
And yet some come to be
as poor as many people --
living off scraps.

Meanwhile, a fool can waste millions,
and destroy life and the landscape;
simply because he is a man.

I would have thought
the mountains' height
of distant gray and white,
and oceans of fond pines;
suffused with winds

and brimming waters
would have been enough.
But to one's utter
surprise and dismay,
we now are chained
from going there.

Though founding parents
left us a land
where free men might in dignity stand,
along comes a generation
that makes a pact with Satan
and free we are -- no more.

Mind control is easiest with the dumbest.
And when visions of the spectacular city
are placed before their eyes,
They will abandon justice
And hand over the innocent to wrath.

The wealthy, haunted apartment tower,
who I wonder would live there?
Built by a prosperous warlock,
a solitary dwelling of ghosts,
overlooking the bay,
rising up:
a mausoleum reaching to the sky.

And even I,
when I'd grown older
forgot the animals
thinking myself more wise,
but in truth darkened
by time's wiles.
For in self potentially lives
the interminable pit of despair.

We were to build
that house in the woods,
but did not.
The old songs we loved
have flown off to their new abode,
somewhere afar off.
Life, one day exalted
in the raiment of the sun,
later lies in a darkened room,
dieing, undone.

What was it that was left behind in time?
The countless lives, the countless stories;
tragedies, boredoms, and glories;
times of mirth;
times of despair;
moments of truth;
life weary of life and its care;
multitudes come and gone.

Where did it all go?
What did it all mean?
How much time was needed,
after all,
to pray for peace?

Lonely wilderness,
where fate descends,
the trees and branches toss wildly;
filling us with fear.

Soul is what you *are*;
your body but its vessel.
Would that now I could
at least live in the soul
and feed off the bread of life;
like he whose soul
has gone deeper than yours.
With cold hearts one can do nothing.

Life is but a day's journey to this world.
For mortals, each day
seen through the corridors of time
is but a flitting shadow.
You may have it,
but if so
you are bound to lose it.
But lasting is the consolation
that you tried to help;
you paid your dues
and for that reason
perhaps now in good conscience
you can at last find rest,
and go to sleep forever.

For even vegetation sleeping grows.
The seemingly quiet ivy and vine,
for example,
cling to the fence
dance in the night wind
and still yet feel
the rain upon their face.

NEIL ARMSTRONG

After Neil Armstrong died,
The wide sky of night
Shimmered like glimmering glass
With silver clouds illumined;
As I walked outside
To see the moon
Bright and beaming;
That orb he tread upon.

His fire's extinguished.
He's now gone.
The moon, however,
Recollects him sweetly
And goes on.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

Bigger than the police,
bigger than the government:
"Heaven" and the Devil.

"Torture – yes.
Mind my own business -- No
(I won't do it.)"

Raised by sin to be a god among men,
"the infernal," he says,
"is just as good as the eternal."
Progress can bring us greater prosperity,
but his devilment destroys all gains.

"But I am someone vexed in love,
and for this reason
life must be enslaved."

His peasants once bemoaned
the fear of being poor,
but after becoming rich insist
there is never enough of more.

I noticed
that if the person is not of the truth
not only can they not love
but they can't *really* do anything
except bother people.

When we read *The Iliad*
how little we're moved by the gods therein.
So that I think
if existence could sin
it's crime would be criminal spirit men,
the life force of tyrants, barbarians;
the divine booger men.

No victor always wins,
and therefore must sometimes lose,
yet even in losing fight on;
for putting up with them
is not worth it.

We promise we won't laugh -- tell us now who you are.

Disembodied voice: "I am someone who gets to be interesting too."

Say again?

"I'm Batman."

Oh, *so you're Batman.*

Sprite: We don't know who he is either (and *we* work for him.)

PRAYER

As often as the moon's full,
As often does our love shine;
Waxing and waning
The rest of the time.

When they threw dice for his robe,
Of He who's Love's sun,
What were they gambling for?
What wasn't theirs.
They didn't care his loss;
They didn't know his sacrifice.

Yet did not He crucified
Know where love was
When he died?
And yet without
Love everlasting,
What, in the end,
Is worth anything?

So precious you cannot contain it,
But would give it away if you could:
Truthful, devoted, enduring, reliable:
The pearl dearer than all else combined.

It covers a multitude of sins;
Lifts the quality
Of every person and thing;
It is the final standard
By which all wealth is measured.

In a seizure, paroxysm, or fit,
Think of justice, peace and harmony
-- that's it.

For these are God too.
In a future time you will wish...
Sanctification through death.
Decide then what matters in the tower,
Not the cellar of your mind.

Picking what's good,
Leaving out the bad,
Raising the good up
To cure the sad.

Command me, Lord and Heart
What it is I must do;
Life is hard, confusing.
Let me see the church
As a child I once did;
Trusting in, by, and for what's true
Despite what's evil and absurd;
Let me seek and find shelter
In the Spirit and your Word.

A VISIT

Matter has no unity
Except in gravity.
Life however has a soul;
Its own swiftness and celerity.

Behind her something glows
From whence she hails;
That makes her radiate here.
Yet though through
A vast sea of stars
She sails, she goes,
This world is just a passing show.
Of her, few really know.

Water and blood,
In a rushing flood,
Flow forth from creation
To end in me.
On water! On blood!
Death pays our debt
And once again we're free;

To return home
To eternity.

HOPE AND CAUTION: A Poem for the New Year

*“O man, whoever thou art, for come I know you shall,
I am Cyrus, who once held an empire in thrall.
Grudge me not, therefore, this little earth
That covers this corse; once of great worth.”*

~ Inscription, paraphrased, found by Alexander
in the tomb of Cyrus the Great.

Beneath the strata of sorrow
Lie streams of joy in moving rest.
But to reach them needs a power
Known only to the wise and blessed;
Streams pouring in quietest peace
Far from despair that does not cease.

Yet to sound to what is most deep,
One must strive towards the most high;
In bleakest shades to seek the light
That beams from Beauty’s concealed sky.
And with faith, hope and charity,
Allot Justice with parity.

To effect *this* we listen within;
To hear the counsels of our heart.
Guided by Reason veracious,
Conscience informs us where to start;
To do right by others as we
Would have them do to us is key.

Do not do unto others that
What you would not have done to you.
Is this so hard to understand?
This too difficult to construe?
All morals we can comprehend
When we’ve made this maxim our end.

Though blind, we have capacity
To see good by the rays of truth;
Eschewing deceptions dark
And insisting on honest proof.
The flame of love shows us this way:
That from night we’ll be led to day.

But alongside beckoning love,
Reason, conscience must e’er abide;
Watching our steps as we proceed
Lest we falter, slip, and slide.
For dear as are all affections,
They need logical correction.

Moving a head to the future,
Life is a light on a wire,
Sparkling forth on its way.

And we must join with that fire;
Else into the dark void we fall;
A mere speck lost in the great all.

But for more than bare surviving
We need to keep ourselves going.
For despite boredom and mourning,
Towards beauty we are flowing;
There, for those who love and pity,
Awaits the end, felicity.

How the would-be great strive for strength;
For supreme might; beyond compare.
Yet will they the poorest protect?
No, the impoverished can't be spared.
Too weak animals to defend,
Yet sway of empire they'd extend.

How strong and puissant is he
Who, when it comes to innocence,
Their safety cannot guarantee?
He's but a slave of evil;
Miserable in doing good;
Impotent to do what he should.

What good is human dignity
That can't insure freedom from fear
For the animals on God's earth?
Someone is needed to lead Life here.
And truly to be human means
To save children from cruelty's fiends.

Secrets there are that would some shame.
Oh, that people knew the sad truth;
Of what hypocrites believe;
Who have money but little ruth.
They trust sly Satan as divine,
And can't tell God from Frankenstein.

Yes, to Heaven they'll look in awe
A sky filled with angels seeming
But one built on incessant tears
Of babes not spared their false dreaming.
Such is the crime ever hidden.
Would that of it we could be ridden!

True, we need Contrariety
In order to have harmony.
We need a Counterpoint for Good.
Yet must this foil Evil be?
Who needs wars when there might be games?
Why should numbered deaths measure fame?

Fair competition and merit
Go hand in hand to prove what's best.
Who brings more good the more earns it;
Who works hardest deserves most rest.
Yet blood and hate what need for these;
That bring not true wealth nor true ease?

No honor's there in sport not fair;
Nor real fame for fraud and liar.
No success for a tyrant's slave;
The Devil reaps the most of his hire.
Free are they who in honor vie;
Not the cheat, nor the cowardly.

Of that which philosopher's tell,
What for the struggle in this life;
In what's the famed dialectic?
That lies and truth are e'er at strife.
Such are grounds of all contention;
At least such as one might mention.

What kills happiness is falsehood,
And in verity does Life live.
Yet con-artists get the most gain;
Rather than they who work and give.
Ban then the secrets and lying;
For from these comes all the dying.

Underlying monsters of old
Are facts of truth by us unknown.
'Tis in night philosophical
That the darkest of fears are shown.
For weeping woes and dire terror
Thrive best in rational error.

Morals are not learned from angels;
Nor ghosts as we sometimes hear it.
Character is by parents taught;
Martyrs and the Holy Spirit.
E'en animals are more well behaved
Than spirits from the sky or grave.

A spot bleak, muffled in darkness
Lay shrouded in oblivion;
Till one day it came back to life
In the warmth of the vibrant sun.
So too does Christ their lives renew
Who love Heart, Logic, and what's True.

After Time's tolls and exactions
And the suffocations of hell,
We are raised not by abstractions,
Theology, or magic spells,

But by Faith and Duty alive
To Christ; who will our breath revive.

Were we in Heaven that is real;
Were we in God's eternity,
There as often as the wind blew
There would always our music be;
With rests and stops to set the mood;
To joy forever in the Good.

NO GOD, NO SOUL

No God, no soul;
no soul then no God.

If no God, no soul,
then all love is vain.

All that's left a thrill:
one day gone;
never to come again --

unless as something vain.

Only unrepentant liars
insist on this,
suffocating
slaves of hell.

But for those
who breathe Honesty
and Reason's air,
God, soul, and love

are well.

YOUR VESSEL

Concealed deep within
is a taper unseen
that underlies all
intensity of emotion;
as if to douse that flame
were to snuff all feeling:
that for which
unthinkingly we yearn;
that which we pursue:
The soul's epiphany,
a spark trembling
interred inside;
like Pythagoras' fire
at the universal core,
but instead

sounding invisibly
the depths of being;
filling you throughout;
a frightening tremor;
knocking you senseless;
disorienting with fear,
yet lifting ethereally,
an exhilarating ecstasy
and uttermost peace
all the same,
but which you forget;
while spending the rest
of your days seeking:
calling it love,
calling it rapture,
call it what you will;
though it have no name.

It's gone, it's lost,
and yet go on you must.
Truth, love, happiness,
pure, distilled, refined,
Where again will I find thee?

Here are riches that have
little with money to do;
that elevate so high the spirit
they go unseen; unfelt by masses
and yet who as individuals
once knew the radiance and hope
of a child's expectations.

“Non vitae, sed scholae discimus.”

Learning and wisdom
are riches we toss away
once we have left school;
growing up vexation to pursue;
in search of wealth,
honors, respectability
and ending up
the enemy of poetry.
Innocence is cute;
to know them is to feel them,
and if one cannot feel that way
one cannot know them:
echoes of the past;
of wished for calm;
a calm once known.
In the cool green shade
with love alone it sits;
in the memory of martyrs
and the darkening pall
of a weeping shadow
that remains indelible

on the dim landscape
of centuries.

Warmed by sun,
the golden moon
sails forth
into frigid night;
over trees
that have been old now
for hundreds
and hundreds of years;
while a spirit pours
through your soul
like clear, clean waters.

Why then did you leave it?
Uncherished, unadored;
hankering to be a giant
that to eternity looks
like a ridiculous dwarf?
For the vision of beauty
that the soul can hold
is worth immeasurably more
than all the lust and glory
the whole world can ever know.

AN ODE TO MUSIC

In the dark hours
Of an early *May* morn,
When the breeze of *Spring*
Is dulcet and fair,
Love makes even
Stars more bright
And gives roses
A sweeter air.

Then, come promised *Day*,
The trees and leaves
Seem more vibrant green
And life itself
Is more lovely and new
Than ever before it's been.

And yet this will last
But for a moment;
For *Nature*, though joyous,
Is but an ephemeral,
Fleeting thing;
Since evil usurped it
Long ages ago,
And made *Earth's*
Loved hope take wing.

So is this world
Then the end of all
Beauty, Love, and Truth?
You know friend it is not,
Since *Bethlehem's* holy birth.

And yet the promised *Heaven*,
Where is it now;
Who of us can say?
Except such who
Bear their cross,
And in constant
Faith do pray.
Only these and the *Innocent*
Are more blessed than they
Who yet can treasure within
Sweet *Music's* celestial din.

TO A SUPER HERO

His armor gleams a golden green;
His masked brow is dark as night.
None is more quick, swift and fleet,
And he scarcely fears to die.
Few there are him can defeat,
Yet still and alas -- a fly!

The universe is very big!
How far, how close we are seen
Oft seems to decide our fate;
When others judge what we are.
And yet all alike are great;
Whether insect or a star.

You don't believe me, this I know.
You sore suffer from neglect.
You're too ignored, unwanted.
But you ought not feel so gray:
For who's more ta'en for granted
Than Sun or Moon on any day?

NEC IN MEMORIAM

Unknown to most of the world,
prior to many a dawn,
much of the army wakes
to the smell of wet green;
of morning fresh dew
or of rain left behind
in the onrush of the night;
to run, to drill, to follow duty.

Left behind in Fort Knox's halls,
an old, dusting photo,
black and white and framed,
hangs prominently on a wall
of the first, it is said,
killed in 1965.

Left behind in years of hurry,
He died before
so much storming for causes
then and later.
His smiling picture
since has hung,
silently fading,
days and nights;
honored, yet unknown.

It's all past history;
that now and for most
seems rather,
seems rather meaningless;
but for him his life.
And yet his life
...His life?
A life for what?

Perhaps someone wept for him.
If so, for how long?
In any case, he floats down
to us draped in shadows,
simply another abandoned in time.
Perhaps some passing soul
remembers, perhaps not...
in pursuit of today,
in setting out at morn.

THE FUTURE HOME

The moan of a once sad hour
subsides in the wind
of another departing day.
How like an ocean surge
now that faint breeze sounds;
like rushing waves, swirling tides;

gusts of surf once more ride the air!
Roaring, yet trembling,
some long buried grief,
some long lost yearning,
resound now -- as if from afar;
as if from a hidden abyss
of forgotten yesterdays.

It's as if fervent love
had died, and its ghost arose
volant on sunset zephyrs:
a descended life yet still living
in the pity of the present.
The sadness of life, you know,
I have felt; even if
it was not mine alone:
hopes disappointed;
dreams gone to ruin.
Is sorrow, I wonder,
yet felt in the grave?

Oh lonely wind,
Who will soothe
your sighing groans?
Where will you find home?
There's no place like home.
And yet if that home is
swallowed by the sea
and all are drowned,
where then is home gone?

Sometimes we think that since
the world's died so many times,
it will no doubt will die tomorrow.
Indeed, perhaps it is not
even here anymore to die:
too hot or too cold,
too full of strife, too dirty.

It was still a beautiful land,
even in time of war:
red and purple evenings
over swamps of insects and snakes,
a plateau of reeds with
tall waving grass leading
to a lethal jungle.
Quiet beaches became war zones;
and whirlwinds carried fire from the sea.
the distant rumble of jet streams
rolled out the thunder of destruction:
metal clanking, bursts of flame,
the screams of men and children
heroism and brutality beyond
human control or reckoning.
What, in the end, was it all but
the nightmare of individual

and collective sin materialized?
The many native martyrs;
The soldier, from home or abroad,
though you may have died
for no seeming reason,
you did so beautifully
whether you wished to or not.

Yet certainly
it was no place
for Andy Williams,
happy television,
or innocent visions
of love and home.

And the present
that once was tumult
has now become
the past in peace.
Our hope, our wishes
our spirits stay,
though the spinning world
continues to runaway.
Before long, all will gone.
All the more reason
to cherish it before it is.

There is plenty for all
of us (and animals too),
to be happy and free,
Why then are we not already?
Because there are hearts and minds
still prisoners of darkness.
And not mere death, but
murder grips the globe;
For the devil hates with rage
peace and beauty he cannot own.
Liars, the cowards, the misers,
hypocrites sell us out to him,
and thus we suffer the plague of Hell.

What will it take to make us all whole?
This, they will say, is the problem,
that is the problem. But get rid of
him and that rids us
of nine tenths of them all;
whose cause is self-pity,
whose cause is false pride,
who never ceased invisibly
in our midst to abide.
Will you ever go on forever
suffering his whip and his chains,
His famines, his pestilence,
and anarchy insane?
Or will you at last fight
join together, fight,

and with him be done;
so that at last we can
have a true happy family
and a true happy home?

The soldier perished in battle;
the martyr died for the faith;
the innocent was eaten alive,
and nigh infinite others to name.
But for you and I
it is different;
and those who wallow
in self should survive.

He who seeks the true
vision of beauty
seeks it by way of the truth:
for no truth, no true beauty
and if no beauty,
then no truth is worth seeking.

Is pain everything?
"No, but all pain me is."
Are you everything?
"By no means."
And yet God, by faith,
is more than everything;
who pours the balm of love
into sunken crevices of pain;
till our suffering and toils
will one day in the end
be made whole again.

A SONNET

If banned had been the world
When hearts were ever moved,
Then despair had never been
In a world not made for love.
Yet even if this world is vain,
Is love vain and useless too?
Not if it o'er leaps the world
And beats for good and true.
For even if the world thrives.
Hearts still yet can give.
Even tho' you succumb and die,
Yet beauty still will live.
Your beauty then e'er maintain;
That dying love may live again.

GRAVITAS

*"...not hospitality heaped for Polymedes
but empty earth on the parched Dryopian fields."*

Despite all the good,
despite all the bad,
neither stops the days;
time proceeds
without them.

And we joy and grumble
along the way.

As much a tragedy,
as much a celebration,
life is a journey
we must go on.
It isn't worth living.
It is worth living.
Yet whether or no
you must go on

and go on.

Mind chained in darkness,
body bound by time,
how much anyone
is embarrassed by the past;
how much anyone
has some shame.

If you died, then lived again,
how now would you live?
War less and learn more;
for if you learn,
onward and upward you go
if not, then further down.

If God's kingdom
is not of this world,
what is beauty here?
What is beauty
in a world that rejects truth?

*"Whoever hates me
also hates my Father."*

If you knew better
(and perhaps you do),
Beauty doesn't need the world.

Comets, and stars are above
they are right outside my door
but they are also in my heart,
they are also in my mind --

In a safe haven
away from the sea,
on a still shore

of a soul yearning,
but not fully filled
with wisdom.

We all judge,
but Who finally judges?

Who placed the earth?
Chance?
Or if not, did He chose
the exact location,
the exact coordinates,
of each view of the heavens
as seen from every land?

Wherever it is rare,
take me there,
take me there.

Where diamonds are framed
on translucent air,
tell me where,
tell me where?

Where one place
is everywhere,
where all are freed
from heavy care,

teach me there.

ILION

Many years since have sped,
And still the siege goes on:
Some fights won, some fights lost;
E'en so, we've yet to be undone.

But how long can it last?
How much more strain endure?
Age takes its silent toll,
And we no longer are as pure.

Even old friends we blame;
See fault where once we praised;
Wishing ill whom we loved;
Fretting with fear of future days.

Doubt starts to cloud the mind.
Whatever was the prize?
Youths now are not so hale.
New waters of illusion rise.

Would shame were burnt away;
All cankers of assumption.
Would we were wise as grey;
Not weighted with past presumption.

"They've left! they're gone!," it's cried.
It seems we've won the war --
While from a turret's seen
A wooden steed left at the door.

Can such gift be trusted?
Yes, most seem to agree:
There is no foe in sight;
The enemy's put to sea.

Some doubt, but they're ignored.
Who can reject relief?
Who succor can despise?
No more then of this woe and grief!

And tho' the citadel
Still yet fall,
Go let them tell it
Wide the world.
The body's but a shell.
Only if, please Heaven,
Our souls survive,
That no man need tell.

ON FAITH

Safe, secure. But for how long?
Our life is ever moving;
Not least than when unseen.
And with so much unknown,
What mind can justify
Its scorning pride alone?

A life all too brief. And so,
In retrospect, what of it?
Is any dark so pitch
There is no longer light
Enough to illumine
And draw it from the night?

The pageantry of ages
Of queens, kings, knights, and sages,
Where now is all that gone?
Where now are all their homes?
Under cypress shadows,
Beneath majestic domes?

All doomed to die. Yet surely,
Somewhere, there is a spirit,
A power, to honor
Beauty all times and years.
And if less than heaven's,
Enough for heaven's tears.

Well said prayers bring forth and down
Treasures glowing like rare jewels;
While memories of deeds
Of daring and virtue
Will ever taste as fresh
As welkin falling dew.

Patience is a holy gem
That vanquishes every sin.
And the end of sin brings
Liberty, trust, and peace.
Oh, that we'd sin no more
That joys would never cease!

What reason to despair of
The might of justice and of right?
Joined e'er in faith and love,
Will we not at last be free;
When we see others
Not as they seem,
But what they can,
Indeed, will one day be?

DID YOU REMEMBER?

With frost at my feet
and silver stars in the sky,
even the bleakest cold
can bring a joyous
quiet and calm.

You don't believe it,
but we are often forgetting
of so much good that abounds,
including feelings of the past;
forgetting what once was;
as if it never were.

Take for instance,
that at some time
all birds play,
all birds love
or would if they could.

Or when in rapture
of a radiant world
our eyes at night are touched
by infinite lights
of planets and stars
journeying through vastness.
Think how many countless of them
can touch us through our eyes!

And when all will have died,
and all those stars come
crashing down;
both victims of injustice;
the guilty, the indifferent,
what all will remain?

Who can guess tomorrow,
or of change not dreamt?
This life is not nearly long enough
to learn all we need to know;
except this,
that all this
great word and vast expanse
must lie under and obedient
to the loftiest soul.

For what but the soul
knows beauty?
When the body breaks down,
as it inevitably will,
what's left but the soul?

And to the wise,
and in the pure light of truth,
there is no picture;

only an overwhelming peace
that survives
both life and death.

Christ the martyr.
Our peace built upon a cross,
And someone willingly suffering it.
If not Christ, someone,
some innocent will,
you know.

So that
though you were away,
though you were away,
I kept your memory safe
by trying to do good,
whenever, that is, I could.

IS NO THING SACRED?

*O God I that such a world as this,
So beautiful and brave,
Should be of all our fondest loves
And dearest hopes the grave:
That in one bitter hour a blight
Should change its glorious hue,
And wither beauties, which no showers
Nor spring-time can renew!*
~ from "Welaway" by George Hunt Clark (1809-1881)

*If anyone supposes he knows anything,
he does not yet know as he ought to know.*
~ 1 Corinth. 8:2

~*~

Oft have drifting dreamers,
whether wandering the night or day,
looked wondering to the moon;
As if from off on high
some secret would be told.

Yet when that moon surveyed them,
what from above could it see,
but travelers to oblivion;
tapers so ephemeral
that, even to ghosts,
they seemed hardly shadows.

Life as we know it
appears indeed
but a vapor or a flame.
And yet why does it
move and goad us so?

Could it be love?
And yet if love gives hope,
Why does existence burn?

Colors once full and bright
are now faded, dull to the sight.
Those houses, those trees,
those forests those mountains,
that sky that a mist wafts over --
all of these could disappear.

Could? One day will.

Treasures once longed for
pawned in an hour's poverty;
A tomb effaced by time,
its occupant unknown;
All is as fleeting as a wave
That lifts a weathered vessel
battered by storms' blast,
striving to survive.

Knowing joy we fear to die.
Knowing evil we fear to live.
The earth,
with her raiment of clouds,
lets in the sun
where and when she will.
On fortune who can depend?

If things were but a certain way,
we would be all right.
But because they are not,
we stumble into agony
and breath scalds the living.

Youth taught how exquisite life was,
and right and wise reason
how life should be
surrounded by happiness,
beauty and peace;
here to sing songs
that would never die.

But then spite filled demons
(call you them gods?)
with bribes, threats and tricks
commanded us honest truth forsake;
to wage war for gain;
that life might be buried
under ugliness, pain, and woe.

There are times we think badly
of what was once thought so wonderful;

because it could not withstand time or evil.
But it wasn't that the thing or the someone
that wasn't good or more good no more,
rather we could not face time and evil.

Yes, he carries heaven with him,
she carries heaven within her
but in this world,
heaven by vote is banished,
and only faith will raise a heaven's wings.

Mark, faith keeps better
the more constant you are
in doing good, in charity,
patience, courage:
it was these that give love power
and what cool the aching burn.

What then surpasses passing life?
Justice, Truth, Love everlasting:
For no work of art or creation
can ever exceed
the beauty it reflects.

When you can see your goal
on the distant horizon,
life can start anew.
When you know there is a light
that can illumine all darkness,
then glory again can be.

Now how could God save
so many people?
Bother saving animals?
Repair what is so pitifully wrecked?
Change time as if it had never been?
How, I say, could God do these things?

Such we can scarcely guess.
Yet the greatest thing
anyone ever saw
was someone lay down his life
for friends, nay, even
those not friends.
And that some that was seen,
that someone was very God.

EASTER 2016

The time was sublime
-- whether or not you were there.
Or most very sad
-- whether or not you where there.
A past mourned because it is gone,

Or mourned because it is here.
What then is the past? Here or gone?

It seems all we ever gain
Must be given back to time,
But we have this consolation --
Time too gets all our pain.

Why is it some things
Are so perfect?
Why are some things not?
Why in the world
Are the two joined
Ourselves to vex?

We cannot always escape
Disappointments and woes.
Yet these can be made less
By choosing rightly.
We have it in us to be happy,
But they will not let us be so.
Let us go forward notwithstanding,
Knowing what we know --
What is dead of the living dies,
But that which lived truly
Will ever truly live.

At least, good heart, believe it so.

Way up high,
Above the tree tops,
Over the clouds,
Beyond the sky,
In a dream land that never dies
There is (or seems) a higher good.

But how do we know *this*?

Who can know what others feel;
Whose lives we do not live;
When death comes unexpected
And tears are a surprise?

Now our own time, in any event,
Is less than it was before.
See to the body, yes.
Yet to heart, mind and soul first.
Whatever it is do it right;
And ever live today
As if it were your last.

We hear the moaning of the sea,
Whispers of regrets
For what might have been:
Wings fluttering,
The crackling of steps,

Wandering through space
Past the firmament,
Spanning the breadth of existence.
Time pours endlessly into tomorrow;
While from the cliff tops we gaze forth,
Pondering sorrow and fate;
Yearning for the power and strength
That will release love eternal
And free us from
The terror of this world.

“In my little soul-boat,
I will take to sea;
Trusting to angels,
While I slumber
Upon the broad expanse of the ocean;
Flung about by winds and waves,
Free of man,
One with the spirit of God
Which encompasses
All wild immensity.

“Bird of peace, the Holy Ghost,
Blesses us with calm serene and joy eternal.
Holy books of wisdom, of ages,
Rest upon the altar of the earth.
Cherubim swell on high in far echoing
Voices, hurling through the stars;
One endless ethereal throng:
Seraphs with wings of sparkling gold,
Rich green or bright red;
A sky bright of hue,
A deep clear blue;
Rays of light
Shooting across the clouds
Transmitting the glory of the Maker.

“Sweet Holy Maid that prays at our death,
Oh, radiant is thy purity,
Pure and precious is thy glow,
In ecstasy on high,
Yet weeping for our sins --
Mysterious unknown, faraway.
But the poor saint, naïve wakes up
Gathers some bread and feeds the poor:
All for the Mercy,
All for the One,
All for the Love
That watches
And conquers all.”

TRANSLATIONS

“Pervigilium Veneris” [The Night Vigil of Venus]

From Latin by an anonymous author of probably the 2nd or 3rd century A.D.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved and each who loved let him love tomorrow.
Spring new, spring now melodious, spring is the birth of the world.
Loves unites in spring, birds marry in spring;
Tomorrow love couples among the shades of the wood;
Interweaves lively in a cottage under myrtle branches
Tomorrow Dione speaks the law sustained by her throne sublime.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Then life from above foams the sea into a mass;
Dark blue amidst the crowds, amidst the two legged and horses
Dione makes waves about the husband of Imbros.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Herself flourishing purple she paints the year's flowers
From her breasts arise the West Wind's breath;
She presses warmth on muscles, herself moisture's splendor,
In the breeze of the Night whom she leaves, she scatters wetting waters.
Look the tears sparkle quivering from their falling weight;
In drops headlong the small orbs delay their downfall.

Look! modesty and beauty bring forth majesty
That fluid which wets the serene stars of night.
In the Morning the damp robe falls loose on maiden breasts.
Herself commands in the morning where the virgin dew weds roses:
Refrains Cythera from warmth; subside kisses of love;
Subside jewels, subside gusts, subside the throne of purple.
Tomorrow the blush, which dress conceals the hidden fire,
Of the special marriage, unashamed, forbids not release.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

The goddess rich bade the nymphs go to the myrtle trees:
With the boy [Cupid] as companion of the girls: it could not however have been trusted
For Love to be idle if arrows struck.
And so, nymphs; he placed aside his arms, Love is at rest.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

He is commanded to go defenseless, to go naked he is commanded
Not with bow, not arrow, nor with fire to harm.
But, even so, nymphs beware, because Cupid is beautiful:
In arms all the same, when Love is bare.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Venus arranged that modesty be sent to you virgins.
The thing that together we ask: yield, Virgin Delia

That the grove will be bloodless from the havoc of animals.
Herself she wanted to ask you, if chastity has turned aside,
Herself she wanted you to come, if virginity is fitting.
Now you see tribes of dancers in revelry at night,
Gathering in company to go through your dances,
Flowers among the garlands, myrtle leaves among the cottages.
Neither Ceres, nor Bacchus are away, nor the god of the poets
Hold back, all the night is awake singing:
Dione reigns in the woods: Delia, you must recede.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

She decrees flowers from mount Hybla to stand at the judgment seat of the goddess;
To the guardians she declares the law, and they sit Thankful.
Hybla, showering all with flowers, whatever the year brought,
Hybla, the height of floral dress, as wide as Aetna's fields.
In this country girls are torn from the spring,
All within the grove, all in riches, all inhabit the mount.
All are enjoined to assist the boy and mother differently,
She directs girls to hide nothing and to trust in Love.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

And the young and flourishing are led from the flowers' shades.
Tomorrow she goes to Heaven whom first joined marriages,
Father of all who makes Spring the wedding time of year:
Into the nuptial vessel flows the husband's joining stream,
From whence the mingled breeding of all grows into a large body.
Herself the pulse and heart of penetrating spirit,
Hidden within steers the mother of men,
Through sky, through lands, under the seas,
On their steady course she sends procreation
Commanding the world to know the ways of birth.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

She herself carried over Troy's subjects to become Latins:
She gave the Laurentian girl [Lavinia] to her offspring [Aeneas],
From whence the Branch of the Romans afterwards arose;
Created the mother of Romulus and his brood Caesar;
And soon gave to Mars the chapel of the chaste virgin;
Herself forming the union between the heirs of Romulus and the Sabines.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Pleasure nurtures the country, in the country they know to Worship
Himself Love, the boy of Dione; the country bespeaks his birth.
Him, with the land born, she receives to her bosom:
Rearing him on the delicate blossoms of her kisses.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

Behold now under broom trees the lambs unfold,
Each careful to hold to the marriage agreement.
Beneath shades with their husbands, behold, flocks of sheep:

And to sing and not be quiet the goddess instructs the birds.
Now the talkative swans of raucous voice are obstreperous on the water:
The wife of Tereus [Procne] under the shadow of the poplars responds,
Such that you think love's emotion is being addressed by the voice of music,
And you doubt she complains of her sister [Philomela] concerning the [i.e. Procne's] barbaric
husband.

She sings, we are silent. When my Spring comes,
When will I become as the lyre, so as to abandon being silent?
I ruined my Muse through silence, nor has Phoebus [Apollo] regard for me.
Thus as Amyclas, when they were silent, silence perished.

Tomorrow let him love who never loved, and each who loved, let him love tomorrow.

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Brontes weary? Or have Palladian hands fashioned for us, Germanicus, such a kind that saw you holding in lofty check the Rhine and the astonished Dacians to their home?

Come now, be it marveled by Fame the name known before in the age of the Dardan horse, which brought down the sacred crown of Dindymon and the leaves of Ida's grove to falling. This not the walls of Pergamum rent asunder could have received, nor could it by a mixed throng of unmarried boys and girls, nor Aeneas himself, have been led in, nor great Hector. Add that that one was carrying dangerous and savage Achaians, this commemorates a tranquil mount: it pleases to see a face with mixed marks of having borne war and placid peace. You should not think anything more true: equal form and beauty, equal honor, the Bistonian steed that carries Mars of highest arms does not outdo it, it disdains great weight; nor seized with delay by coursing rivers nearby, it fumes with a breath that drives forth the great Strymonian billows.

Equal to the work is the place where it rests. Here the constricted entrance he [i.e., Julius Caesar] widens, who wearied with wars, by a gift of an adopted offspring [to the state, i.e., Octavian, later Augustus], first showed us our way to ethereal divinities. He learns also from your expression, how much you, more mild with arms and who not easily given in external furies to rage, instead give trust to Chattians and Dacians. To you bearing by the laws the seal of Caesar he goes, having driven aside the son in law [i.e., Pompey] and Cato [the younger.] But the outstretched sides here protect you with the houses of Julius, there the sublime court of martial Paullus, the father sees the back and Concord with her winning mien.

You yourself have moreover seen, your lofty head looking out on the pure air, the shining temples surrounding; whether new more beautiful palaces, disdaining flames, rise, or whether the torch of Trojan fire silently watches, or having surveyed them Vesta now praises her ministrants. The right hand forbids you fight, the Tritonian maid [i.e., Minerva] weighs down not the left extending Medusa's head severed at the neck: like a spur bestirring the horse: nothing anywhere is more sweet than the chosen seat of the goddess, not if Father you yourself held her. A breast, which might prevail to unravel the cares of the world, and for which Temese gave all to have exhausted its mines of riches; the cloak goes low down the back; the saber resting secure on the side, with how so great a sword Orion menaces the winter nights and affrights the stars. But the steed, resembling horsemen with a keener souls, raises up its face and threatens a charge; to which on shoulders, with rigid necks, stand manes full of life, great spurs spread widely that they will be relied on for the attack. In place of the vacant grassy earth, the bronze hoof touches the hair of the Rhenish captive. Arion [the horse] of Adrastus would have feared and grown pale seeing him, and as well Cyllarus of Ledaeus from the temple close by. This one will never change the reins of its perpetual lord, nor, with its bridles, serve but a single star!

The soil beneath hardly breathes, the grounds alone are scarcely sufficient for having so much weight settled in upon them; with neither iron nor bronze they labor under, but with the guardian spirit, although the eternal maintains the foundation, which supports the heights of the mind and heaven pouring down and which would harden the worn out knee of Atlas.

No long delay to drag things out. The intense form of the god presently makes pleasing the labors and work themselves, youth marvels the more at what hands can do. The arduous pulse of the machine resounds. The continuous noise proceeds through the seven heights of Mars, and subdues the wandering murmurs of great Rome. The keeper of the site himself [i.e., Curtius], whose memorable name protects the sacred chasm and lake, innumerable raw sounds of brass being struck to bellow he senses in the forum, it stirs wildly the holy face and head of the place that merited the venerable oak wreath. And first the mighty demeanor, immersed in the trembling lake, becomes fearful by the glistening light and thrice greater horse with towering neck; [but] soon cheered by the commanding vision [cries]:

“Hail descendant and father of gods, divinity heard by me from afar! Now my happiness, now the lake to venerate, with you close by, to know your brightness, and to witness your indulgence close by the immortal throne. Once I [was] the author and discoverer of the safety of Romulus' city. You tame the wars of Jove, you the battles of the Rhine, you civil disorders, you by treaty and far off war delayed master the mountain. If my own era had borne you, you had attempted, not I, to go daringly into the deep lake; only Rome your reins would have restrained.”



Erato, this teach me, while the doors and halls warm with the throng, and many staffs sound the lintels. He is free to move them with apt conversations and they learn to be taught to hear the [traditional wisdom of the] homestead.

Per chance, where rests the brightening milky region of heaven, cherishing Venus lay nightly in the marriage bed; dissolved in the hard embrace of her Getic mate. A line of tender cupids press the bed posts and couch of the goddess; they seek the approving signs by which to bear the torches, that she might command those with which hearts are to be reached; Whether she prefers on lands or seas to rage, or to embroil the gods or still yet to vex the Thundering One. Not yet having fixed her soul to the heart's desires, weary she [i.e., Venus] lays upon the coverlets, where once the partner of guilt [Mars] having been discovered they crawled to bed into Lemnian bonds [made by Vulcan.] Here a boy from the bustle of the winged companions, to whom with most fervent mien and a nimble hand with the never failing arrows, thus from the midst of the tender troop with voice speaks out - pressing to silence his quiver-bearing brothers.

“As you know, mother,” he says, “there is no work which my right hand is slow to; whomever of man or god you have given [to me], [with passion] he burns. But once, by the tears and propitious begging with prayers and vows of men, grant us to be moved, o mother: indeed not out of adamantine hardness we have been created, but in truth we are your brood. There is a bright youth from the Latin nation, whom from elder patricians born and having joyed nobility now has brought and set down [here] titles of beauty from our heaven. One time with dense and quavering quivers, I pointedly pierced him - sweetly for you. Although many Ausonian matrons have sought him as a son in law, I subdued the victim of the powerful mistress to bear the yoke and to hope for long years to be so commanded. But her at last gently - for this you decreed - we had weakly strung the bow; by love's lamp sparingly. From thence the anxious youth overwhelms the many fires, as I am an astonished witness, how much by night and day he endures my urgings. Not any else have I more vehemently brooded over, mother, digging with repeated wounds. I also saw this [modern-day] Hippomenes with longing run the cruel race-course, nor did he thus wax pale at the turning point: I saw and praised this youth of Abydos competing with his arms and hands at the oars, and I lighted the way ahead of him [when he was] swimming: The savage heat warmed him less than it did the wide seas: you, oh youth, having passed over [even] veteran lovers. I myself was stupefied you had been so hardened by the swelter and I made firm those spirits [of yours] and with smoothing feathers removed the sweating from your eyes. How often has Apollo complained to me, that I am grief to the poet! Now, mother, gratify the loved marriage. He is our devoted comrade and ensign bearer; He can recall arms-bearing labors, famous deeds of men and fields with bloody streams. But for you he has given the soothing plectrum and has preferred to walk with poets and to weave the laurel with our myrtle. He has rolled back the slipping or else external wounds of youth; alas! how great the veneration, mother, of the Paphian godhead; he having wept bitterly the deaths of our dove.”

He finished; and coaxing clung to the neck of the tender mother and warmed her breast with nearing wings. Thus so invited, she replied with unresisting glance: “Grand indeed and of rare powers, which I myself have shown, the youth desires the Pierian [Muse's] pledge. I marveling at the excellent splendor of this beauty, for whom glory of homeland and of patrimony have vied in honors, and with the earth sinking under me have received and cherished her; nor, my child, have my hands ceased adorning her curved neck and cheeks and to draw forth her locks with thick balm. She has sprung forth [to become] a flattering likeness to me. Behold from afar brow and hair suggesting high graces. Measure in what [qualities] she stands out above Latin matrons: how much the maid hard presses Latonian nymphs and [like] how much I myself [have given competition to] the Nereids. This girl is worthy to arise with me on the blue waves and would have been able to sit astride our [water-borne] shell; and if she had been able to scale to these blazing seats to enter these abodes, [even] you, [my] Loves, might err [thinking her me.] Determined, I have given her wealth in beauty, yet she conquers with the riches for the soul.

“We grumble now of greedy Seres despoiling the denuded grove, and that the buds of Clymene go wanting freshness, that the green Sisters weep not enough, few fleeces blush with Sidonian dye, and rarely are crystals frozen for the ancient snows. For her Hermum and Tagus run with reddish sand - not enough for cultivation - for her Glaucus and Proteus and all the Nereids are commanded to seek Indian necklaces.



“If, Phoebus, you had seen her in Thessaly, Daphne would have wandered through the fields secure, if on the shore of Naxos she was seen next the couch of Theseus, Bacchus [Euhann], flying Gnosssus, had forsaken the maid deserted. But that Juno had placated me from long quarreling, the Ruler of the bright air had taken on the disguising wings and horns for her, truly Jupiter would have fallen on her in [sheets of] gold.

“But given to the youth desiring, for you child, is the height of my powers, even though lamenting to bear the yoke of a second marriage the girl oft refuses. I sense now she herself yielding and in turn [ready] to warm to the husband.”

Having thus spake she raised her celestial limbs from the bed and exiting the proud portal prompted the Amyclaeon swans to their teams. Love happily seated had harnessed them; carrying the matron on the jeweled car through the clouds. Presently the Iliadean citadel on the Tiber is seen: the towering palace spreads out before them and the shining divinities of the dwelling, exulting, applaud at the swan’s arrival. Not sullied by gleaming stars is the honored seat of the goddess. Here are Libyan and Phrygian marble, here the hard verdant stones of Laconia. Here curved onyx shine, here rocky veins the same color as the deep sea, the purple of which the master of Oebalian and Tyrian copper vessels oft envies. Pressing roofs depend on columns innumerable; satisfying oak timbers shine with Dalmation metal. The cold of the ancient forests exclude falling rays [of the sun], transparent fountains are alive in the marble. Nor does Nature preserve her [usual] succession: here Sirius chills, winter warms the home and ground and makes the year for them mild.

Fond Venus exults at the sight of the mighty houses of the foster-child second to none, than if morning star had arose from the deep sea to [find] Idalian homes and the Eryxian shrine. Then herself reclined alone upon the couch speaking: “For what purpose [is] this continually useless sleep and restraint on the bed, oh delightful to me among Laurentian girls? For whose sake [is this] manner of customs and devotion? Are you never to submit to the masculine yoke? A more sad time of age even now will come. Exercise beauty and make use of gifts that are fleeing [with time.] Not therefore for such [reason] did I give to you my pride and splendor of face, that you should pass through the years widows as if you were not dear to me. Enough, indeed too, much to have despised past wooers. In fact here is given to you one from among all that with complete vigor loves and is to be marveled at, needing neither beauty or ancestry. For what experienced youths throughout the city, what girls, have not heard his songs? Thus indulging let him proceed with the Ausonian guardians - resolve to raise aloft up the twelve torches prior to the festive day; surely now he has stirred Cybele’s portals and selects the song of the Euboean Sibyl. And now the Latian parent, whose rightful mind is foreknown to me, will bestow the purple garment on the youth and the magisterial ivory - these a greater glory - laurels to celebrate recent Dacian spoils.

“Come therefore, unite with the marriage bed and cast off the idleness of youth. What nations, what hearts have I not joined with love’s flame? Flocks of sustaining herds and hard wild beasts do not refuse me, lands themselves with the air I release for wedlock, when the clouds disperse into showers. Thus the succession of things returns to the ages of the world. Had I not been joined a to a Phrygian mate, from whence [had come] new glory to Troy and the abductor of the burning gods, from whence of Lydia [had come] he who had revived my Julian tribe on the Tiber? Who would have laid down the sevenfold walls of Rome, head of imperial Latium, unless a Dardanian priestess had secretly taken Mars [in her arms], and without me preventing her?”

With such flattering pronouncements she excites the honor of the speechless bride. Having protested with tears the man’s attendants near the threshold, now the gift and prayers return to her mind, now recalls the songs of the poet and of Aster’s [i.e., “Stella’s” bride] [sung] throughout the city, before the banquet of Aster’s, at night of Aster’s, at dawn of Aster’s - “Hylas” was never shouted so much. And now begins to soften the sharp heart-strings, and appears to herself to have been hard. Honor to the couches, most pleasing among Latin poets, since the hard measured way is begun and you have comprehended the labors of taking refuge! Thus the river [i.e., Alpheus] deserting shining Pisa, having been long inflamed in outward love affairs, draws chastely to streams in a submerged course. until at last with panting mouth he imbibes the Sicilian springs; the Naiad [i.e., Arethusa] marvels at the sweet kisses nor can believe her husband has arrived from the open sea.



### III. The Villa of Manilius Vopiscus on the Tiber.

If any seeing of eloquent Vopiscus's on the cold Tiber and the twin homes inserted on Anio's [tributary] waters or have been able to know the exchange of friends competing on the bank; each defending themselves as the master villas, Sirius on him never barked with the heat of its star, nor did Nemea with its weighty leaves so look on its dear ones: nor winter touching such, as thus rude frosts crush the sun, no home swelters in the year as at Pisa.

Pleasure herself [is said] to have written of you with a tender hand...then Venus anointed and caressed the summits with Idalian moisture and her alluring locks and left honor to the dwellings, and forbade her winged children from departing thence.

O day to long remember! What joys to recall to mind, how wearying to have viewed so many wonders! How natural the mild earth! What forms of beauty in places preceding the hand of art! Never has Nature indulged herself more plentifully!

The high groves lying by the swift streams: a feigned image [on the water] replies to the leaves, and the same reflection flies through the long billows. The Anio itself - marveling belief - under and over the rocks here with murmurs lays down the swelling mad foam, as if having reverence to [only] disturb the sleep of placid Vopiscus and the Pierian days with [its] music. And with a home on either bank, this most mild river divides you not. Palaces keep watch over the alternate banks, nor grudge the running river outside, as it were, restraining them. Now let Fame boast the Sestian bay and sea, and swimming by the daring boy [Leander] that surpassed dolphins! Here eternal calm, here laws with no storms, never a fury of waters. The sight is given here of voices, and almost hands, passing over them. Thus Calcis' waves drive forth to flow back, thus, having separated, the boundless Bruttian shore surveys Sicilian Pelorus.

What will I sing for the first or middle [part], where will I rest the end? Will I not I admire the gilded timbers, or from whence the Moorish door frames, or the bright veins of colored marble, or the nymphs issuing forth through all the dens? Here I am drawn by the eyes, here by the mind. Shall I speak of the venerable age of the groves? Do you discern, what streams of rivers below, or what in the forests you gaze at, the stately halls passing over in silence, night will be silent, where for you, with all quiet and with no knocking from whirlwinds, murmuring darkness summons slumber? Or what baths, upheld by a grassy foundation, steam having been placed upon the frigid banks over fire? With the vapors of two furnaces joined, the river laughs at the panting nymphs hard by the tumbling stream.

I saw the arts of ancient hands and lively metals of various kinds. It is a labor now to remember the figures of gold, or ivory, or gems worthy to be fitted to fingers, each thing with silver first, or tricked in lesser bronze, and tried [the work of] teams of enormous colossi. I wander in view pondering through all I regard, I tread not influential riches, for splendor flowing from on high and bright brass reflecting sea shells to be revealed to me alone. Where various arts have painted upon the floor new figures. the ground joys: one's steps tremble.

Why now should I marvel at vast dwellings, or why arrange my verse to sing about distant abodes? Why thou, a tree which, in the midst of houses, roofs have been protected by, and posts emerging in fluid airs, which under no master will be suffering savage two-headed axes? And mayhap unknown to you already an elusive Naiad or Hamadryad owes you for untrammelled years.

What Marcia, shall I relate twice to you about alternate courses accumulating, and deep white basins amid whirling fountains, which hidden lapse into an oblique river, streams running boldly through lead channels? Should Elis alone lead a path, under Ionian floods, a sweet river to Aetna's port? There Anio itself, by way of caves and a spring, eluding abandoned night under mystic blue mantles, here and there throwing its fragile longings over the moss, or into great glassy pools descends and claps the swimming waters. In that shade Tiber reclined, there Albuca yearns to immerse her sulfurous locks; this home could separate woodland Phoebus from Egeria and widow cold Taygetus of Dryad choirs and summon Pan from the Lycaen forests. Since if Tirynthian temples would grant other lots of fate, the sisters of Praeneste would have migrated. Why should I praise you twice-bearing orchards of Alcinous, who never



labor of a vigorous mind exerting command on its faculties for the watchful care of Caesar, a pleasant chore. Hence inward rest has [in others before] crept insidiously into weary limbs and a lazy neglect of life.

Then the god, who close the high Alpine ranges signifies with holy name the Apollonian groves, looks back, alas, praying for the safety of so dear a child of his, and cutting short any delay:

“With me here, Epidaurian offspring,” he says, “go now with glee: it is given - the means to advance forth! - to restore the greatness of [your] powers. Let us preserve by assailing now pained fibers distending: Let there be no fear of a deadly blow: Past limit Jupiter will praise these arts. For not a soul plebeian sprung or one without right divine do I preserve. And so briefly, while we pass under the roofs, I will make ready. The race itself having returned to their [original] nobility; the source lies not hidden, but with the light following is overcome, and, having yielded, joys in the illustrious descendant. To him also [is] the foremost strength of the toga: mighty and bright in eloquence; having trained in countless camps, he soon gained the principal settlements of the west and every band under the sun, having in leisure of peace sworn the sword no permission to be unguarded and slacken. Him strengthening Galatea dared to reproach in war - myself also - through nine harvests Pamphylia and warlike Pannonia feared the bow and with Armenia in flight dreading the Araxes now is suffering a Latian bridge. Why should I turn over repeating the twice [bestowed] commands and duties [for him] in great Asia? He might indeed wish to have these [offices] thrice and four times for himself, but the greater annals of a magistrate, having been promised to him not once, called him home. Wherefore should I praise the wondrous compliance of Libya’s tribute and a triumph having been sent in the midst of peace and how immense the riches he delivered over which no one had dared to expect? Transimene and the Alpes joy and the spirits of Cannae; and foremost himself in honor the lacerated shade of Regulus openly demands an offering, the northern battle line frees not the Rhine rebel and the prayers of captive Veleda, which of late is the supreme glory, to lay open the surrendered city with ruined Dacians, with the reins of the ruler having been so chosen, Gallicus, you have endured, surprising not Fortune.

“Him therefore, if I speak worthily, we will snatch from ill fortune, my son, for [the purposes of] Jove. This the celebrated Latin father asks and deserves of the city; and indeed let it not be in vain for you young men to have recently sounded honorable songs for me with the patrician in [the] purple [lined toga.] If [there be] any herb in the healing cave of twin [bodied] Chiron, whatever is hidden for you in the temple of Trojan Pergamum or whatever blessed Epidaurus may draw forth from healing grains of sand, what wealth of flowering dittany Crete offers within the Idaean shadows, and where abounds the spume of the snake: And I will join the expert hand itself with every good secretion, and fragrant balms in the lands of Arabia or that I a shepherd plucked from the grass of Amphyrsus.”

He said. They find now placed nearby the soul weakly struggling; by means of the Paeonian rite he encircles them and at once the willing ones both teach and obey, until with transforming medicine they shatter the deadly pests and doubt filled clouds of sickly sleep. He himself aids the blessed and with each malady the remedy more strong prevails. Not more quickly was Telephus restored by Haemonia [i.e., Thessalian arts], nor what, with Machaon’s elixir, mended the savage wounds of fearing Atrides.

Amid so many people and cares of senators having been stirred, what may be the place of an offering to me? I yet give as witness to you the lofty stars, Thymbracean father of versifiers, which with every light and night a dread to me, while I am caught now clinging constant at doorways awake with all ear and eye; as if a small craft having been joined with an immense ship. when a storm has raged, recovers in a small part of the raging waters and is rolled forward in the same south wind.

Tie now gleaming threads with gladness, Sisters [of the Fates], bind! Let no man reckon [what is] the measure of life’s passing: this will be the birth date of life. You are worthy to transcend the ages of Troy, Euboea’s [i.e., the Euboean Sibyls’s] years of dust and the desuetude of Nestors! What suitable cask of fragrance should I, a pauper, now obtain for you?

Not if Mevania should empty the vales or the fields of Clitumnus present bulls white as snow would I suffice. But often in the midst of rewards, a grassy place and grain with a little salt have satisfied [even] the gods.



## VI. The Kalends<sup>1</sup> in Decembers

Thee father Phoebus [Apollo] and Pallas [Athena] severe,  
and even you Muses, go afar and keep holiday:  
You we will recall come the Kalends in January.  
Saturn and much heavy wine  
have freed me from December's bonds,  
and a place for laughing and raucous Wit  
are also present, whilst I recall the blest day  
of glad Caesar and the [Aeons'] intoxicated muse.

Scarcely had fresh Aurora stirred the dawn,  
when lines of tasty treats descended like rain  
- this the dew the coming east wind pours:  
Whatever's prime from Pontic nut orchards  
or Idume's fruitful ridges drops down;  
what blossoms on righteous Damascus boughs,  
and what ripens in drunken Caunus,  
plummets freely in lavish plunder;  
soft dainty pastries,  
and with unburnt kneaded doughs of Ameria  
and must-cakes while from the hidden palm  
came down the fertile dates.  
The hazy Hyades with such great clouds hides  
not the lands nor melts a Pleiadean star,  
as by wedges Winter with hail subdues  
the people of Latin serenity.  
Let Jupiter prolong clouds through the world  
and threaten showers for spacious fields,  
whilst THESE rains from OUR Jove are endured.

But look, he goes into the theater stalls  
through all ranks with splendor, with care  
seating the common people with no less honors.  
These carry bread baskets,  
white napkins, and fine dinners;  
others serve languid wines;  
you'd think them so many Ganymedes.  
That world, which is upright and austere,  
clans and togas together,  
as well as so many others, oh blessed,  
you nourish and feed.  
Snobby Annona knows not this festival.  
Go, Vetustas, compare the age now  
with the ancient time of golden Jove:  
not then did wines flow thus so freely,  
nor grain so fill up the late year.  
By one table is fed each rank,  
children, women, common folk, knights, senators:  
liberty relaxes reverence.  
But even you - who to be idle here,  
which of the gods could have promised this? -  
entered with us the shared banquet.  
Now they, whoever they are,

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., the first day.

whether fortunate or needy,  
glory themselves a table fellow of the leader [i.e., Caesar.]

Among these, pleasure flees the noise  
of novel luxuries and polished gaping;  
a coarse and naïve woman stands with sword  
as she takes the fight to shameless men!  
You might believe the horsemen of Thermodon  
charging to Tanais river or the wilds of Colchis.  
Here impudent nature enters with a row of dwarves,  
which by brief finishing too soon,  
she bound at once into a knotty mass.  
Swords set in, wounds devour,  
- what a band! - and threaten death to them.  
Father Mars grins at the bloody host  
and with cranes falling with cries of cheating  
marvels at the ferocious fighters.

Now under the approaching shades of night  
what tumult succeeds upon the dispensing of riches!  
Here enter easy girls to be purchased,  
here it is admitted by all, what in the theaters  
pleases by beauty or is proven by art.  
Here the puffed up of Lydia applaud with the crowd,  
and there are the clacking cymbals of Cadiz,  
there resound marching troops of the Syrians,  
here the theaters groundlings and they who  
exchange sulphur [matches] for [shards of] broken glass.

Amidst which immense clouds of birds  
suddenly fall in flight from the stars,  
which sacred Nile and brusque Phais  
and wet Numdia gathered from the south.  
which sacred Nile and brusque Phais  
and wet Numdia gathered from the south.  
They go without who would seize the entire bowl,  
and joy as long as new riches are acquired.  
They raise innumerable voices  
sounding to the stars  
for the Saturnalia of the chief  
and clamor for sweet favor of the Lord:  
Caesar alone forbids granting this  
[i.e., title for himself.]

Blue night scarce stole into the world,  
when descended in the seashore's midst  
a bright ball of flame from the dense shadows  
surpassing the torch of Gnosso's crown  
[i.e., Ariadne, a constellation.]  
Nothing lights up the pole with fires  
to permit the obscure night suffer  
The pole with fires lights up to permit  
nothing suffer from the dark night.  
Discerning these things  
Lazy Quiet and sluggish Sleep flee  
and depart for other cities.





with you in the solemn pomp of night, a calamity for the city having seen, I led forth the bier of the boy, and saw savage heaps of dooming incense and mortuary rites lamenting over his life, you with the groans of a father overcome and the arms of an embracing mother preparing to quaff the fires of the dead, I could scarcely hold back like companions and offended by restraining. And now, alas, with fillets and honor of the brow loosened, my feelings having been transformed by you, I, unhappy poet, beat the lyre; but you joint comrade in anguish, if I merited experiencing a shared sadness of yours, I pray now you suffer [me] kindly. The fathers having heard me in the lightning bolt [hour of woe] itself, I have sung consolations alongside funeral pyres to [grief] outpouring mothers and devoted children and myself, when I was groaning at my own failings at the flames - oh Nature, what a father! I do not separate from you to mourn severely, but we ought combine sighs and sorrow as one.

Long ago, oh deservedly loved boy, I was drawn seeking the suitable beginnings of an approach to your praises. Here standing on the threshold of life's annals, here beauty seizes me, seizes me with your gentle modesty, unfinished bashfulness, and probity advanced beyond your years. Oh where else are brought together from established family radiance pouring in, bright starry orbs, eyes for heaven chastened with modesty, and of a natural brow athwart soft locks at the margin of a glorious mane? Where in the world with flattering blame are found melodious speech folded in spring kisses, redolent of flowers; laughter mingled with inward tears, and a voice for speaking mixed with the honey-combs of Hybla? For whom a serpent might put aside hissing and acrid stepmothers would wish to serve. I embellish nothing as far as youthful advantages. Alas, the milk-white neck! Arms which were never without the neck of some lord to burden! Oh when will arrive for you that hope not distant from youth; with cheeks having been pledged a much wished for beard and honors? All the hours bring in painful ashes and hostile days: it is for us [merely] to have remembered what is left behind. Who will soothe your feelings with loving light-hearted banter? Who will relax the secret cares of the mind? Who will calm the puffed up attendant, fierce with wrath, and deflect the burning anger at servants to himself? Who with the feasts begun will lift away pouring wines from the mouth and disturb [you] from all the sweet booty? Who will disrupt with a whisper the morning slumbers, [your] departure having been imposed by obligations, stay by arts the coverlets and revive [you] in the doorway with kisses? The interrupting hand entering once more, who will spring forth with brief expressions of adoration and encompass [your] shoulders with outstretched arms? Quiet the home, I admit, left empty the households, and in the rooms and at the tables a gloomy stillness!

What wonder that an affectionate a sustainer so honors a funeral? You were rest and a safe haven for the master in old age, you the means of delight, you the pleasant recourse of a troubled heart. The uproar of a barbaric slave platform spun not you, nor when an infant were you mixed in with tawdry Egyptian merchandise, nor speaking devised words of pre-arranged wit did you with lascivious deliberation search out for and furnish mistresses. Here a home, here an ancestry of a master at once both with family dwellings dear and children obedient to your joys, not seeking importance of rank, but when you had been immediately been taken from the womb, the master exulting first raised you, and hailing with a clear voice, spoke with judgment, and embracing bore to his bosom someone deemed to have himself begot. It is right for me to have spoken with favor of pious parents, and you, Nature, I pray you may permit, to whom it is first given through the world to sanctify oaths of the soul: not everyone of near blood or one having descended from a series of a well bred race binds; often new pledges assumed are deeper and glide forward in the connecting. It is necessary to have given birth to children, and it pleases to have chosen [to do so.] Thus with tender flattering half-beast Chiron overcame Haemonian Peleus for Achilles, nor did elder Peleus accompany the son in arms at Troy, but it was Phoenix that adhered there to the illustrious offspring. Evander from afar wished for the return of Pallas rejoicing, [but] faithful Acoetes [in fact] beheld the battles. And when at a distance that the father might hold back within the bright stars, it was wave-tossed Dictys who made beautiful the winged Perseus. What should I say with piety of foster mothers living [as] parents? What say you Bacchus, after funeral ashes cheated you of a mother, [of your] more safely crawling to the breast of Ino? With Iliia, now secure from a Tuscan father, and reigning in the waves, Romulus wearied Accam carrying him? I have seen cross-weaving branches from a stranger [tree] go higher in an oak than its own. And already mind and soul had made you a father to him, but not by customs or ornamental display: And yet even now, having clasped with a murmur the voices of those crying, you loved the child's infant wailings.

He as a rude flower that stands high in the mild meadows and will expire with the first south winds, tender thus it conquered day with a proud passing face and was leaving behind many similar [sorts of] years. Or had he stood, with fettered limbs curving, in wrestling schools: you'd think him conceived of a mother from Amycla, Apollo might have traded Oebalus for him, or Alicides substituted Hylan; or if attired an Attic Greek, he might have flowed eloquently with the words of Meander: have extolled rejoicing the echo and tresses of beauties and subdued impish Thalia with a roseate crown; or had he bespoken the labors of old Maeonia and Troy or of the calamities of the late returning Ulysses: the father and teachers themselves would have been struck with astonishment. No doubt Lachesis touched the cradle with an ill-fortuned hand, and Envy certainly was cherishing that boy at the lap embracing: those cheeks and grown up hair to adorn, these arts to display and words to instill, for which now we mourn. He had begun to match the labors of Hercules for his years, though as yet near to infancy; already even so, stepping vigorously, with greater measures of cultivation, and having seen the clothing for the boy diminish in size - when what vestments for you, what garments did not the mild master hurry! Not with short doublets straining the torso, or tight cloaks constricting the arms; not he with irregular folds, but ever gathering for the years, wrapped woven fabrics in scarlet mode [for you] to wear, now lawn greens for following the chest, now coloring with delightful purple, now he made glad the fingers with vibrant gems: the crowds of comrades, the gifts, did not cease: he wanted only the bordered toga for modest propriety.

These the fortune of the home. Suddenly Parca [one of the Fates] lifted a hostile hand. For what, goddess, do you extend the savage weighty claws? Does not beauty, does not a time of weeping move you? Him not violent Procne would have torn for a [hated] husband, nor a wild vicious Colchian [Medea] have hardened in wrath for, nor have cast out [even] were this Aeolian Creusa [wife of Jason]; from him mad Athamas would have turned [aside] the grim bow, though hating Hectorean ashes Ulysses will have wept casting him from Troy of the Phrygian towers[.] [Come] the seventh day, and now lacking vigor the eyes numb, now it is Juno [in the underworld] below with encompassing hand that preserves the hair. He however, with the Fates pressing in on the fragile years, sees you with withering expression and faltering tongue murmur; in you of emptied heart now breathes out all that remains, alone he remembers you alone, calling he hears clearly your mouth stir, for you he leaves the [remaining] words and consoled forbids a grieving groan. It is pleasing, oh Fate, even so that death did not consume slowly the dignity of the prostrate boy, and he went below to the shades untouched as one of those undefiled bodies free of blame.

What, should I speak of obsequy fires, prodigious offerings, and the mournful luxury of ardent funerals? What, of yourself in purple ascend to heap upon the sad pyre, of Cilician bouquets, of herbal gifts from India, of Arabian, Egyptian and Palestinian perfumes to soak the burning hair? Each desires to bring all that is lavish and to incite the estimation of Melior, thinking lost riches nothing; but he does not arrest the hated blaze, nor are dense flames wanting. Dread seizes the senses. I feared for you Melior, formerly the most calm of individuals, near and at the summit of a conflagration for the dead! Did he then seem light hearted and affable? From whence [therefore] the barbaric fright and hands of a savage mind, while on the recoiling earth only the unjust light of day pours down, and now equally pitiless [to us] you rend robes and chest together, and seeing visions of the beloved press cold kisses, caressing? There were father and mother prostrate with woe, but to behold you [even] the parents were astonished. [Yet] why [should this seem] strange? All the crowds and folk going before [you] bewept the impious deed [of the youth's death], by the Flaminian road which crosses the Mulvian causeway, while undeserving it the child is surrendered to the doleful flames, and by his form and age merits the lamentation: Of such a kind, in the Isthmian harbor, shipwrecked Palaemon, having been borne forth from the sea, lay placed beneath the mother; thus also having been cut down by serpents, an insatiable fire consumed Opheltis, playing in the snake haunted grass of Lerna,

Set aside dread of death and cease to fear its menaces: Cereberus with three heads will not bark, nor a sister [a Fury] with flames, nor hydras arising terrify him; but he [Charon] from the interior, the wild sailor of the implacable skiff, will come athwart the sterile embankments and burning shores, lest the means for the boy to have embarked be harsh.

What announces to me the offspring of Cyllene with glad wand? Is there not some happiness in so severe a time? The boy knew the noble likenesses of the face of the lofty Blaesus, while off at home he saw you with a heart binding new garlands and rubbing clean wax images. When midst the Ausonian shores he



Not if Helicon indulged me with all its streams, and Pimplea overcome should thirst, and the flying hoof of the horse [Pegasus] settled, and chaste Pheonoe opened up the hidden fountains, or where my Pollius, by the most high patron Phoebus, stirred up the plunging jar, I would [as a poet] be fit for innumerable kinds of worship and be able to meet the standards of Pierian realms. With hardly a long row sufficing to the eye, steps scarcely availing, while through separate ones I am lead. What a multitude of matters! Of what am I amazed more, the seat of the master or of nature? Here one beholds the home of sunrise and the dawning radiance of mild Phoebus; there [come evening] it detains and refuses to let go abating and sinking sun, when now from the mountains daylight weary descends on the waters and the dark shadows of the palace float on the glassy sea. These [places] moan with the clamor of the main, here the homes disregard the sonorous surge and prefer [rather] the stillness of land. These sites Nature favored, here surviving it cedes to the worshipper and has grown tame in docile uses unknown [to her.] Where you see level grounds, there was a large mound; and under the ceilings where you now go, there were bogs; where now you descry tall groves, there was no soil here: the owner domesticated it, and taking on and shaping the boulders, the earth obedient was made glad. Now see stones paired having learned to become entrances to homes, and the mountain having been commanded to withdraw. Now let the hand of the poet of Methymne and the sole lyre of Thebes and the glory of the Getic plectrum concede to you: you move the stones and you the lofty forests follow you.

Why should I report about the traditional wax and bronze figures, or why the colors of Apelles rejoice to be brought to life, or why as yet in empty Pisa, though admirable, what by the hand of Phidias, [or] what by the art of Myron or Polycletus, was commanded to be chiseled to live in heaven, and the bronzes [made] from the ashes of the [burned down Corinthian] Ishtmus better than gold, [or] the [sculpted] visage of a commander, the countenance of a wise poet, from times gone before, what concerns [there are] for you to follow, what you feel with all heart, your being immune from cares of the soul and with a quite strength ever prepared? Why recall the thousand high points and succession of sights? For whom his every pleasure he has joined to a bedroom by the sea; with Nereus [seen] from diverse openings lying beyond his lands: here he sees Inarimen, there rough Prochyta appears; here the armor bearer [i.e., a cape so named] of great Hector stands open, from thence Nesis breathes out malignant air flowing in from the sea; from thence Euploea sounds a happy omen for wandering vessels, with [the isle of] Megalia [aka Megaris] thrust forth strained by the arching billows, and Limon, at a distance lying opposite to his master, watches over your Surrentine dwelling. However from afar one of all the rooms, one room stands out, which directly carries in to yo [siren] Parthenope at the boundary of the sea: here within are rocks selected from Greek quarries; which a vein of eastern Syene bestrewn, which from sad Synnade, by the wailing fields of Cybele, axes of Phrygia have mined, where in marble the white background is made distinct from a rim embellished with purple; here also cut from the Amyclaeon mount of Lycurgus stone that becomes green and resembles supple grass on the cliffs, here the gold rocks of Numidia shine, and those of Thasos and Chios and Carystos rejoicing to see the ocean tides: all salute the Chalcidican towers facing them. Bravo to the mind, that you approve what is Greek, that you frequent the regions of Greece; may the walls of Dicharchi that begot you not envy, [and say instead] we shall gain what is best from our learned son!

Why now should I speak of the fallow lands set by the sea, the wealth of the farm, and the cliffs dripping with the nectar for Bacchus? Oft times during autumn with the vine ripening for Lyaeus, a Nereid climbed the rocks, concealed under the shades of night, and snatched from the hills the agreeable grapes. Oft times too the harvest is sprinkled by the nearby surf, and Satyrs have descended into the shallows, and Pan's mountain sprites longed to catch hold bare Doris [i.e., an ocean nymph] across the waves.

Oh land, may you be happy, with both masters [i.e., master and his mistress], from Phrygia and Pylos, aged in years, nor may your noble servitude [to such masters] be changed, nor may by the halls of Tirynthia and the bay of Dicarchus outlast you in honor, nor may those of Therapnaeus Galaesus please more often than these pretty vineyards, here where Pollius practices Pierian arts, or mediates the counsel, which the authority of Gargettus [i.e., birthplace of Epicurus] imparts, or he arouses our lyre, restrain discordant songs, or strip away [i.e., unmasks?] the avenger threatening from the podium [with satire]: hence the whimsical Siren flies from the rocks to better songs, hence with [helmet] plumes nodding Tritonia listens. Then the swift breezes settle, the seas themselves forbid roaring, and sleek dolphins, drawn to the learned lyre, emerge from the sea and stray towards the cliffs.











Let the abundant streams of learning overflow,  
be even more green the woods of Aonia,  
and wherever day is let in or held back,  
may the shade be filled with smooth garlands.  
Let a hundred perfumes of Thespia's sacred grove  
and a hundred altar victims stand  
which Dirce bathes or Cithaeron suckles:  
We sing of Lucan, favor [us] with speech,  
this is your day, favor [us] Muses  
while he who carried you off by twin arts,  
and being bound by the [poetic] foot and freed of voice,  
is honored [as] priest of the Roman choir.

Happy - alas too much so! - and blessed country,  
that in the height of the ocean waves  
you see the forward course of Hyperion  
and hear the rattle of the falling wheel,  
that you, Baetica, provoke fertile Athens  
with the anointed oil presses of Lake Triton:  
can claim Lucan with the lands!  
This is more than to have given Seneca to the world  
or to have begot delightful Gallio.  
Let Baetis be raised to the stars  
back-flowing springs famous  
more than Meles for Greece;  
Do not wish, Mantua, to challenge Beatis!

Calliope forthwith received the wailing child,  
and through her the earth as well,  
into the softening bosom  
at first with a sweet murmur.  
then next, with the shedding of grief lessened,  
she flung aside the long sufferings of Orpheus  
and said:

“Oh youth dedicated to the Muses,  
soon to pass over the ancient bards,  
you will not stir rivers, nor the herds of wild beasts,  
with the plectrum, nor ash trees of Thrace,  
but the seven summits and the Tiber of Mars  
and skilled equestrians and the senate of purple  
will you draw forth in eloquent song.  
Let others attend the ruined nights of Phrygia,  
and the late returning path of Ulysses,  
and the ship of reckless Minerva,  
tracks well trodden by poets:  
You dear to Latium and mindful of the nation  
lay bare more powerfully the Roman drama.  
And yet first tender in years  
you will play on Hector and the chariots of Thessaly  
and the suppliant of the gold of mighty Priam,  
and will lay open the seats of inferiors,  
ungracious Nero in flattering theaters,  
and by you is our Orpheus discovered.  
you will speak the abominable fires  
of the criminal master roaming the heights of Remus.

From here you will give honor and title  
 to chaste Polla with pleasing elocution.  
 Soon having started youth more noble  
 you will roar forth of Philippi pale with  
 Italian bones and the wars of Phasalia,  
 of the leader shattered midst the arms of the god,  
 grave Cato devoted to freedom  
 and Magnum pleasing to popular favor.  
 Pious you will weep bitterly  
 the crime of Pelusian Canopus  
 and will give to cruel Pharaoh  
 a tomb deeper than that for Pompey.  
 These things in the prime of youth you will sing  
 under age, years before Virgil's "Culex"  
 [i.e., years younger than Virgil when he wrote "The Gnat."]  
 The Muse of Ennius of wild roughness  
 and the lofty madness of erudite Lucretius  
 will submit, as also will he [i.e., Apollonius of Rhodess]  
 who led the Argonauts through seas  
 and he [i.e., Ovid] who transformed the first bodies.  
 What greater should I mention? "The Aeneid" itself  
 will be honored by the Latins singing with you.  
 Not only will I grant the splendor of songs,  
 but also with genial torches I will ascribe  
 proper teaching to your talent,  
 a kind charming Venus and Juno might give,  
 models with simplicity, good taste,  
 judgment, tradition, grace, decorum,  
 as well will I shout before your doors  
 a wedding hymn with festive singing.  
 Oh too weighty and fierce Parca [i.e., a lesser god of Fate]!  
 Oh never long have high places been given [to anyone] by Fate!  
 Why more do you lie open the heights [of success] to chance?  
 Why in turn do the savage great ne'er age?  
 Thus so the Nasamonian Thunderer's son [i.e., Alexander the Great]  
 after a thunder-bolt wielding dawn and dusk  
 Babylon presses to a petty tomb.  
 Thus did Thetis trembling dread Pelides  
 transfixed, falling at the hand of Paris.  
 Thus on the banks of Hebrus I followed  
 the head not mute of murmuring Orpheus.  
 Thus also you - evil of the raging tyrant! -  
 I should headlong cast commands to be sunk in Lethe,  
 while you fight with the hard voice of a hound  
 and give consolations to grand sepulchers,  
 - oh dire evil! oh evil! you will be silenced."

Having thus spoken and in leaning lightly  
 on the plectrum she wiped away the falling tears.

But you, if taken up in rearing chariots through  
 the swift heaven of Fame's celestial vault,  
 where mightier souls rise,  
 you look down and smile at the earth's tombs;  
 or if by merit the grove of peace is disclosed  
 you keep to the blessed shores of Elysium,



coverings supported by Greek metals; just as if by purifying torches of illustrious fire you once again ascended to heaven from Oeta's flame. Will you not even trust eyes and senses? Then with the thresholds having been laid open, this [shrine] too is but an ignoble keeper of a paltry altar. From whence [came] this fresh and brilliant temple unexpected by rustic Alcides? They are the destinies of gods, the purpose of places! Oh [how] swiftly dutiful! Recently here were sterile sands, spanning from the wide sea to the mountains and shaggy rocks with briars, nor was there to be discerned any paths to endure easily the grounds. For who by sudden chance enhanced these rigid boulders? Come here with Tyrian plectrum or Getic [i.e., Orphic] lyre? The year itself is astounded by the labors, and in the narrow limit of twice six, the months marvel at the ancient work, the god brought and raised his strongholds, dislodged resistant stones, and with a great heart striving repulsed a mountain: you'd think a cruel stepmother had commanded [it.]

Therefore come, whether now free from the laws of the ancestral denizens of Argos you trample Eurysthea sunk in the burial mounds, or if having been furnished alone with the power of your [sire] Jove you hold the stars, for you girded with good fortune a draught of nectar Hebe extends, better than [that] denied Phrygia: here as well you are near genius with shrines arising beneath, No Lerna harming, not the poor soil of Molorchus, nor Nemea's dreaded field and the Thracian cave, nor the polluted altars of king Pharo make demands of you, but a happy and simple domicile not knowing of fraud and evils and you are seated most dignified among the highest guests. Put aside the rude procession and the fierce bows of the quiver and the club of kings saturated with much blood, and cast off the enemy lying over [your] rigid shoulders: here for you the high cushions woven with Sidonian [i.e., purple] acanthus and a rough couch swells with ivory badges of distinction. Come calmly and mild, not troubled with wrath, nor fearing to be used as a slave, but detained in that condition which Auge of Maenalia accomplished with you with Bacchic dances and dripping with much with [your] brother [i.e., Bacchus, Hercules step-brother] and Thespius, father in law of so many, was struck dumb following the reproaches of a night roving. Here for you are festival wrestling, and yearly contests of guileless youth, without boxing gloves of rage, are carried through with swift expiation. Here a priest, inscribed in temples for a joying grandfather, still little [in years] and yet like you, when you [as a babe] pressed in hand the first monsters from the step-mother [Juno] and grieved their being killed. Yet who of the temple, [though] starting so soon, must be revered.

Come speak, Calliope, [an] Alcides, a companion for you, and with grande bow drawn tight, will sound and mimic [your] ways. It was that time when chariot of heaven came down on lands in a most scorching stroke and keen Sirius with intense Hyperion set afire the gasping fields. Already the day was near when with kings fleeing the grove of Trivia at apt Aricia steamed and by a great torch, knowing the secret of Hippolytus, the lake glimmered; Diana herself decks worn out hounds with garlands, cleanses arrow shafts, and permits the protected wild beast to pass, while at all chaste hearths, the Italian land honors the ides of Hecate. Yet I, though for me a farm of my own under the Dardanian hills of Alba, the gift of the great prince [i.e., Domitian], and running waves at home to alleviate the cares of heat would be sufficient, you observe I had not by name the rocks of the Sirens and the host deity of eloquent Pollius, the peace of a man assiduously learning songs untried and new customs and flowers of the Pierian Muses. By chance we reflect on the day of Trivia, while on a wet shore, away from the usual narrow gates and roof laden with foliage, ward off suns wide open under a tree, and heaven withdrew and the radiant light of a sudden yielded to thin clouds and the west wind made damp with deep violet; the kind of rainstorm Saturnia carried to Libya, and fertile Elyssa was given to a Trojan husband while witnessing nymphs wailed in hiding. Wreathed in garlands, we scatter festive dishes and attendants haul away the wines; nor [is there] a place quests might depart to, although [there are] countless farms rejoicing on the height to seat a home and at many a summit the rich mountain gleams: but approaching clouds threatening, they were urged to seek the nearest [spot for cover] and trust fair weather will return. With the name of a sacred temple having been spoken, a slight dwelling stood and at the humble abode the least pursue great Alcides, hardly spacious to shelter wave-tossed sailors and searchers of the deep. Here we assemble with all the throng, here opulent feasts, swelling crowds and a most grateful cohort of servants of shining Polla are pressed together. No doors to take to, the constricted temple is insufficient. The god of Pollius blushed and laughed, with delighted heart enters, and with affectionate forearms lays hold of the man.

"Then," he says, "grantor of wealth, you are he who with a lavish intention filled equally the houses of Dicharcheus and youthful Parthenope? He who has fashioned for us so many mountain peaks, so many verdant groves, so many stones, faces imitated in gold, and so many living wax figures engraved by

the eye? For what was this home, what this land, before it joyed you? You have bedecked the bare rock with a long path. And where there was only a trail, now for you stands a high portico with distinct columns, lest the way seem mean, you have contained the lusty nymphs with a twin covering at the shore of the curved beach, I could scarcely enumerate the works; and only for me, Pollius, poor and unworthy? Yet I nevertheless enter such dwellings cheerfully, and I love the strand you have stretched out. But Juno looks down on the seat and quietly laughs at my latest domicile. With effort, give to the temple worthy altars, which ships with fair sails would be unwilling to pass by [without saluting], which the celestial father having been sent for to the crowds of gods at banquets and which a sister from on high might come to [as] a temple guest. It should not intimidate you that the solid shield of the mountain opposite harden and by immense age never be consumed: I myself will be near and help such great endeavors and tear through the rough bowels of the unyielding earth. Begin and dare trusting in the exhortations of Hercules. The heights of Amphion [i.e., in Egypt] or the labor of Pergamum [i.e., at Troy] will not have been made to stand more quickly.”

[Thus] he spoke and left behind [his] mind. Without pause, when in the likeness of a web [i.e., latticed network] the plans had been composed, innumerable hands enter into concurrence: to chop down these woods and to raise the timbers, with these concerns to sink the foundations in the soil, part of the damp earth [for bricks] is baked that will protect from winters and keep out the frosts, indomitable stone melts in the curved furnace. It is indeed but a special labor to raze by contract the cliffs opposite while refusing the rocks with iron. Here, he the father of the site, with the Tirynthian arms having been laid on, sweats and alone, abasing himself with the mighty twin axe, when the sky is veiled in the heavy shade of night, digs. Fertile Caprae and green Taurubulae resound, while an echo profound falls back on the level plains. Not so at grand Aetna it sounds when Brontes and Steropes strike the busy anvils, nor greater is the clangor from the den of Lemnia, when Mulciber embosses the flaming aegis and furnishes Pallas with chaste adornments. The boulders diminish, and craftsmen returning under the rosy light [of dawn] marvel at the work. Scarce another year breathes, and Tirynthius from the enormous height looks down on the rich commotion and challenges [with envy] the adjacent houses of the step-mother [Juno] while he invites Pallas to worthy shrines. Now are given over the proofs of the peaceful trumpet, now the burning sand smoke with pungent sacrifices. Not Pisaeon Jupiter or the father of shaded Cirrha would disdain these honors. Nothing with sadness at these places; let the sad Isthmus yield, let fierce Nemea yield: here a happier child makes offering. The young Nereids themselves bound wantonly from pumice caverns [beyond]: they cling to the wet rocks nor does it shame to observe the nude wrestlers in secret. Timbered [Mount] Gaurus looks on the woods and vine of Icarus [i.e., a Spartan pupil of Bacchus], which crowns Nesis fixed in the sea, and placid Limon and Euploea a [good] omen for ships, and Lucrine Venus, Greek trumpets out from the summit of Phrygia, Misenus, you will learn of besides, while Parthenope smiles with gentle kindness at the sacred rites of men and naked contests and miniature likenesses of her crown.

But come yourself freely to the performances of your own contest and dignify it with [your] invincible hand; whether to divide clouds with the discus or outdo the flying zephyrs with the javelin, or yourself with delightful might the Libyan gymnasium in a knot, grant these consecrated rites, and if the apples of Hesperides remain for you, heap [them] in the venerable lap of Polla; for she captivates and will not be found unworthy of so great an honor. Since if with sweetness she might resume the splendor and youthful years - give pardon, Alcides - per chance you had also brought to her to be spun [i.e., as Hercules had done while serving Omphale, queen of Lydia.]

Here, happy to have revealed, I carried libations destined for the altars. Now himself on the threshold - I discern, launching expressions and bringing forth such words [as these]: “Well done these riches of souls in imitation of my labors, by which the rigid cliffs and barren deserts of nature have been put to shame and you have subdued and turned the base wilderness of beasts into use for habitation and display to view the hidden divinity. With what reward for merits will I now compensate you? With what thanks will I repay? I will keep the threads of the spinning Fates extended - I know how to defeat implacable Death -, I will turn aside grief from you, forbid sad injuries, concede no harm to youth, and renew old age to long behold young grand children, as long as he [the grandchild] is ripe for a bride and she for a husband, and once more from these progeny, a new and impudent flock presently crawls on the shoulders of the grandparent, now in an affectionate troop they run eagerly to the kisses of mild Polla. For never will the end of the age be established for temples, as long as the engine of flame bearing heaven will







Perhaps never again with gliding hair will he reap honor [in this way], and so will place it for you in an enclosed space with other gold. Pergamum, much more favored than pine-covered Ida! - [though] she [i.e., Ida] permitted herself to be pleased by the sacred abduction [i.e., of Ganymede] in a cloud -, certainly she gave him to the gods, whom Juno, annoyed, ever sees, and avoids and refuses the nectar from [his] hands -, but you pleasing to the gods sent to beautiful and nurtured Latium distinctions of honor, which ministrant both Ausonian Jupiter and Roman Juno equally behold with placid brow approve of. Not without reason [was there] so much divine pleasure for the mighty lord of the lands.

It is said golden Venus, while she seeks the Idalian groves from the summit of Eryx and drives the docile swans, had entered the [consecrated] abodes of Pergamum, where the greatest helper for the sick is present, and hastening to restrain the fates, the merciful god with the healing serpent lies. She herself observes here the splendid boy of surpassing beauty settled down playing before the altars of the god, and first of a sudden is a little deceived by the form and thinks [him] [one] of [her] common children; but there was no bow and no shade [i.e., made by wings] from the effulgent shoulders. Gazing she marvels at the dignity, countenance, and mane of hair of the boy.

“Will you then” she says “go to the Ausonian towers neglected by Venus? Will you suffer dirty dwellings and be prostituted to the yoke of servitude? May such a thing be far off and away: I will give the lord of beauty these things which he has merited. Come and go with me, child: in the flying chariot I will [you] across the vast stars a gift for the leader; nor will plebeian vows detain you; you ought to be a servant for Palatine [i.e., or “Palace”] affection. Nothing, nothing, I admit, I saw or gave birth to so sweet in all the world. The Latmian will freely yield to you, and the Sangarian lad, and he excited by the image in the barren springs and whom love consumed. Cerulean Nais would have preferred you and being seized would more vigorously have got [you] in a jar. You, child, before all; he alone to whom you will be surrendered is more beautiful.”

So uttering, she commands [him] to take seat with her and raises the twin-yoked swans through the light air. Without delay, now the Latin mountains and the homesteads of ancient Evander, which with a new structure the celebrated father of the world honors and makes Germanicus equal with the loftiest stars. Then were those cares now nearer now to the goddess: which [for him would be] the best shape of the hair, which vestment suitable to set alight the roseate face, what [rings] on the fingers, what gold on the most worthy neck. She knew the eyes of the celestial leader, and herself had joined the pine torches [of wedlock], and granted marriages with a full right hand: Thus she adorns his hair, thus lays on the Tyrian cloak, bestows rays and her own fire. Yield [ye] earlier companies and servant of the beloved fair; here for the great leader first, with radiant hand, he brings crystal cups and heavy myrrh [in vessels]: the new charm enhances Bacchus [i.e., the wine.]

Boy beloved of the gods, who has been chosen to sip the consecrated nectar and as often to lay hold the great right hand, that Getae knew; which Persians, Armenians and Indians seek to touch! Oh brought forth by a fortunate star, much indulgence favored the god towards you! Even once, lest next youth despoil and esteem of beautiful form darken flourishing cheeks, the god of [your] fatherland himself left noble Pergamum and crossed the seas. No power has been trusted to weaken the boy, but he of Phoebus by gentle art commands the youth not be struck by any wound from sex to cross [his] person. But anxious with cares Cythera fears the boy’s being bitten by sorrows. Not yet had the beautiful distraction of the leader [i.e., emperor] begun to preserve males untouched from birth; now it is a crime to undermine the sex and to modify the man, glad nature sees and only gives birth to such, nor by an improper law do mothers of a slave fear to bear the weight of sons.

Further now youth, had you been born later, with shaded adult cheeks and a more robust frame, you would gladly have sent not one gift to the shrine of Phoebus; now may this single plait of hair sail to the shores of the fatherland. Here steeped in much Paphian balm, here new combed by the thrice favoring Graces; and to this Nisus’ wounded locks of purple will yield, and as well what pride-swelled Achilles kept for Spercheus.









### III. The Domitian Road.

What din of hard iron and of vast  
rock near the ocean filled the side  
of the stony Appian Way?  
Certainly not bands of Libyans clamor,  
nor a foreign leader swearing to  
war shakes unquiet the Campanian plains,  
nor does a Nero crush the fords [for a canal]  
and with mountains hewn  
bring on sordid marshes,  
yet rather he who encircles  
the warlike thresholds of Janus  
with just laws at the forum,  
who restored to chaste Ceres,  
long refused, the sober lands and fields,  
who [as] Censor forbids the strong sex  
to perish and prohibits male adults  
to fear the torture of handsome beauty,  
who returns the Thunderer to the Capitol  
and restores Peace to its very home,  
who will ever dedicate the lights  
of father's nation and the heaven of Flavia:  
he of the people burdened with sluggish roads  
and the long plains detaining every path  
he removes circuitous routes  
and with a new injection  
makes solid the painful sands,  
gladdening the home of the Euboean Sibyl  
and the laps of Gaurus while moving  
seething Baiae to the seven hills.

Here in times past the lazy traveler  
borne on a single planked axle  
uncertain gave way when  
the niggardly earth absorbed the wheels  
and the Latin folk in the midst of the plains  
shuddered at the unkind navigation;  
not nimble paces, but hindered  
the silencing wheel-ruts delayed the journey,  
As long as too much weight is seeking  
the deep under, the lanquid four-footed [animal]  
creeps along with the chariot pole.  
Yet the way now, that [once] wore out  
the entire day, is hardly made in two hours.  
Not [by] the stretched pinions of birds  
through the stars, nor by ship,  
will you proceed more swiftly.

Here the initial work was to set up the tracks,  
to cut back the uncultivated grounds, and  
to excavate and bear away the inner grounds;  
next was to refill the emptied trenches  
in a different manner and to prepare  
the lap [of the road] with [its] ridge's end,  
lest the soils give way, lest a doubtful

bed, with pressing stones, give way  
to treacherous foundations;  
then to secure the path with collected knobs  
and thick pegs here and there.  
Oh, how many hands labor together!  
These chop wood and strip the mountains,  
these raise rocks and timbers with iron;  
these bind stones and construct the work  
with the powder and baked dirty tufa;  
these dry by hand the soaking cavities  
and drive off lesser streams from afar.  
These with the right hand  
are able to hollow out Athon  
and without a floating bridge can block up  
the grim sea of groaning Helle.  
these, unless the gods forbid the way,  
could have Ino's small Isthmus  
mingled [with] the straits.  
the moving shores of forest are agitated,  
the noise travels through the midst  
of distant cities, and from hence and thereon  
cluster-bearing Massicus at once sends back  
a shattering echo to Gaurus.  
Quiet Cynme, the Linternian marshe  
and listless Savo marvel at the sound.

But [the river] Vulturnus, the golden head and  
the broad swamp with the soft sedge impeded,  
raises the face and reclining on the  
great arch of Caesar's bridge  
with raucous throat(s) overflows  
with such [words as these]:

"Noble builder on my plains,  
who having poured into my unfrequented vales,  
you have bound the unlearned skirts  
of the hollow with laws of propriety,  
now I, that also was impatient and threatening  
having before scarcely suffered skittish boats,  
now I bear a bridge passable by foot;  
I who had been accustomed to seize lands  
and to whirl forests - it shames [me]! -  
I begin to be a river;  
Yet I give thanks and so great is the service,  
since under you as leader,  
with you commanding [I] yield,  
since you are to be read [as] the supreme arbiter  
and perpetual victor of my bank.  
now you you honor me with a blest path  
nor do you permit dirtying and widely  
remove the wicked shame of barren soil,  
nor would I oppress the dusty air while  
the bay of the deep Tyrrhenian sea cleanses me,  
just as Cinyphian Bagrada silently creeps  
the banks amidst the Punic fields,  
but such will I bear, that on a shining course

I might be able with a pure stream rival  
the sea and nearby tranquil Liris.”

These things the river [spoke] together [as]  
the marbled expanse raised itself from the huge ridge.  
The entrances of this prosperous threshold  
is an arch, with trophies of the warlike leader  
and shining all with the metals of Liguria,  
as great as he who decks the clouds for rain.  
The traveler roused is turned there  
there Appia itself is left behind Appia abandoned.  
then more quickly and keenly the course,  
then the force delights even the yoked teams;  
as when the weary arms of the oarsmen  
and the sails are fanned with the first breeze.  
Come all therefore, that under the foremost sky  
you honor the faith of the Roman father,  
come forward and visit at the path of the nations,  
come more swiftly laurels of the East.  
Nothing opposes longing, nothings delays:  
he who at first dawn left the Tiber behind,  
at evening sails first Lake Lucrinus.

But how at the inmost end of the recent road,  
where Apollo reveals the ancients [sibyls] of Cumae,  
I discern white with fillets and tresses!  
Are we deceived by the vision?  
Or does the Sibyl bring forth bay leaves  
of Chalcis from the sacred grottos?  
Let us submit; lyre, restore now the song:  
it must be silent, a more divine poet begins.  
Behold! while in new intervals she rotates  
the head widely, she celebrates the Bacchic rites  
and fills up the road. Then with virgin mouth  
thus she calls out:

“I spake, stay river and fields, he will come -,  
he will come favoring heaven, who will  
lift the foul forest and putrid sands  
onto lofty bridges and a road.  
Lo! Here is the god, Jupiter himself  
will command him to rule for him the happy lands;  
where he places under these reins none more worthy,  
where Aeneas penetrated and left behind  
the sacred groves of Avernus hungrily seeking  
from me foreknowledge of the leader that will be.  
This the man of honor for peace, here with arms to  
be feared better and more puissant than Nature.  
Here if he might master the flame-bearing skies,  
you India would have moistened with lavish clouds,  
(you) Libya have streamed, (you) Haemus have warmed.  
Hail, leader of men and parent of gods,  
for me the divine will foreseen and established.  
Scan not now with crumbling sheets unrolled  
of fifteen men in solemn prayer my words, but rather  
be singing close at to be heard, as you deserve.







with much light have consoled us  
and the pots have been emptied  
that seethed only with Bacchus.

Not a thousand wooly flocks bleat,  
nor does the cow bellow for sweet amour,  
and if when one is singing to the master  
the quiet field cries out in protest.

But after the native country, the land  
with the first cares is loved by me,  
here the warlike queen of battles  
adored my songs with gold from Caesar,

when you striving might lift each peril  
from the breast of a companion,  
as Castor trembled at all the din  
of the Bebrycian arena.

Hold, did a grandmother of Leptis beget  
in remote Syrtes? This time she will bear  
Indian harvests and snatch rare  
cinnamon from the scent bearing Sabaeans.

Who that has strolled on every peak of Rome  
woud not think of sweet Septimius?  
who would deny [you] to have been fed at  
Juturna's fount on the rich remnants?

No wonder the power: forthwith you enter  
the Ausonian port, ignorant of the shallows  
of Africa, and an adopted son, you  
as a boy swam in Tuscan eddies.

Here a lad 'midst content, pledged to  
the Senate, in the glow of the select purple  
you thrive, but, innately a patrician,  
pursuing immeasurable labors.

Not for you Punic talk, not the manner,  
not a mind for what's foreign: Italian, Italian.  
there are natives from the City  
with Roman horsemen who could befit\* Libya

\* [i.e., befit the ranks of those of Libya]

And it is a voice lively with roaring at forum,  
yet venal eloquence is not for;  
and the sword rests in the scabbard,  
unless friends should command it to be drawn.

But more oft a farm and quiet for the soul,  
now on Veientine soil at paternal seats,  
now atop leafy Hernica,  
now at ancient Cures.













weep, to rend vestments, to weary companies of servants, to overcome the utterance of anguish, and to batter the unjust heavens with mad lamentations. Though from the woods and streams Orpheus himself attended and been near that the groans be comforted, and might equally touch each maternal oracle, and all the priests of Apollo and Bacchus: no song, no strings for the gods of pale Avernus and the Eumenides [i.e., the Furies] had been heard to appease or bid adieu [even] to the locks of hair: such great grief reigned in the stupefied breast! Even yet does the flattened scar still flee to wailing, while we sing, and a downpour from the wife's husband press hard on the weighted eyes. But even now do the devoted eyes have these tears? Wondrous faith! More quickly the Sipylean matron carries away the exhausted cheeks, more quickly the dews of sorrow fail Tithonia, or the mother of Achilles sated and will grow weak crashing storms [i.e., with her ocean waves] against the tombs. Well done hearts! The god notes these things who turns the reins of the world and nearer to Jove directs human actions, and beholds mourning; and mysterious attendants of the bridal couch! From such he yet again comprehends the examples, since you hold dear the shade and cherish the obsequies. Here is the purest ardor, here is merited love from a lord to be commended by the censor.

No wonder, if Harmony united you mingled together and gathered you to the heart in one long unbroken chain. She indeed was married before and was permitted pine [i.e., marriage] torches to another husband, but it was, as if [still] in [her] maidenhood, you were joined to all inmost being and with an embracing soul she cherished you; just as an elm tree loves a vine socializing with contemporaneous shoot, and the grove mixing with the deity prays for autumn and joys to be wreathed in the loved clusters of fruit. Some are extolled for [their] distant ancestors or for the gift of beautiful form, but are without the benefits of customs, and deceptively powerful of praise [i.e., are powerful as a result of being praised], they lack truth: although for you family, a happy appearance and much that husbands will wish for also would shine, from you is the greater honor, to have known one bed, to stir one fire under hidden sinews. No plunderer of Phrygia vitiated that love, no Dulichian suitors, nor an adulterer who had traduced a brother's stainless marriage with Mycenaean gold. If you would give Babylonian wealth, tons of Lydian treasures and the mighty riches of India, China and Arabia, she would have preferred to die undefiled in humble poverty and exchanged life for good repute.

Not the too great stiffening sad brow in dread behaviors, but an unaffected and cheerful faith mingled with gracious modesty, since if perilous fear had summoned her to greater customs, for the husband she gladly would have rescued him from armor bearing troops or the dangers of lightening fires on the midst of the sea. Well it was that such was not recommended by an adversary, since for you with concern for the [marriage] bond, how great the pale worry for the spouse! But better [it was that] your vows to the husband merited the way of favoring divinities, while night and day you weary the gods, while you will have knelt a suppliant at all the altars and adore the bright guardian of the present lord. You had been heard, and Fortune came on a benign footing. Of course the upright youth saw [your] industrious calm and faith intact and girded with a breast of care, you would be awake to feeling and worthy to pursue such great changes with a sober heart, HE saw, he who knows all his own and will go widely round inspecting each of [his] ministers. This is not strange: he sees the approach of the dawn, what the south and stormy north wind do, is borne by the toga, and [his] counsel sanctions judgment itself. He conquering imposed an immense mass and a weight scarcely tractable on shoulders - for there are not other sacred responsibilities more numerous for the master -, to send wide into the great sphere of Romulus the commands of the leader and to manage by hand the powers and bounds of empire; what from the north, what the roving Euphrates, what banks of twice-named Ister, what the banners of the Rhine might carry off, how greatly far the limits of the world will be passed in receding from the loud flood of Thule - for all the happy leaves [i.e., news] raised up on all the pikes, and no lance marked with infamous feathers [i.e., bad news] - in addition, if the trust deserving master should separate [i.e., sort] the swords, with whom who to expand a century [i.e., a Roman army unit], with whom he might prevail to breakdown [a century in size], a cavalryman sent among maniples who had anticipated a cohort, who would be more excellently fitted in the order of an illustrious tribune, for whom to give the signal to a wing of bridled horses is more worthy; to have known before hand even a thousand changes, whether the Nile will immerse the fields, or Libya will perspire with the rain-bearing south wind; and if I would count all, nor more does winged Tegean with interpreting wand announce from the high stars, and what the maid of Juno drops through the liquid ether and binds the rain with a colored arc of mist [i.e., a rainbow], and what laurels of yours, Germanicus, Fame, on a winged

course, carries; having gone ahead a day late day under the Arcadian stars, and leaves the daughter of Thaumias [i.e., Iris] in mid-heaven.

How excellent gods and men beheld you on a kind day, Priscilla, when first your husband was promoted for remarkable exploits! You nearly surpassed himself, while, with breast prone outpouring, you rolled up with such great eagerness before the sacred feet of the well-deserving lord. She joys not [even] thus on the Aonian height whom the father of Delos placed in command of the mystic cave, or [she] to whom venerable Bacchus assigned the law of the first wand and the ensigns of the stupefied [Bacchic] throng. Yet from here neither was quiet changed nor did honesty swell [i.e., in pride] with the favorable changes: Habits remain the same to a modest mind with increased fortune. She maintains the anxious zeal of the husband and at the same time urges he restrain labors. She hands over moderate dishes and sober cups, and to the master teaches an example; just as the Apulian mate of a frugal farmer or one tanned by the Sabine sun, who at the prospect of the stars sees now the time of the man worn from service to have arrived, hurrying she arranges the tables and cushions having awaited the sound of the returning plow. I speak little. With you she was a comrade in the icy Sarmatian north, the storms of Ister and pallid frost of the Rhine, was also with you hardened in courage through every summer, if the camps allowed, she would have wished to wear quivers, have wished to parry with a wide Amazonian shield; provided that she might see you in a dust cloud of wars near the lightening steed of Caesar, brandishing a divine lance, and bestrewn with the sweat of the great spear.

Thus far a favorable lyre. Now [however] is the time, Phoebus, to set aside your [laurel] leaves and to bind the foliage with [those of] the sad cypress. For what deity tied Envy and Fortune in implacable kinship? Who commanded hostile goddesses to be fighting eternally? Will [the one] not mark some home, which pitiless she would not fastened instantly with light, but that [the other] drives out joys with a savage right hand? The unpeturbed and mirth-filled gods of the household flourished: there was no sorrow. For how, although faithless and fickle, could Fortune be so frightened with Caesar favorable? Livid Fate finding a way, a cruel power invaded the pious dwelling. Thus are vineyards suffused wafted with the malignant south wind, thus the wheat field ages with excessive rain, thus the hostile wind envies the swift ship and beclouds successful sails. Priscilla of exceptional loveliness is seized by Fate; just as the glory of the forests is the foliage of the tall pine, whether dissolved from the root or falls by the punishing fire of Jove, despoiled it murmurs no more to the breeze. What are probity, a chaste faith, or divine worship that they benefit the supreme being? On every side black blows surround the unhappy circle of death, the unfeeling strings of the Sisters are drawn tight and left over is the farthest part of the expired thread. No concourse of servants, no extensive healing arts remedied the evil; companions on every side with feigning visage notwithstanding pretended hope, she observes the husband weeping. He asks anyone only for the pure streams of Lethe from below, now anxious he weeps at every altar, seals the gates and rubs the thresholds with [his prostrate] breast; now with great entreaty he invokes the divinity of Caesar, alas the unfeeling course of fate! Is there not something which he [i.e., Caesar] may not permit? How many obstacles of mortal years would have been able to approach, had you, father, held the sway of all judgment? Death locked out in the blind abyss would have groaned and the Fates have placed aside the destitute threads of life.

And now sink the faces with her eyes at the very last wandering and ears deafened, but that the voice of the husband alone is distinguished; him only the mind returned sees in the midst of death, him the ailing one envelopes bravely with forearms having turned [to him] the stiffened cheeks, not with the remaining light, but she prefers to be sated solely with the sweet spouse. Then thus the dying solaces the one united with her in love: "Part of my living soul, oh would that I could leave to whom the years which cruel Atropos snatches from me: show no more tears I pray, strike not the breast with savage lamentation, torment not the consort's flying shade. I do indeed leave the marriage bed, yet I save in death's succession what came before: I have for the better had done with long old age; I saw you some time ago shining in every flower, I saw you draw nearer and nearer into high favor. There is not now for you judgment by the fates or any celestial power: I bear these away with me. I begin freeing you on the path, exert yourself for the sacred and love without rest the spacious genius and power [i.e., of the emperor.] Now because you yourself desire to be enjoined, grant gold everlasting to the Capitoline seats, that the countenance of holy Caesar may gleam [in a statue of] a hundred weight and inscribe the love of a close devotee. Thus will I not see the Furies nor low Tartarus and be admitted to the ends of blest Elysiums." These things said the



embracing! Must even those close to us wish sorrow? And now life has encompassed you in twice eight circles, but in the narrow years a more robust soul, that does not succumb to a burden, nor does [youthful] age take captive its mind. No wonder: not for you was bespoken a chain of obscure parents without honor, or from plebian stock wanting ancient ancestors of fame: not born from equestrian blood or white mantle of recent distinction or did you a foreigner with a poor tunic strike out for an august and inmost seat with the senate of Latium, but rather your own surpassing [family] line. Of the sort when through the stretches of the Roman circus beauty is to be seen, and a noble steed of ancestral repute is awaited, from whose long happy family line has winning parents in breeding, all applauding bring him to a head, they joy recognizing him flying from the dust itself towards the curved turning point: so you, bright boy, the senate perceived as born for itself, and enclosed the patrician moon [i.e., a badge of senatorial rank] with [your] first footsteps. Soon from habit the Tyrian folds and the powerful tunic of [your] shoulder were acknowledged. Yet indeed the father had prepared for you great examples for those honors, he setting out a youth as a mater of course forthwith attacked warlike quiver-bearing Araxes and rebellious Armenia to serve fierce Nero. Corbulo acted in a high position of stern Mars, but he too marveled at the exceptional arms of Bolanus, a comrade and associate in the labors of war; and to him the most severe of responsibilities he was wont to trust and [with him] the dread was to be divided, what time [he was] an ally in ambushes, what times good for open battle, whether the reliable faith or else retreat of defiant Armenia was gazed upon. Bolanus had known before the path to be feared, it was for Bolanus to seek the mountain advantage for safe encampments, Bolanus to measure the fields, to uncover malignant obstacles of the scorching forests, to satisfy the awe inspiring leader's great mind and alone be adequate for the momentous commands. The barbarian land itself came now to know the man, his the second highest honor in battles and nearest active service, thus the astonished Phrygians, although they might see Neamean arms and the bow of Cleonae might drive the battle lines, yet [even] with Alcides fighting they feared Telamon [i.e., father of Ajax] as well. Learn, boy, - since it is not for you to seek from a foreign counselor a beautiful love of virtue: praise should minister to kindred minds. Others are taught by Decius or the return of Camillus - learn you [from] a father, how great he entered Thule, with Hyperion weary and western waves refusing, until in an allotted year, carrying great commands, he ruled a thousand cities of mighty Asia, tempering supreme power with the [just] toga. Drink in such matters with ears prone, let these lessons vie in uniting relatives to you, let seniors and a father's comrades repeat them.

And now you undertake to go on another path and prepare [for it] at no lazy pace; not yet do the signs of virile youth steal into your cheeks, and thus far untouched is the course of [your] life. Nor is the father near; for a draught from evil fates killed [him] leaving two offspring without a guardian. He had not so much as removed the boyhood purple from tender arms or introduce the white mantle to the shoulders. Whom did not new and unrestrained manliness corrupt the freedom of the toga! Just as the wood, ignorant of the pruning knife, raises foliage and fruit and expires in the shades. But it is for you with Pierian zeal, and with a tender heart beneath, and the modesty of learning, to impart law and traditions; then a cheerful probity, and a tranquil brow keeping the splendors of luxury confined, being managed by all rules and sense of duty; the fortune of the home reminded [you] to yield to a brother of similar age, revere the father, and pardon an unhappy mother [i.e., who had reportedly tried to poison Crispinus; apparently to favor of his brother.] Was this wicked cup and deadly juice placed together to prevail over you, you who with a voice can prevent the bite of serpents and with a face to appease all step-mothers? It pleases ghosts to infest and take away peace from funeral pyres that merit prayer; but in you, upright fellow, I discern a look persuasive and furnishing such fine utterances: "Spare, I pray, the ashes: that destiny was the noxious wrath of the Fates and the crime of a god, Who sees mortal feeling too late, nor pauses at the threshold when attempting crime and furnishing minds with the unspeakable. Let those days perish with time and let not the coming age believe such was possible! Certainly it is for us to be silent and many things buried in night and let us suffer the reproaches of own clan to be covered o'er. He expels punishments who for the care of his people repays Devotion with due authority, revisits homelands, and whom all sin fears. These things and to be weeping is to us revenge enough. Would that it might be permitted in fact to persuade the savage Eumenides and turn away Cerberus from the timid shade and more quickly to give by your hands the forgetful stream [i.e., of Lethe.]"

Well done with spirit, youth! Yet the crimes of the mother increase. Not only pious, but without pause were you laying claim to high courage. Not long ago when it chanced a companion paled at a falsely imputed crime of unmerited report, and with many a Julian judge the court of justice was gathered around,

rose up and brandished chaste lightning: you, although not [yourself] suffering before the court of justice and severe laws, yet hidden in the silent umbrage of devotions [i.e., of a friendship], and as yet an unarmed recruit and obliging a friend, you sustained the assault, defending against fright and enemy spears. Never did Romulus and the Dardanian [i.e., Aeneas] of old behold such [youthful] years in a toga to war in the midst of the carnage of the forum, so greatly were the city fathers astounded by your attempts and exertions, not any less did the guilty fear you. Equal vigor in the limbs that are and qualified for brave action, they follow a great soul commanding. I myself recently saw you on the shore of the Tiber, where the Tyrrhenian wave foams with the shallows of Laurentum, pressing the course, with a bare heel goading a bold steed, and with a threatening countenance and right hand: - if what is spoken be trusted, I was stupefied and thought [you] a soldier armed- : thus handsome Ascanius on Gaetulian mount and shaking a Trojan lance, went a hunter into the step-mother's fields and with the father [i.e., Aeneas] made [the mistress of] unhappy Elissa burn [with passion]; not otherwise did Troilus with nimble wheeling adroitly evaded the menacing horsemen, or he whom, at the high turrets of Arcady, going round the turning points in the Theban dust, the Tyrian mothers viewed with not disapproving eye.

Therefore come - the sure indulgence of the leader strikes on and a brother furnishes a path of cheerful promise - arise now with great soul and take up the manly concerns of the camp. Mars and the Attic virgin will instruct the battle lines, Castor the cavalry to flank, Quirinus to rattle the arms on the shoulders, who trusted you, with so young a neck, to make ring cloud-born shields and arms untried in slaughters.

To what lands of Caesar's therefore will you go into the world? Will you not swim northern streams and [ice] broken Rhenish rivers or will you perspire in the heat laden lowlands of Libya? Or will you shake the summits of Pannonia or the shifting homes of the Sarmatians? Or will the seven headed Ister [i.e., the Danube] hold you and in the flowing shade with [the isle] of Peuce's paramour? Or will you be situated in the ashes of Solyma and the captive palm-groves of Idume, not esteeming the happy woods for herself? Since if the land held in check by the great parent should receive you, how much the untamed Araxes will rejoice! How much will the fields of Caledonia exalt glory! Where the ancient inhabitant of the wild land will recall to you: "Here the parent was accustomed to bestow laws, here on the grassy sod to address troops of cavalry; widely stretched apart watch towers and fortresses - do you see? - he furnished and encircled these walls with a ditch; these gifts, these weapons he dedicated to divinities of war, - you [can] still examine the trophies -; he dressed himself here from those summoned to arms, [it was] here he seized the armor of the British king." Just as Phoenix related to Pyrrhus, preparing victorious wars against the Trojans, [about] unknown Achilles.

Happy Optatus, you, who trusting in green youth, will harden no matter the roads and valley, perhaps also - so may the divinity of the prince be near - you, and unwearied comrades united to friend, be girded at the side [with swords], with which Pylades from pious custom and the son of Menoetius [i.e., Patroclus] wielded in Dardanian wars. Of course these harmonies are with you, this love is yours and I pray it may endure! Now the years of life more vigorously fly us; and for me I will aid [your] heart with vows and prayers! Yet if by chance I will disturb with customary murmuring and the fathers of Romulus come to [hear] my songs, [if] you are in need of me, Crispinus, and through all obstacles, I would dispatch my Achilles and he will look about for you. Yet you will better arrive - the omens of the poets hurry not in vain -, whoever now reveals to you the eagles [i.e., battle standards] and the camps, the same will give all [necessary] steps to sustain and to be surrounded with the proud rods and axes, by which the consuls of the fatherland have been seated.

But who from the exalted hills of Trojan Alba, from whence he the present god gazes close by on the walls of His Rome, is that herald who more quickly than Rumor enters and fills your dwellings, Crispinus? Certainly I have said: the auguries of the poets hurry not in vain. Lo! The magnificent threshold of honors and duties of Asonia to be borne Caesar has opened up and entrusts to you. Proceed, young man, stand up blessed carry forward such great talents [as are yours], and swear to and keep watch for sacred Germanicus to whom is handed over the first sword! Not less mighty this than if the God of War himself should extend the eagles and with grim countenance bring in the helmet. Go readily and learn the higher [honors] to be merited!



complains with tongueless murmur to the cruel sister: all too familiar to the poet. Who has not at a burial bespoke all the tearful branches and buds of the daughters of Helios, and the boulders of Phrygia, and dared music contrary to Phoebus, with trustworthy Pallas [herself as well] not having joyed at a flute [i.e., on such an occasion?] Piety, forgotten of men, recalls you to heaven and Justice with a tongue of redoubled Eloquence bewails you, and Pallas and the Heliconian court of learned Phoebus; for whom it is labor to lead Aonian songs in six foot [meter] and those for whom, by measuring a poem with care to the tortoise-shell, Arcadia of the lyre was the name [given] and those under all the globe which Wisdom numbers sevenfold on the height of fame, who in dread buskin [i.e., stage costume for a tragedy] thundered the furies and hostile stars from heaven upon the homes of kings, and they who wore out wanton strength on sweet Thalia, or by a [metrical] foot crippled heroic ambitions. For having embraced all with spirit, the author lets it be known wide all the powers which may be spoken of, or if it pleased to refrain with Aonian rhythms, or if with voice loosened and freed to scatter rainstorms and harmonize with plain speaking.

Lay forth, Parthenope, from the sudden dust the half-demolished faces, and breathe from the mount and place [thy] hair upon the tombs and sunken burial of a great offspring, whom not any of the heights of [Athenian] Munychia and shrewd Cyrene better excelled or bold Sparta gave birth to. If you were cast from an obscure stock, lacking of fame and with no holding in the race, you had approved him a fellow Euboean citizen with you and more of the Greeks than is thought of [one with] blood. So often joined with yours he surpassed the times, when in laudatory verse he would sing at the appointed quinquennial feasts; with an expression exceeding the Pylion of old and the face of the Dulichian monarch and a brow bound up with the splendor of either. You were not deformed born of obscure blood, nor without the light of noble birth (although the fortune of the parents was constrained by expenses); for Infancy with wealthy ceremony chose you to put aside purple mantle given with honor of lineage and the aristocratic gold of the breast. In [your] coming out at once the Aonian sisters smiled with favor, and Apollo, already charming to me, lowered and dipped the lyre of the boy into the sacred river. The glory of fatherland is not simple, and the origin of birth depends on an ambiguous contest of a twin lands [i.e., Rome and Greece.] Grecian Elea reports you derived from their tribe of Latin colonists, where the ships master [i.e., Palinurus] was vigilant [but] perished unhappily in the midst of the waves; yet from thence a greater from his long line of life it [i.e., Elea] approved...Parthenope [i.e., ostensible gap in text]...other and different cities compete as birth places of [that] Homer they all commend; [but] he [i.e., Homer] is not a true [son] with these, the glory of fraud maintains [a] huge [count of] victims. And there, while you offer life years of well wishing [i.e., in the way of poetry], promptly are you taken to contests of ancestral purification hardly [meant] be completed [even] by [grown] men, [so] swift and daring [you were] by nature for renown. The Euboean common folk were in awe at the youthful songs and parents showed you to [their] children. From whence your voice was frequent, and not without glory, at sacred battles: not as often did green Therapnae applaud at Castor's racing course or the triumphant brother [i.e., Pollux] at a boxing bout. But if inclined to have been victorious at home [then]: what a prize [it is] now to merit being covered betimes with the boughs of Phoebus, now with the grass of Lerna, now with the Athamantian pine, yet with so many times having been wearied, did you nowhere bring forth boughs, did Victory [ever] take away [from you] or touch the hair of another?

Here for you to be trusted with the pledge of the fathers and honored manliness, with you to be guided by a preceptor, to learn the customs and deeds of forbearers - who fell at Troy, how Ulysses was delayed, how many steeds and battles of men Maeonides maneuvered in verse, and how much the old man of Ascrea [i.e., Hesiod] and [he] of Sicily [i.e., Epicharmus] enriched the patriotic peasants, where, with convention prevailed upon, the voice of Pindar's lyre might return, and Ibycus entreated of the birds, and Alcman was sung by the gloomy Amyclae, fierce Stesichorus, and reckless Sappho, not dreading the Leucadian cliffs, having undertaken the manly leap [i.e., in the taking of her own life], and those others the lyre has deigned worthy. [It was for] you to spread the learned songs of Battus' son [i.e., Callimachus] and the hiding places of wily Lycophron, of obscure Sophron, and the the refined mysteries of Corinna. Yet why do I speak trifles? You were accustomed to bear equal yoke with Homer and to match hexameters with liberated verses, while never suffering what is more brief to be relinquished. What wonder, if those who left homelands seek you out, those from the Lucanian field, those from the mountains of stern Daunus, those that wept over the neglected home for Venus and the country of Alcides or the maid from the Sorrento's summit that cast a watch on the Tyrrhenian deep, which nearer the bay with the war trumpet and oar, was observed long ago by one from the Ausonian hills, by a sojourner from a hearth-god of Cyme,

which they sent from the port of Dicarchus and Baiæ's shore, where, with the deep mixed with middling shallows, fire breathes on the waters and homes watch over hidden passions? Thus to Avernus' rocks and the dark cave of the Sibyl came peoples from every side asking; she sung omens of the Fates and deeds of the gods, a not ineffective prophetess despite foiled Phoebus. Soon also you instruct the future princes and the shoot of Romulus and stand firm, leading into the footsteps of the fathers. Under you thrived the Dardanian searcher of the secret fire, who hides the inner sanctums of furtive Diomede, and from thence the boy became acquainted with the sacred rite; being one to approve you showed arms to the Sali and certain fore-warnings of the skies to augurers; to whom is the right to recite Chalcidic song, why the hair of Phrygian flames could be concealed, and your many strokes gathered up [which] the Luperci feared.

And now perhaps one from that company gives laws to Eastern nations, another keeps in check Iberians, another at Zeugma shuts out Persian Achaemenids, these curb the wealthy of Asia, these other those of Pontus, these improve the forums with peace-maintaining laws, these hold dutiful station at the camp: you are the source of praise. To shape youthful hearts, neither Nester or Phoenix, guide of an untamed ward, contended to shape youthful hearts for you, nor Chiron who, with Aecides wishing to hear sharp trumpets and bugles, subdued him with a different song.

While you celebrate such excellent things, suddenly Erinys [i.e., a Fury], from the Tarpeian mount, stirred the fire and provoked battles in Phlegra. The Capitol houses are alight with sacrilegious pine torches, and the cohorts of Latium took up the Furies of the Senones [i.e., a Gallic tribe.] Scarcely the flames rest, nor yet had this funeral pyre of the gods settled, when at the firebrands you, with vigor, chant many consolations for the razed temples, and would, with affectionate countenance, mourn the captives and crushing blows. The Latin princes and Caesar, the avenger of the gods, are amazed, and from the midst of the fire the Father of divinities nods in assent. And now it was his mind to weep with pious song at Vesuvian conflagrations and groan at the destruction overhanging the native country, when the Father removing the mountain from the lands lifted it to the stars, and cast it far and wide upon the unhappy cities.

The tuneful groves of Boetia at the time striking me also, when from your race descending I spoke the goddesses receiving: for [it was] not so much for me the stars, oceans and lands, which custom owes to the parent [of poets], but whatever distinction you first bestowed on this lyre, is to hope for fame in the tomb and not to be uttered to the multitude. You were as like the Latin fathers, such as often I might flatter with song, and I the happy spectator of the gift that you might appear! Oh how bewildering to weep with joyful prayers and respectful fears amidst glad modesty! How that day was yours, how for me there was no greater glory! When such observes the youth he begot on Olympian sand, the more the one strikes, the more he is slain deep within the heart; the spectators attend, he is watched by the great Achaeans, while frequently he covered up [his] eyes with a draught of dust and vows to die for a captured crown. [Alas] that for him so great under you a witness, I bore on the head only ancestral leaves, gifts of Ceres, and Chalcidic garlands. Hardly could the field of Dardanian Alba contain you, if through me you might carry off wreathes bestowed by the hand of Caesar! What strength to supply that day, how much of old age it was able to take away! For since the [award of] oak tree did not mixed with the [award of] olive [honor] press me, and hoped for honor has fled: how sweetly [it is that] you should take hold the unattainable [prize] of the Tarpeian Father! With you as our teacher, the "Thebiad" followed on the ancient first steps of the poets; You roused my song, laid out the deeds of heroes, and taught the bounds and settings of territories. Without you a path with uncertain bound fails for me and the sails of a ship made destitute darken. Not only did you foster me with ample devotion: such also [were you] in [your] marriage. With one pine torch was marriage known to you, one love, certainly now I cannot separate [from you my] mother in the icy ashes; she feels with and holds you, she sees the tombs and greets you at dawn and sun's setting, as others in feigned piety honor and bewail Pharian or Mygdonian funerals in sorrow not their own.

Why should I report the customs of weight known by their keeping? What loyalty, how worthless [is] greed, what care of modesty, how much love of [what is] right? And again when with delight to be relaxed, what grace with words? How would old men be without a soul? With these things you have merited fame and kind praises, and a judge with concern for the gods pardoned not a sad wound. You are taken, father, not unworthy of old age, not excessive, and joining thrice ten quinquennia purification ceremonies borne. But piety and grief do not permit me to number [time.] Oh that you might exceed transcending Nestor's age and equal that of old Priam, [indeed] worthy to see me likewise [i.e., to such an







**APPENDIX**  
**(or poems written subsequently to 2018.)**

**TO K. D.**

There is a door hidden  
in the soul  
that to heaven leads,  
and ecstasies and peace  
that simply cannot be expressed.

The way there is the heart;  
the key to it is faith  
on the threshold truth,  
awaiting inside.

A church in ruins lies;  
the graves it blest  
left behind at rest,  
blasted by time,  
awaiting a future age.

The pensive hermit  
ruminates on thwarted hope  
as the sun descends,  
in the still twilight  
of year's end.

Though the stars are fixed  
in chambered abodes,  
at the approach of night  
a gloom pervades all;  
breezes wail at the sight.

Why does the icy breeze  
gently moan in hurried flight,  
ruffling wildly the trees;  
blow through my window  
to caress those in sorrow?

It is as if  
shredded and forlorn;  
Nature mourned  
its exile and separation  
from the security of Heaven.

Would that winter waters  
would already flow  
and wash our troubles away.  
Rolling fluid go  
cleanse my cares of days,  
over aches and groans  
like a river rushing through stones.

Death and change let nothing  
hold still, bad or good,  
and all disappears down the river of ages;  
till the fruit of faith in the end  
harvests all that's good  
of what's forgot.

So many things disappeared  
and which in the eyes of the many  
came to be as nothing,  
yet in their day were the very thing.

The leaves are dying with the year;  
orange, gold and red  
are o'er the lawns over spread;  
in a carpet they cover  
returning to earth their mother  
that in spring a new generation may appear.

The mundane, the physical  
is chained to time,  
but in the heart with faith  
the spirit survives the flood of years;  
where music lives ever  
that takes the soul to empyrean;  
as an eagle soars to dizzying height  
till it reaches a point beyond our sight.

How like a paradise  
the earth must have seemed  
when roses grew wild;  
birds first appeared  
in all their colors singing,  
majestic beasts wandering,  
animals frolicking,  
to wondering primitive man  
with lessons of true life.

Where did all the voices of life come from?  
What brings even the crows in droves  
to caw together on a fine day,  
or joins the sparrows in a throng to sing,  
upon the departure of storm,  
at the opening of Spring's dawn,  
that chirping, that golden warbling  
where music ever lives?

That scorned rosy-eyed view of things  
is still there;  
it is not gone;  
only it is in closed keeping  
till the world be purged of evil first;  
before being freed again.

And I thought  
if life is beautiful,  
it is because you,  
(and such like you)  
are so.  
And you are so  
because somehow, some way  
Nature in you sighs;  
that it lifts my heart  
up to the skies.

(Oct. 17, 2020)

### WHAT ISN'T KNOWN

Somewhere, way out there,  
over a dark and o'ercast sea,  
a storm rumbles and roars,  
but which no one of us sees.

It blizzards 'mid the high mountains,  
burying cliffs in snow;  
that by the hour piles up in feet,  
yet this no one of us knows.

Like memories wrapped  
in the murky mists of time:  
on a clear glowing day,  
a bright procession  
of splendor and pageantry,  
issues from Byzantium's gates,  
with naiveté and faith aglow:  
but now, alas, unknown.

But when winds drum and thunders in the trees  
or when a silent sea of stars appear,  
Oh then I remember  
that distant, beshadowed past  
of ages long ago,  
yet existing still  
in some eternal mind.

All lives must one day fade into the past  
that once bounded into life.  
Though oft I've wished  
to visit lands of ancient lore.  
how very near us yet passed by  
lies an unopened door!

A world that is more of a stranger to us  
and we a stranger to it than we know.  
For life went onto to peaks of joy,

only to lead some  
into a dark vale of woe.

Oh the comforts of life  
when they are there,  
how we wish life to be prolonged;  
until worry, fear and care  
make us forlorn.

One winter's night when silence  
of a seeming sudden overcame all,  
imagined going back in time;  
when family and neighbors were all to each other;  
and life was simpler but love as real as ever it was.  
a memory now forgot but in its day true.

Where the house nearby,  
now abandoned and empty,  
was a place people did feel;  
whose mutual love was to them forever;  
sad though now they are gone  
a memory now forgot,  
and to us only as forgotten  
is it real.

As successful or prosperous  
as anyone is,  
they are successful or prosperous  
in a world overflowing with grief.  
What then is success  
in a world like this?

Life is hard because there is so much to it.  
Life would have you juggle more than you would.  
But always look for the difference  
because a difference, some difference at least,  
is always and ever there.

Nature, with its grass and trees,  
birds and animals,  
clouds and sky and looks as fresh and new  
as the day after God made it.  
I saw a little girl all alone on the swing,  
energetically she sang,  
as if she saw life fresh and gay;  
like a bouquet flowering  
in variegated ways.

Then there was one time a grown infant  
being strolled along,  
smiling with bright eyes of innocence.  
And though I didn't know her,  
she smiled and waved exuberantly at me.  
Oh I bitterly groaned,

why must her eyes  
smile at everyone she sees?

From courageous hope and faith to joy,  
a future triumph known only in secret to the soul.  
The child holds the keys to joy:  
reject the child  
you reject joy.  
What is love if not ever enduring,  
at least that it last  
to return and bloom again one day?

The wisdom and past joys we forget  
the songs we so used to love that now are so forgot.  
But for this, but for that I could be happy.  
But for this but for that, happy I already am.  
For though Faith too has many dry spells,  
at times notwithstanding it will pour like rain.

(Dec. 28, 2023)