

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

Sweet and Low

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

from *The Princess*

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.
Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Early Spring

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Once more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throstles too.
Opens a door in heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.
Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods,
The woods with living airs
How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.
O, follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure!
Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell!
Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,

The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.
For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

Morning

Emily Dickinson

Will there really be a morning?
Is there such a thing as day?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?
Has it feet like water lilies?
Has it feathers like a bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I've never heard?
Oh, some scholar! Oh, some sailor!
Oh, some wise man from the skies!
Please to tell a little pilgrim
Where the place called morning lies!

Indian Summer

Emily Dickinson

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.
These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June, --
A blue and gold mistake.
Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,
Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air

Hurries a timid leaf!
Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,
Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

Autumn Thoughts

John Greenleaf Whittier

Gone hath the Spring, with all its flowers,
And gone the Summer's pomp and show,
And Autumn, in his leafless bowers,
Is waiting for the Winter's snow.
I said to Earth, so cold and gray,
"An emblem of myself thou art."
"Not so," the Earth did seem to say,
"For Spring shall warm my frozen heart."
I soothe my wintry sleep with dreams
Of warmer sun and softer rain,
And wait to hear the sound of streams
And songs of merry birds again.
But thou, from whom the Spring hath gone,
For whom the flowers no longer blow,
Who standest blighted and forlorn,
Like Autumn waiting for the snow;
No hope is thine of sunnier hours,
Thy Winter shall no more depart;
No Spring revive thy wasted flowers,
Nor Summer warm thy frozen heart.

A Day

John Greenleaf Whittier

Talk not of sad November, when a day
Of warm, glad sunshine fills the sky of noon,
And a wind, borrowed from some morn of June,

Stirs the brown grasses and the leafless spray.
On the unfrosted pool the pillared pines
Lay their long shafts of shadow: the small rill,
Singing a pleasant song of summer still,
A line of silver, down the hill-slope shines.
Hushed the bird-voices and the hum of bees,
In the thin grass the crickets pipe no more;
But still the squirrel hoards his winter store,
And drops his nut-shells from the shag-bark trees.
Softly the dark green hemlocks whisper: high
Above, the spires of yellowing larches show,
Where the woodpecker and home-loving crow
And jay and nut-hatch winter's threat defy.
O gracious beauty, ever new and old!
O sights and sounds of nature, doubly dear
When the low sunshine warns the closing year
Of snow-blown fields and waves of Arctic cold!
Close to my heart I fold each lovely thing
The sweet day yields; and, not disconsolate,
With the calm patience of the woods I wait
For leaf and blossom when God gives us Spring!

The Road Not Taken, Robert Frost (from *Mountain Interval*, 1916)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by
And that has made all the difference.

Mending Wall

Robert Frost

(from *North of Boston*, 1915)

Mending Wall takes up the theme where A Tuft of Flowers laid it down.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbours."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."

The Hound of Heaven

Francis Thompson

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;

I fled Him, down the arches of the years;

I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways

Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears

I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

5

Up vistaed hopes I sped;

And shot, precipitated,

Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,

From those strong Feet that followed, followed
after.

But with unhurrying chase, 10

And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

They beat—and a Voice beat

More instant than the Feet—
'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.' 15

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,

By many a hearted casement, curtained red,

Trellised with intertwining charities;

(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,

Yet was I sore adread 20

Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside).

But, if one little casement parted wide,

The gust of His approach would clash it to.

Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.

Across the margent of the world I fled, 25

And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,

Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;

Fretted to dulcet jars

And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.

I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon; 30

With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over

From this tremendous Lover—

Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!

I tempted all His servitors, but to find

My own betrayal in their constancy,

35

In faith to Him their fickleness to me,

Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;

Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.

But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,

40

The long savannahs of the blue;

Or whether, Thunder-driven,

They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,

Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their
feet:—

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

45

Still with unhurrying chase,

And unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

Came on the following Feet,

And a Voice above their beat—

50

'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

I sought no more that after which I strayed

In face of man or maid;

But still within the little children's eyes

Seems something, something that replies,

55

They at least are for me, surely for me!

I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair. 60

‘Come then, ye other children, Nature’s—share
With me’ (said I) ‘your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning 65

With our Lady-Mother’s vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured dais,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is, 70

From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.’
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature’s secrecies. 75

I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumèd of the wild sea-snotings;
All that’s born or dies 80

Rose and drooped with; made them shapers

Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;

With them joyed and was bereaven.

I was heavy with the even,

When she lit her glimmering tapers

85

Round the day's dead sanctities.

I laughed in the morning's eyes.

I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,

Heaven and I wept together,

And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;

90

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart

I laid my own to beat,

And share commingling heat;

But not by that, by that, was eased my human
smart.

In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.

95

For ah! we know not what each other says,

These things and I; in sound / speak—

Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.

Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;

Let her, if she would owe me,

100

Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me

The breasts o' her tenderness:

Never did any milk of hers once bless

My thirsting mouth.

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,

105

With unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;

And past those noisèd Feet

A voice comes yet more fleet—

‘Lo! naught contents thee, who content’st not Me!’

110

Naked I wait Thy love’s uplifted stroke!

My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from
me,

And smitten me to my knee;

I am defenceless utterly.

I slept, methinks, and woke,

115

And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.

In the rash lustihead of my young powers,

I shook the pillaring hours

And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,

I stand amid the dust o’ the mounded years—

120

My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.

My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,

Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream

The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;

125

Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist

I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,

Are yielding; cords of all too weak account

For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed

130

A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,

Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—

Designer infinite!—

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn
with it? 135

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;

And now my heart is as a broken fount,

Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver

Upon the sighful branches of my mind. 140

Such is; what is to be?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?

I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds

From the hid battlements of Eternity; 145

Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then

Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.

But not ere him who summoneth

I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned; 150

His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.

Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields

Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit 155

Comes on at hand the bruit;

That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:

‘And is thy earth so marred,

Shattered in shard on shard?

Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!

160

Strange, piteous, futile thing!

Wherefore should any set thee love apart?

Seeing none but I makes much of naught’ (He said),

‘And human love needs human meriting:

How hast thou merited—

165

Of all man’s clotted clay the dingiest clot?

Alack, thou knowest not

How little worthy of any love thou art!

Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,

Save Me, save only Me?

170

All which I took from thee I did but take,

Not for thy harms,

But just that thou might’st seek it in My arms.

All which thy child’s mistake

Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:

175

Rise, clasp My hand, and come!’

Halts by me that footfall:

Is my gloom, after all,

Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?

‘Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,

180

I am He Whom thou seekest!

Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'