# Poems and Ballads (Second Series)

by Algernon Charles Swinburne

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## Poems and Ballads

# Second Series

## By Algernon Charles Swinburne

Taken from The Collected Poetical Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne—Vol. III

## swinburne's poetical works

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Poems and Ballads (First Series).

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Songs Before Sunrise, and Songs of Two Nations.

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Poems and Ballads (Second and Third Series), and Songs of the Springtides.

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Tristram of Lyonesse, The Tale of Balen, Atalanta in Calydon, Erechtheus.

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A Midsummer Holiday, Astrophel, A channel Passage and Other Poems.

## LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

POEMS & BALLADS (SECOND AND THIRD SERIES) AND SONGS OF THE SPRINGTIDES

By Algernon Charles Swinburne

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# POEMS AND BALLADS

SECOND SERIES

INSCRIBED TO

# RICHARD F. BURTON

IN REDEMPTION OF AN OLD PLEDGE AND IN RECOGNITION OF A FRIENDSHIP WHICH I MUST ALWAYS COUNT AMONG THE HIGHEST HONOURS OF MY LIFE

# THE LAST ORACLE

(A.D. 361)

Image 1: Greek Text

Years have risen and fallen in darkness or in twilight, Ages waxed and waned that knew not thee nor thine, While the world sought light by night and sought not thy light, Since the sad last pilgrim left thy dark mid shrine. Dark the shrine and dumb the fount of song thence welling, Save for words more sad than tears of blood, that said: Tell the king, on earth has fallen the glorious dwelling, And the watersprings that spake are quenched and dead. Not a cell is left the God, no roof, no cover In his hand the prophet laurel flowers no more. And the great king's high sad heart, thy true last lover, Felt thine answer pierce and cleave it to the core. And he bowed down his hopeless head In the drift of the wild world's tide, And dying, Thou hast conquered, he said, Galilean; he said it, and died. And the world that was thine and was ours When the Graces took hands with the Hours Grew cold as a winter wave In the wind from a wide-mouthed grave, As a gulf wide open to swallow The light that the world held dear. O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo, Destroyer and healer, hear! Age on age thy mouth was mute, thy face was hidden, And the lips and eyes that loved thee blind and dumb; Song forsook their tongues that held thy name forbidden, Light their eyes that saw the strange God's kingdom come. Fire for light and hell for heaven and psalms for pæans Filled the clearest eyes and lips most sweet of song, When for chant of Greeks the wail of Galileans Made the whole

world moan with hymns of wrath and wrong. Yea, not yet we see thee, father, as they saw thee, They that worshipped when the world was theirs and thine, They whose words had power by thine own power to draw thee Down from heaven till earth seemed more than heaven divine. For the shades are about us that hover When darkness is half withdrawn And the skirts of the dead night cover The face of the live new dawn. For the past is not utterly past Though the word on its lips be the last, And the time be gone by with its creed When men were as beasts that bleed, As sheep or as swine that wallow, In the shambles of faith and of fear. O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo, Destroyer and healer, hear! Yet it may be, lord and father, could we know it, We that love thee for our darkness shall have light More than ever prophet hailed of old or poet Standing crowned and robed and sovereign in thy sight. To the likeness of one God their dreams enthralled thee, Who wast greater than all Gods that waned and grew; Son of God the shining son of Time they called thee, Who wast older, O our father, than they knew. For no thought of man made Gods to love or honour Ere the song within the silent soul began, Nor might earth in dream or deed take heaven upon her Till the word was clothed with speech by lips of man. And the word and the life wast thou, The spirit of man and the breath; And before thee the Gods that bow Take life at thine hands and death. For these are as ghosts that wane, That are gone in an age or twain; Harsh, merciful, passionate, pure, They perish, but thou shalt endure; Be their flight with the swan or the swallow, They pass as the flight of a year. O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo, Destroyer and healer, hear! Thou the word, the light, the life, the breath, the glory, Strong to help and heal, to lighten and to slay, Thine is all the song of man, the world's whole story; Not of morning and of evening is thy day. Old and younger Gods are buried or begotten From uprising to downsetting of thy sun, Risen from eastward, fallen to westward and forgotten, And their springs are many, but their end is one. Divers births of godheads find one death appointed, As the soul whence each was born makes room for each; God by God goes out, discrowned and disanointed, But the soul stands fast

that gave them shape and speech. Is the sun yet cast out of heaven? Is the song yet cast out of man? Life that had song for its leaven To quicken the blood that ran Through the veins of the songless years More bitter and cold than tears, Heaven that had thee for its one Light, life, word, witness, O sun, Are they soundless and sightless and hollow, Without eye, without speech, without ear? O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo, Destroyer and healer, hear! Time arose and smote thee silent at his warning, Change and darkness fell on men that fell from thee; Dark thou satest, veiled with light, behind the morning, Till the soul of man should lift up eyes and see. Till the blind mute soul get speech again and eyesight, Man may worship not the light of life within; In his sight the stars whose fires grow dark in thy sight Shine as sunbeams on the night of death and sin. Time again is risen with mightier word of warning, Change hath blown again a blast of louder breath; Clothed with clouds and stars and dreams that melt in morning, Lo, the Gods that ruled by grace of sin and death! They are conquered, they break, they are stricken, Whose might made the whole world pale; They are dust that shall rise not or quicken Though the world for their death's sake wail. As a hound on a wild beast's trace, So time has their godhead in chase; As wolves when the hunt makes head, They are scattered, they fly, they are fled; They are fled beyond hail, beyond hollo, And the cry of the chase, and the cheer. O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo, Destroyer and healer, hear! Day by day thy shadow shines in heaven beholden, Even the sun, the shining shadow of thy face: King, the ways of heaven before thy feet grow golden; God, the soul of earth is kindled with thy grace. In thy lips the speech of man whence Gods were fashioned, In thy soul the thought that makes them and unmakes; By thy light and heat incarnate and impassioned, Soul to soul of man gives light for light and takes. As they knew thy name of old time could we know it, Healer called of sickness, slayer invoked of wrong, Light of eyes that saw thy light, God, king, priest, poet, Song should bring thee back to heal us with thy song. For thy kingdom is past not away, Nor thy power from the place thereof hurled; Out of heaven they shall cast not the

day, They shall cast not out song from the world. By the song and the light they give We know thy works that they live; With the gift thou hast given us of speech We praise, we adore, we beseech, We arise at thy bidding and follow, We cry to thee, answer, appear, O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo, Destroyer and healer, hear!

## IN THE BAY

I Beyond the hollow sunset, ere a star Take heart in heaven from eastward, while the west, Fulfilled of watery resonance and rest, Is as a port with clouds for harbour bar To fold the fleet in of the winds from far That stir no plume now of the bland sea's breast:

II Above the soft sweep of the breathless bay Southwestward, far past flight of night and day, Lower than the sunken sunset sinks, and higher Than dawn can freak the front of heaven with fire, My thought with eyes and wings made wide makes way To find the place of souls that I desire.

III If any place for any soul there be, Disrobed and disentrammelled; if the might, The fire and force that filled with ardent light The souls whose shadow is half the light we see, Survive and be suppressed not of the night; This hour should show what all day hid from me.

IV Night knows not, neither is it shown to day, By sunlight nor by starlight is it shown, Nor to the full moon's eye nor footfall known, Their world's untrodden and unkindled way. Nor is the breath nor music of it blown With sounds of winter or with winds of May.

V But here, where light and darkness reconciled Hold earth between them as a weanling child Between the balanced hands of death and birth, Even as they held the newborn shape of earth When first life trembled in her limbs and smiled, Here hope might think to find what hope were worth.

VI Past Hades, past Elysium, past the long Slow smooth strong lapse of Lethe—past

the toil Wherein all souls are taken as a spoil, The Stygian web of waters—if your song Be quenched not, O our brethren, but be strong As ere ye too shook off our temporal coil;

VII If yet these twain survive your worldly breath, Joy trampling sorrow, life devouring death, If perfect life possess your life all through And like your words your souls be deathless too, Tonight, of all whom night encompasseth, My soul would commune with one soul of you.

VIII Above the sunset might I see thine eyes That were above the sundawn in our skies, Son of the songs of morning,—thine that were First lights to lighten that rekindling air Wherethrough men saw the front of England rise And heard thine loudest of the lyrenotes there—

IX If yet thy fire have not one spark the less, O Titan, born of her a Titaness, Across the sunrise and the sunset's mark Send of thy lyre one sound, thy fire one spark, To change this face of our unworthiness, Across this hour dividing light from dark.

X To change this face of our chill time, that hears No song like thine of all that crowd its ears, Of all its lights that lighten all day long Sees none like thy most fleet and fiery sphere's Outlightening Sirius—in its twilight throng No thunder and no sunrise like thy song.

XI Hath not the seawind swept the sealine bare To pave with stainless fire through stainless air A passage for thine heavenlier feet to tread Ungrieved of earthly floorwork? hath it spread No covering splendid as the sungod's hair To veil or to reveal thy lordlier head?

XII Hath not the sunset strewn across the sea A way majestical enough for thee? What hour save this should be thine hour—and mine, If thou have care of any less divine Than thine own soul; if thou take thought of me, Marlowe, as all my soul takes thought of thine?

XIII Before the moon's face as before the sun The morning star and evening star are

one For all men's lands as England. O, if night Hang hard upon us,—ere our day take flight, Shed thou some comfort from thy day long done On us pale children of the latter light!

XIV For surely, brother and master and lord and king, Where'er thy footfall and thy face make spring In all souls' eyes that meet thee wheresoe'er, And have thy soul for sunshine and sweet air— Some late love of thine old live land should cling, Some living love of England, round thee there.

XV Here from her shore across her sunniest sea My soul makes question of the sun for thee, And waves and beams make answer. When thy feet Made her ways flowerier and their flowers more sweet With childlike passage of a god to be, Like spray these waves cast off her foemen's fleet.

XVI Like foam they flung it from her, and like weed Its wrecks were washed from scornful shoal to shoal, From rock to rock reverberate; and the whole Sea laughed and lightened with a deathless deed That sowed our enemies in her field for seed And made her shores fit harbourage for thy soul.

XVII Then in her green south fields, a poor man's child, Thou hadst thy short sweet fill of halfblown joy, That ripens all of us for time to cloy With fullblown pain and passion; ere the wild World caught thee by the fiery heart, and smiled To make so swift end of the godlike boy.

XVIII For thou, if ever godlike foot there trod These fields of ours, wert surely like a god. Who knows what splendour of strange dreams was shed With sacred shadow and glimmer of gold and red From hallowed windows, over stone and sod, On thine unbowed bright insubmissive head?

XIX The shadow stayed not, but the splendour stays, Our brother, till the last of English days. No day nor night on English earth shall be For ever, spring nor summer, Junes nor Mays, But somewhat as a sound or gleam of thee Shall come on us like morning from the sea.

XX Like sunrise never wholly risen, nor yet Quenched; or like sunset never wholly set, A light to lighten as from living eyes The cold unlit close lids of one that lies Dead, or a ray returned from death's far skies To fire us living lest our lives forget.

XXI For in that heaven what light of lights may be, What splendour of what stars, what spheres of flame Sounding, that none may number nor may name, We know not, even thy brethren; yea, not we Whose eyes desire the light that lightened thee, Whose ways and thine are one way and the same.

XXII But if the riddles that in sleep we read, And trust them not, be flattering truth indeed, As he that rose our mightiest called them,—he, Much higher than thou as thou much higher than we— There, might we say, all flower of all our seed, All singing souls are as one sounding sea.

XXIII All those that here were of thy kind and kin, Beside thee and below thee, full of love, Fullsouled for song,—and one alone above Whose only light folds all your glories in— With all birds' notes from nightingale to dove Fill the world whither we too fain would win.

XXIV The world that sees in heaven the sovereign light Of sunlike Shakespeare, and the fiery night Whose stars were watched of Webster; and beneath, The twinsouled brethren of the single wreath, Grown in kings' gardens, plucked from pastoral heath, Wrought with all flowers for all men's heart's delight.

XXV And that fixed fervour, ironred like Mars, In the mid moving tide of tenderer stars, That burned on loves and deeds the darkest done, Athwart the incestuous prisoner's bridehouse bars; And thine, most highest of all their fires but one, Our morning star, sole risen before the sun.

XXVI And one light risen since theirs to run such race Thou hast seen, O Phosphor, from thy pride of place. Thou hast seen Shelley, him that was to thee As light to fire or dawn to lightning; me, Me likewise, O our brother, shalt thou see, And I behold thee, face to glorious face?

XXVII You twain the same swift year of manhood swept Down the steep darkness, and our father wept. And from the gleam of Apollonian tears A holier aureole rounds your memories, kept Most ferventfresh of all the singing spheres, And Aprilcoloured through all months and years.

XXVIII You twain fate spared not half your fiery span; The longer date fulfils the lesser man. Ye from beyond the dark dividing date Stand smiling, crowned as gods with foot on fate. For stronger was your blessing than his ban, And earliest whom he struck, he struck too late.

XXIX Yet love and loathing, faith and unfaith yet Bind less to greater souls in unison, And one desire that makes three spirits as one Takes great and small as in one spiritual net Woven out of hope toward what shall yet be done Ere hate or love remember or forget.

XXX Woven out of faith and hope and love too great To bear the bonds of life and death and fate: Woven out of love and hope and faith too dear To take the print of doubt and change and fear: And interwoven with lines of wrath and hate Bloodred with soils of many a sanguine year.

XXXI Who cannot hate, can love not; if he grieve, His tears are barren as the unfruitful rain That rears no harvest from the green sea's plain, And as thorns crackling this man's laugh is vain. Nor can belief touch, kindle, smite, reprieve His heart who has not heart to disbelieve.

XXXII But you, most perfect in your hate and love, Our great twinspirited brethren; you that stand Head by head glittering, hand made fast in hand, And underfoot the fangdrawn worm that strove To wound you living; from so far above, Look love, not scorn, on ours that was your land.

XXXIII For love we lack, and help and heat and light To clothe us and to comfort us with might. What help is ours to take or give? but ye— O, more than sunrise to the blind cold sea, That wailed aloud with all her waves all night, Much more, being

much more glorious, should you be.

XXXIV As fire to frost, as ease to toil, as dew To flowerless fields, as sleep to slackening pain, As hope to souls long weaned from hope again Returning, or as blood revived anew To drydrawn limbs and every pulseless vein, Even so toward us should no man be but you.

XXXV One rose before the sunrise was, and one Before the sunset, lovelier than the sun. And now the heaven is dark and bright and loud With wind and starry drift and moon and cloud, And night's cry rings in straining sheet and shroud, What help is ours if hope like yours be none?

XXXVI O wellbeloved, our brethren, if ye be, Then are we not forsaken. This kind earth Made fragrant once for all time with your birth, And bright for all men with your love, and worth The clasp and kiss and wedlock of the sea, Were not your mother if not your brethren we.

XXXVII Because the days were dark with gods and kings And in time's hand the old hours of time as rods, When force and fear set hope and faith at odds, Ye failed not nor abased your plumeplucked wings; And we that front not more disastrous things, How should we fail in face of kings and gods?

XXXVIII For now the deep dense plumes of night are thinned Surely with winnowing of the glimmering wind Whose feet are fledged with morning; and the breath Begins in heaven that sings the dark to death. And all the night wherein men groaned and sinned Sickens at heart to hear what sundawn saith.

XXXIX O firstborn sons of hope and fairest, ye Whose prows first clove the thoughtunsounded sea Whence all the dark dead centuries rose to bar The spirit of man lest truth should make him free, The sunrise and the sunset, seeing one star, Take heart as we to know you that ye are.

XL Ye rise not and ye set not; we that say Ye rise and set like hopes that set and rise Look yet but seaward from a landlocked bay; But where at last the sea's line is the

sky's And truth and hope one sunlight in your eyes, No sunrise and no sunset marks their day.

## A FORSAKEN GARDEN

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland, At the seadown's edge between windward and lee, Walled round with rocks as an inland island, The ghost of a garden fronts the sea. A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses The steep square slope of the blossomless bed Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses Now lie dead. The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken, To the low last edge of the long lone land. If a step should sound or a word be spoken, Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand? So long have the grey bare walks lain guestless, Through branches and briars if a man make way, He shall find no life but the seawind's, restless Night and day. The dense hard passage is blind and stifled That crawls by a track none turn to climb To the strait waste place that the years have rifled Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time. The thorns he spares when the rose is taken; The rocks are left when he wastes the plain. The wind that wanders, the weeds windshaken, These remain. Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not; As the heart of a dead man the seedplots are dry; From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not, Could she call, there were never a rose to reply. Over the meadows that blossom and wither Rings but the note of a seabird's song; Only the sun and the rain come hither All year long. The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath. Only the wind here hovers and revels In a round where life seems barren as death. Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping, Haply, of lovers none ever will know, Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping Years ago. Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither," Did he whisper? "look forth from the flowers to the sea; For the foamflowers endure when the roseblossoms wither, And men that love

lightly may die—but we?" And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened, And or ever the garden's last petals were shed, In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened, Love was dead. Or they loved their life through, and then went whither? And were one to the end—but what end who knows? Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither, As the rosered seaweed that mocks the rose. Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them? What love was ever as deep as a grave? They are loveless now as the grass above them Or the wave. All are at one now, roses and lovers, Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea. Not a breath of the time that has been hovers In the air now soft with a summer to be. Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep, When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter We shall sleep. Here death may deal not again for ever; Here change may come not till all change end. From the graves they have made they shall rise up never, Who have left nought living to ravage and rend. Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing, While the sun and the rain live, these shall be; Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing Roll the sea. Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble, Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink, Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink, Here now in his triumph where all things falter, Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread, As a god selfslain on his own strange altar, Death lies dead.

## RELICS

This flower that smells of honey and the sea, White laurustine, seems in my hand to be A white star made of memory long ago Lit in the heaven of dear times dead to me. A star out of the skies love used to know Here held in hand, a stray left yet to show What flowers my heart was full of in the days That are long since gone down dead memory's flow. Dead memory that revives on doubtful ways, Half hearkening

what the buried season says Out of the world of the unapparent dead Where the lost Aprils are, and the lost Mays. Flower, once I knew thy starwhite brethren bred Nigh where the last of all the land made head Against the sea, a keenfaced promontory, Flowers on salt wind and sprinkled seadews fed. Their hearts were glad of the free place's glory; The wind that sang them all his stormy story Had talked all winter to the sleepless spray, And as the sea's their hues were hard and hoary. Like things born of the sea and the bright day, They laughed out at the years that could not slay, Live sons and joyous of unquiet hours, And stronger than all storms that range for prey. And in the close indomitable flowers A keenedged odour of the sun and showers Was as the smell of the fresh honeycomb Made sweet for mouths of none but paramours. Out of the hard green wall of leaves that clomb They showed like windfalls of the snowsoft foam, Or feathers from the weary southwind's wing, Fair as the spray that it came shoreward from. And thou, as white, what word hast thou to bring? If my heart hearken, whereof wilt thou sing? For some sign surely thou too hast to bear, Some word far south was taught thee of the spring. White like a white rose, not like these that were Taught of the wind's mouth and the winter air, Poor tender thing of soft Italian bloom, Where once thou grewest, what else for me grew there? Born in what spring and on what city's tomb, By whose hand wast thou reached, and plucked for whom? There hangs about thee, could the soul's sense tell, An odour as of love and of love's doom. Of days more sweet than thou wast sweet to smell, Of flowersoft thoughts that came to flower and fell, Of loves that lived a lily's life and died, Of dreams now dwelling where dead roses dwell. O white birth of the golden mountainside That for the sun's love makes its bosom wide At sunrise, and with all its woods and flowers Takes in the morning to its heart of pride! Thou hast a word of that one land of ours, And of the fair town called of the Fair Towers, A word for me of my San Gimignan, A word of April's greenestgirdled hours. Of the old breached walls whereon the wallflowers ran Called of Saint Fina, breachless now of man, Though time with soft feet break

them stone by stone, Who breaks down hour by hour his own reign's span. Of the old cliff overcome and overgrown That all that flowerage clothed as flesh clothes bone, That garment of acacias made for May, Whereof here lies one witness overblown. The fair brave trees with all their flowers at play, How kinglike they stood up into the day! How sweet the day was with them, and the night! Such words of message have dead flowers to say. This that the winter and the wind made bright, And this that lived upon Italian light, Before I throw them and these words away, Who knows but I what memories too take flight?

## AT A MONTH'S END

The night last night was strange and shaken: More strange the change of you and me. Once more, for the old love's love forsaken, We went out once more toward the sea. For the old love's lovesake dead and buried, One last time, one more and no more, We watched the waves set in, the serried Spears of the tide storming the shore. Hardly we saw the high moon hanging, Heard hardly through the windy night Far waters ringing, low reefs clanging, Under wan skies and waste white light. With chafe and change of surges chiming, The clashing channels rocked and rang Large music, wave to wild wave timing, And all the choral water sang. Faint lights fell this way, that way floated, Quick sparks of seafire keen like eyes From the rolled surf that flashed, and noted Shores and faint cliffs and bays and skies. The ghost of sea that shrank up sighing At the sand's edge, a short sad breath Trembling to touch the goal, and dying With weak heart heaved up once in death— The rustling sand and shingle shaken With light sweet touches and small sound— These could not move us, could not waken Hearts to look forth, eyes to look round. Silent we went an hour together, Under grey skies by waters white. Our hearts were full of windy weather, Clouds and blown stars and broken light. Full of cold clouds and moonbeams drifted And streaming storms and straying fires, Our souls in us were stirred and shifted By

doubts and dreams and foiled desires. Across, aslant, a scudding seamew Swam, dipped, and dropped, and grazed the sea: And one with me I could not dream you; And one with you I could not be. As the white wing the white wave's fringes Touched and slid over and flashed past— As a pale cloud a pale flame tinges From the moon's lowest light and last— As a star feels the sun and falters, Touched to death by diviner eyes— As on the old gods' untended altars The old lire of withered worship dies— (Once only, once the shrine relighted Sees the last fiery shadow shine, Last shadow of flame and faith benighted, Sees falter and flutter and fail the shrine) So once with fiery breath and flying Your winged heart touched mine and went, And the swift spirits kissed, and sighing, Sundered and smiled and were content. That only touch, that feeling only, Enough we found, we found too much; For the unlit shrine is hardly lonely As one the old fire forgets to touch. Slight as the sea's sight of the seamew, Slight as the sun's sight of the star: Enough to show one must not deem you For love's sake other than you are. Who snares and tames with fear and danger A bright beast of a fiery kin, Only to mar, only to change her Sleek supple soul and splendid skin? Easy with blows to mar and maim her, Easy with bonds to bind and bruise; What profit, if she yield her tamer The limbs to mar, the soul to lose? Best leave or take the perfect creature, Take all she is or leave complete; Transmute you will not form or feature, Change feet for wings or wings for feet. Strange eyes, new limbs, can no man give her; Sweet is the sweet thing as it is. No soul she hath, we see, to outlive her; Hath she for that no lips to kiss? So may one read his weird, and reason, And with vain drugs assuage no pain. For each man in his loving season Fools and is fooled of these in vain. Charms that allay not any longing, Spells that appease not any grief, Time brings us all by handfuls, wronging All hurts with nothing of relief. Ah, too soon shot, the fool's bolt misses! What help? the world is full of loves; Night after night of running kisses, Chirp after chirp of changing doves. Should Love disown or disesteem you For loving one man more or less? You could not tame your light white seamew, Nor I my sleek black

pantheress. For a new soul let whoso please pray, We are what life made us, and shall be. For you the jungle and me the seaspray, And south for you and north for me. But this one broken foamwhite feather I throw you off the hither wing, Splashed stiff with seascurf and salt weather, This song for sleep to learn and sing— Sing in your ear when, daytime over, You, couched at long length on hot sand With some sleek sundiscoloured lover, Wince from his breach as from a brand: Till the acrid hour aches out and ceases, And the sheathed eyeball sleepier swims, The deep flank smoothes its dimpling creases. And passion loosens all the limbs: Till dreams of sharp grey northsea weather Fall faint upon your fiery sleep, As on strange sands a strayed bird's feather The wind may choose to lose or keep. But I, who leave my queen of panthers, As a tired honeyheavy bee Gilt with sweet dust from goldgrained anthers Leaves the rosechalice, what for me? From the ardours of the chaliced centre, From the amorous anthers' golden grime, That scorch and smutch all wings that enter, I fly forth hot from honeytime. But as to a bee's gilt thighs and winglets The flowerdust with the flowersmell clings; As a snake's mobile rampant ringlets Leave the sand marked with print of rings; So to my soul in surer fashion Your savage stamp and savour hangs; The print and perfume of old passion, The wildbeast mark of panther's fangs.

## SESTINA

I saw my soul at rest upon a day As a bird sleeping in the nest of night, Among soft leaves that give the starlight way To touch its wings but not its eyes with light; So that it knew as one in visions may, And knew not as men waking, of delight. This was the measure of my soul's delight; It had no power of joy to fly by day, Nor part in the large lordship of the light; But in a secret moonbeholden way Had all its will of dreams and pleasant night, And all the love and life that sleepers may. But such life's triumph as men waking may It might not have to feed its faint delight Between

the stars by night and sun by day, Shut up with green leaves and a little light; Because its way was as a lost star's way, A world's not wholly known of day or night. All loves and dreams and sounds and gleams of night Made it all music that such minstrels may, And all they had they gave it of delight; But in the full face of the fire of day What place shall be for any starry light, What part of heaven in all the wide sun's way? Yet the soul woke not, sleeping by the way, Watched as a nursling of the largeeyed night, And sought no strength nor knowledge of the day, Nor closer touch conclusive of delight, Nor mightier joy nor truer than dreamers may, Nor more of song than they, nor more of light. For who sleeps once and sees the secret light Whereby sleep shows the soul a fairer way Between the rise and rest of day and night, Shall care no more to fare as all men may, But be his place of pain or of delight, There shall he dwell, beholding night as day. Song, have thy day and take thy fill of light Before the night be fallen across thy way; Sing while he may, man hath no long delight.

## THE YEAR OF THE ROSE

From the depths of the green gardencloses Where the summer in darkness dozes Till autumn pluck from his hand An hourglass that holds not a sand; From the maze that a flowerbelt encloses To the stones and seagrass on the strand How red was the reign of the roses Over the rosecrowned land! The year of the rose is brief; From the first blade blown to the sheaf, From the thin green leaf to the gold, It has time to be sweet and grow old, To triumph and leave not a leaf For witness in winter's sight How lovers once in the light Would mix their breath with its breath, And its spirit was quenched not of night, As love is subdued not of death. In the redrose land not a mile Of the meadows from stile to stile, Of the valleys from stream to stream, But the air was a long sweet dream And the earth was a sweet wide smile Redmouthed of a goddess, returned From the sea which had borne her

and burned, That with one swift smile of her mouth Looked full on the north as it yearned, And the north was more than the south. For the north, when winter was long, In his heart had made him a song, And clothed it with wings of desire, And shod it with shoon as of fire, To carry the tale of his wrong To the southwest wind by the sea. That none might bear it but he To the ear of the goddess unknown Who waits till her time shall be To take the world for a throne. In the earth beneath, and above In the heaven where her name is love, She warms with light from her eyes The seasons of life as they rise, And her eyes are as eyes of a dove, But the wings that lift her and bear As an eagle's, and all her hair As fire by the wind's breath curled, And her passage is song through the air, And her presence is spring through the world. So turned she northward and came, And the whitethorn land was aflame With the fires that were shed from her feet, That the north, by her love made sweet, Should be called by a rosered name; And a murmur was heard as of doves, And a music beginning of loves In the light that the roses made, Such light as the music loves, The music of man with maid. But the days drop one upon one, And a chill soft wind is begun In the heart of the rosered maze That weeps for the roseleaf days And the reign of the rose undone That ruled so long in the light, And by spirit, and not by sight, Through the darkness thrilled with its breath, Still ruled in the viewless night, As love might rule over death. The time of lovers is brief; From the fair first joy to the grief That tells when love is grown old, From the warm wild kiss to the cold, From the red to the whiterose leaf, They have but a season to seem As roseleaves lost on a stream That part not and pass not apart As a spirit from dream to dream, As a sorrow from heart to heart. From the bloom and the gloom that encloses The deathbed of Love where he dozes Till a relic be left not of sand To the hourglass that breaks in his hand; From the change in the grey gardencloses To the last stray grass of the strand, A rain and ruin of roses Over the redrose land

## A WASTED VIGIL

I Couldst thou not watch with me one hour? Behold, Dawn skims the sea with flying feet of gold, With sudden feet that graze the gradual sea; Couldst thou not watch with me? II What, not one hour? for star by star the night Falls, and her thousands world by world take flight; They die, and day survives, and what of thee? Couldst thou not watch with me? III Lo, far in heaven the web of night undone, And on the sudden sea the gradual sun; Wave to wave answers, tree responds to tree; Couldst thou not watch with me? IV Sunbeam by sunbeam creeps from line to line, Foam by foam quickens on the brightening brine; Sail by sail passes, flower by flower gets free; Couldst thou not watch with me? V Last year, a brief while since, an age ago, A whole year past, with bud and bloom and snow, O moon that wast in heaven, what friends were we! Couldst thou not watch with me? VI Old moons, and last year's flowers, and last year's snows! Who now saith to thee, moon? or who saith, rose? O dust and ashes, once found fair to see! Couldst thou not watch with me? VII O dust and ashes, once thought sweet to smell! With me it is not, is it with thee well? O seadrift blown from windward back to lee! Couldst thou not watch with me? VIII The old year's dead hands are full of their dead flowers. The old days are full of dead old loves of ours, Born as a rose, and briefer born than she; Couldst thou not watch with me? IX Could two days live again of that dead year, One would say, seeking us and passing here, Where is she? and one answering, Where is he? Couldst thou not watch with me? X Nay, those two lovers are not anywhere; If we were they, none knows us what we were, Nor aught of all their barren grief and glee. Couldst thou not watch with me? XI Half false, half fair, all feeble, be my verse Upon thee not for blessing nor for curse; For some must stand, and some must fall or flee; Couldst thou not watch with me? XII As a new moon above spent stars thou wast; But stars endure after the moon is past. Couldst thou not watch one hour, though I watch three? Couldst thou not watch with me? XIII What of the night? The night is full, the tide Storms inland, the most ancient rocks divide; Yet some endure, and bow nor head nor knee; Couldst thou not watch with me? XIV Since thou art not as these are,

go thy ways; Thou hast no part in all my nights and days. Lie still, sleep on, be glad—as such things be; Thou couldst not watch with me.

## THE COMPLAINT OF LISA

(Double Sestina) Decameron, x. 7

There is no woman living that draws breath So sad as I, though all things sadden her. There is not one upon life's weariest way Who is weary as I am weary of all but death. Toward whom I look as looks the sunflower All day with all his whole soul toward the sun; While in the sun's sight I make moan all day, And all night on my sleepless maiden bed Weep and call out on death, O Love, and thee, That thou or he would take me to the dead, And know not what thing evil I have done That life should lay such heavy hand on me. Alas, Love, what is this thou wouldst with me? What honour shall thou have to quench my breath, Or what shall my heart broken profit thee? O Love, O great god Love, what have I done, That thou shouldst hunger so after my death? My heart is harmless as my life's first day: Seek out some false fair woman, and plague her Till her tears even as my tears fill her bed: I am the least flower in thy flowery way, But till my time be come that I be dead Let me live out my flowertime in the sun Though my leaves shut before the sunflower. O Love, Love, Love, the kingly sunflower! Shall he the sun hath looked on look on me, That live down here in shade, out of the sun, Here living in the sorrow and shadow of death? Shall he that feeds his heart full of the day Care to give mine eyes light, or my lips breath? Because she loves him shall my lord love her Who is as a worm in my lord's kingly way? I shall not see him or know him alive or dead; But thou, I know thee, O Love, and pray to thee That in brief while my brief lifedays be done, And the worm quickly make my marriagebed. For underground there is no sleepless bed: But here since I beheld my sunflower These eyes have slept not, seeing all night and day His sunlike eyes, and face fronting the sun. Wherefore if

anywhere be any death, I would fain find and fold him fast to me, That I may sleep with the world's eldest dead, With her that died seven centuries since, and her That went last night down the nightwandering way. For this is sleep indeed, when labour is done, Without love, without dreams, and without breath, And without thought, O name unnamed! of thee. Ah, but, forgetting all things, shall I thee? Wilt thou not be as now about my bed There underground as here before the sun? Shall not thy vision vex me alive and dead, Thy moving vision without form or breath? I read long since the bitter tale of her Who read the tale of Launcelot on a day, And died, and had no quiet after death, But was moved ever along a weary way, Lost with her love in the underworld; ah me, O my king, O my lordly sunflower, Would God to me too such a thing were done! But if such sweet and bitter things be done, Then, flying from life, I shall not fly from thee. For in that living world without a sun Thy vision will lay hold upon me dead, And meet and mock me, and mar my peace in death. Yet if being wroth God had such pity on her, Who was a sinner and foolish in her day, That even in hell they twain should breathe one breath, Why should he not in some wise pity me? So if I sleep not in my soft strait bed I may look up and see my sunflower As he the sun, in some divine strange way. O poor my heart, well knowest thou in what way This sore sweet evil unto us was done. For on a holy and a heavy day I was arisen out of my still small bed To see the knights tilt, and one said to me "The king," and seeing him, somewhat stopped my breath, And if the girl spake more, I heard not her, For only I saw what I shall see when dead, A kingly flower of knights, a sunflower, That shone against the sunlight like the sun, And like a fire, O heart, consuming thee, The fire of love that lights the pyre of death. Howbeit I shall not die an evil death Who have loved in such a sad and sinless way, That this my love, lord, was no shame to thee. So when mine eyes are shut against the sun, O my soul's sun, O the world's sunflower, Thou nor no man will quite despise me dead. And dying I pray with all my low last breath That thy whole life may be as was that day, That feastday that made trothplight death and me,

Giving the world light of thy great deeds done; And that fair face brightening thy bridal bed, That God be good as God hath been to her. That all things goodly and glad remain with her, All things that make glad life and goodly death; That as a bee sucks from a sunflower Honey, when summer draws delighted breath, Her soul may drink of thy soul in like way, And love make life a fruitful marriagebed Where day may bring forth fruits of joy to day And night to night till days and nights be dead. And as she gives light of her love to thee, Give thou to her the old glory of days long done; And either give some heat of light to me, To warm me where I sleep without the sun. O sunflower made drunken with the sun, O knight whose lady's heart draws thine to her, Great king, glad lover, I have a word to thee. There is a weed lives out of the sun's way, Hid from the heat deep in the meadow's bed, That swoons and whitens at the wind's least breath, A flower starshaped, that all a summer day Will gaze her soul out on the sunflower For very love till twilight finds her dead. But the great sunflower heeds not her poor death, Knows not when all her loving life is done; And so much knows my lord the king of me. Aye, all day long he has no eye for me; With golden eye following the golden sun From rosecoloured to purplepillowed bed, From birthplace to the flamelit place of death, From eastern end to western of his way. So mine eye follows thee, my sunflower, So the white starflower turns and yearns to thee, The sick weak weed, not well alive or dead, Trod underfoot if any pass by her, Pale, without colour of summer or summer breath In the shrunk shuddering petals, that have done No work but love, and die before the day. But thou, today, tomorrow, and every day, Be glad and great, O love whose love slays me. Thy fervent flower made fruitful from the sun Shall drop its golden seed in the world's way, That all men thereof nourished shall praise thee For grain and flower and fruit of works well done; Till thy shed seed, O shining sunflower, Bring forth such growth of the world's gardenbed As like the sun shall outlive age and death. And yet I would thine heart had heed of her Who loves thee alive; but not till she be dead. Come, Love, then, quickly, and take her utmost breath. Song, speak

for me who am dumb as are the dead; From my sad bed of tears I send forth thee, To fly all day from sun's birth to sun's death Down the sun's way after the flying sun, For love of her that gave thee wings and breath, Ere day be done, to seek the sunflower.

## FOR THE FEAST OF GIORDANO BRUNO,

PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR

I Son of the lightning and the light that glows Beyond the lightning's or the morning's light, Soul splendid with allrighteous love of right, In whose keen fire all hopes and fears and woes Were clean consumed, and from their ashes rose Transfigured, and intolerable to sight Save of purged eyes whose lids had cast off night, In love's and wisdom's likeness when they close, Embracing, and between them truth stands fast, Embraced of either; thou whose feet were set On English earth while this was England yet, Our friend that art, our Sidney's friend that wast, Heart hardier found and higher than all men's past, Shall we not praise thee though thine own forget? II Lift up thy light on us and on thine own, O soul whose spirit on earth was as a rod To scourge off priests, a sword to pierce their God, A staff for man's free thought to walk alone, A lamp to lead him far from shrine and throne On ways untrodden where his fathers trod Ere earth's heart withered at a high priest's nod And all men's mouths that made not prayer made moan. From bonds and torments and the ravening flame Surely thy spirit of sense rose up to greet Lucretius, where such only spirits meet, And walk with him apart till Shelley came To make the heaven of heavens more heavenly sweet And mix with yours a third incorporate name.

## AVE ATQUE VALE

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Nous devrions pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs; Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs, Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres, Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres, Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats. Les Fleurs du Mal.

I Shall I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel, Brother, on this that was the veil of thee? Or quiet seaflower moulded by the sea, Or simplest growth of meadowsweet or sorrel, Such as the summersleepy Dryads weave, Waked up by snowsoft sudden rains at eve? Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before, Halffaded fiery blossoms, pale with heat And full of bitter summer, but more sweet To thee than gleanings of a northern shore Trod by no tropic feet? II For always thee the fervid languid glories Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies; Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories, The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave That knows not where is that Leucadian grave Which hides too deep the supreme head of song. Ah, salt and sterile as her kisses were, The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong, Blind gods that cannot spare. III Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother, Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us: Fierce loves, and lovely leafbuds poisonous, Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other Blowing by night in some unbreathedin clime; The hidden harvest of luxurious time, Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech; And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep; And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each, Seeing as men sow men reap. IV O sleepless heart and sombre soul unsleeping, That were athirst for sleep and no more life And no more love, for peace and no more strife! Now the dim gods of death have in their keeping Spirit and body and all the springs of song, Is it well now where love can do no wrong, Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang Behind the unopening closure of her lips? Is it not well where soul from body slips And flesh from bone divides without a pang As dew from flowerbell drips? V It is enough; the end and the beginning Are one thing to thee,

who art past the end. O hand unclasped of unbeholden friend, For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for winning, No triumph and no labour and no lust, Only dead yewleaves and a little dust. O quiet eyes wherein the light saith nought, Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night With obscure finger silences your sight, Nor in your speech the sudden soul speaks thought, Sleep, and have sleep for light. VI Now all strange hours and all strange loves are over, Dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet, Hast thou found place at the great knees and feet Of some pale Titanwoman like a lover, Such as thy vision here solicited, Under the shadow of her fair vast head, The deep division of prodigious breasts, The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep, The weight of awful tresses that still keep The savour and shade of oldworld pineforests Where the wet hillwinds weep? VII Hast thou found any likeness for thy vision? O gardener of strange flowers, what bud, what bloom, Hast thou found sown, what gathered in the gloom? What of despair, of rapture, of derision, What of life is there, what of ill or good? Are the fruits grey like dust or bright like blood? Does the dim ground grow any seed of ours, The faint fields quicken any terrene root, In low lands where the sun and moon are mute And all the stars keep silence? Are there flowers At all, or any fruit? VIII Alas, but though my flying song flies after, O sweet strange elder singer, thy more fleet Singing, and footprints of thy fleeter feet, Some dim derision of mysterious laughter From the blind tongueless warders of the dead, Some gainless glimpse of Proserpine's veiled head, Some little sound of unregarded tears Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes, And from pale mouths some cadence of dead sighs— These only, these the hearkening spirit hears, Sees only such things rise. IX Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow, Far too far off for thought or any prayer. What ails us with thee, who art wind and air? What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow? Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire, Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire, Our dreams pursue our dead and do not find. Still, and more swift than they, the thin flame flies, The low light fails us in elusive skies, Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf,

and blind Are still the eluded eyes. X Not thee, O never thee, in all time's changes, Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad soul, The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut scroll I lay my hand on, and not death estranges My spirit from communion of thy song— These memories and these melodies that throng Veiled porches of a Muse funereal— These I salute, these touch, these clasp and fold As though a hand were in my hand to hold, Or through mine ears a mourning musical Of many mourners rolled. XI I among these, I also, in such station As when the pyre was charred, and piled the sods, And offering to the dead made, and their gods, The old mourners had, standing to make libation, I stand, and to the gods and to the dead Do reverence without prayer or praise, and shed Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom, And what of honey and spice my seedlands bear, And what I may of fruits in this chilled air, And lay, Oresteslike, across the tomb A curl of severed hair. XII But by no hand nor any treason stricken, Not like the lowlying head of Him, the King, The flame that made of Troy a ruinous thing, Thou liest, and on this dust no tears could quicken There fall no tears like theirs that all men hear Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear Down the opening leaves of holy poets' pages. Thee not Orestes, not Electra mourns; But bending usward with memorial urns The most high Muses that fulfil all ages Weep, and our God's heart yearns. XIII For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often Among us darkling here the lord of light Makes manifest his music and his might In hearts that open and in lips that soften With the soft flame and heat of songs that shine. Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine, And nourished them indeed with bitter bread; Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food came, The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he fed Who feeds our hearts with fame. XIV Therefore he too now at thy soul's sunsetting, God of all suns and songs, he too bends down To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown, And save thy dust from blame and from forgetting. Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert and art, Compassionate, with sad and sacred heart, Mourns thee of many his children the last dead, And hallows with strange tears and alien sighs

Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless eyes, And over thine irrevocable head Sheds light from the under skies. XV And one weeps with him in the ways Lethean, And stains with tears her changing bosom chill: That obscure Venus of the hollow hill, That thing transformed which was the Cytherean, With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine Long since, and face no more called Erycine; A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god. Thee also with fair flesh and singing spell Did she, a sad and second prey, compel Into the footless places once more trod, And shadows hot from hell. XVI And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom, No choral salutation lure to light A spirit sick with perfume and sweet night And love's tired eyes and hands and barren bosom. There is no help for these things; none to mend And none to mar; not all our songs, O friend, Will make death clear or make life durable. Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild vine And with wild notes about this dust of thine At least I fill the place where white dreams dwell And wreathe an unseen shrine. XVII Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon, If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no more to live; And to give thanks is good, and to forgive. Out of the mystic and the mournful garden Where all day through thine hands in barren braid Wove the sick flowers of secrecy and shade, Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants grey, Sweetsmelling, pale with poison, sanguinehearted, Passions that sprang from sleep and thoughts that started, Shall death not bring us all as thee one day Among the days departed? XVIII For thee, O now a silent soul, my brother, Take at my hands this garland, and farewell. Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry smell, And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother, With sadder than the Niobean womb, And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb. Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done; There lies not any troublous thing before, Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more, For whom all winds are quiet as the sun, All waters as the shore.

## MEMORIAL VERSES

## ON THE DEATH OF THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

Death, what hast thou to do with me? So saith Love, with eyes set against the face of Death; What have I done, O thou strong Death, to thee, That mine own lips should wither from thy breath? Though thou be blind as fire or as the sea, Why should thy waves and storms make war on me? Is it for hate thou hast to find me fair, Or for desire to kiss, if it might be, My very mouth of song, and kill me there? So with keen rains vexing his crownless hair. With bright feet bruised from no delightful way, Through darkness and the disenchanted air, Lost Love went weeping half a winter's day. And the armèd wind that smote him seemed to say, How shall the dew live when the dawn is fled, Or wherefore should the Mayflower outlast May? Then Death took Love by the right hand and said, Smiling: Come now and look upon thy dead. But Love cast down the glories of his eyes, And bowed down like a flower his flowerless head. And Death spake, saying: What ails thee in such wise, Being god, to shut thy sight up from the skies? If thou canst see not, hast thou ears to hear? Or is thy soul too as a leaf that dies? Even as he spake with fleshless lips of fear, But soft as sleep sings in a tired man's ear, Behold, the winter was not, and its might Fell, and fruits broke forth of the barren year. And upon earth was largess of great light, And moving music winged for worldwide flight, And shapes and sounds of gods beheld and heard, And day's foot set upon the neck of night. And with such song the hollow ways were stirred As of a god's heart hidden in a bird, Or as the whole soul of the sun in spring Should find full utterance in one flowersoft word, And all the season should break forth and sing From one flower's lips, in one rose triumphing; Such breath and light of song as of a flame Made ears and spirits of them that heard it ring. And Love beholding knew not for the same The shape that led him, nor in face nor name, For he was bright and great of thews and fair, And in Love's eyes he was not Death, but Fame. Not that grey ghost whose life is empty and bare And his limbs moulded out of mortal air, A cloud of change that shifts into a shower And dies and leaves no light for time to wear: But a god clothed with his own joy and power, A

god rerisen out of his mortal hour Immortal, king and lord of time and space, With eyes that look on them as from a tower. And where he stood the pale sepulchral place Bloomed, as new life might in a bloodless face, And where men sorrowing came to seek a tomb With funeral flowers and tears for grief and grace, They saw with light as of a world in bloom The portal of the House of Fame illume The ways of life wherein we toiling tread, And watched the darkness as a brand consume. And through the gates where rule the deathless dead The sound of a new singer's soul was shed That sang among his kinsfolk, and a beam Shot from the star on a new ruler's head. A new star lighting the Lethean stream, A new song mixed into the song supreme Made of all souls of singers and their might, That makes of life and time and death a dream. Thy star, thy song, O soul that in our sight Wast as a sun that made for man's delight Flowers and all fruits in season, being so near The sungod's face, our god that gives us light. To him of all gods that we love or fear Thou amongst all men by thy name wast dear, Dear to the god that gives us spirit of song To bind and burn all hearts of men that hear. The god that makes men's words too sweet and strong For life or time or death to do them wrong, Who sealed with his thy spirit for a sign And filled it with his breath thy whole life long. Who made thy moist lips fiery with new wine Pressed from the grapes of song, the sovereign vine, And with all love of all things loveliest Gave thy soul power to make them more divine. That thou might'st breathe upon the breathless rest Of marble, till the brows and lips and breast Felt fall from off them as a cancelled curse That speechless sleep wherewith they lived opprest. Who gave thee strength and heat of spirit to pierce All clouds of form and colour that disperse, And leave the spirit of beauty to remould In types of clean chryselephantine verse. Who gave thee words more golden than fine gold To carve in shapes more glorious than of old, And build thy songs up in the sight of time As statues set in godhead manifold: In sight and scorn of temporal change and clime That meet the sun rerisen with refluent rhyme —As god to god might answer face to face— From lips whereon the morning strikes

sublime. Dear to the god, our god who gave thee place Among the chosen of days, the royal race, The lords of light, whose eyes of old and ears Saw even on earth and heard him for a space. There are the souls of those once mortal years That wrought with fire of joy and light of tears In words divine as deeds that grew thereof Such music as he swoons with love who hears. There are the lives that lighten from above Our under lives, the spheral souls that move Through the ancient heaven of songillumined air Whence we that hear them singing die with love. There all the crowned Hellenic heads, and there The old gods who made men godlike as they were, The lyric lips wherefrom all songs take fire, Live eyes, and light of Apollonian hair. There, round the sovereign passion of that lyre Which the stars hear and tremble with desire, The ninefold light Pierian is made one That here we see divided, and aspire, Seeing, after this or that crown to be won; But where they hear the singing of the sun, All form, all sound, all colour, and all thought Are as one body and soul in unison. There the song sung shines as a picture wrought, The painted mouths sing that on earth say nought, The carven limbs have sense of blood and growth And largeeyed life that seeks nor lacks not aught. There all the music of thy living mouth Lives, and all loves wrought of thine hand in youth And bound about the breasts and brows with gold And coloured pale or dusk from north or south. Fair living things made to thy will of old, Born of thy lips, no births of mortal mould, That in the world of song about thee wait Where thought and truth are one and manifold. Within the graven lintels of the gate That here divides our vision and our fate, The dreams we walk in and the truths of sleep, All sense and spirit have life inseparate. There what one thinks, is his to grasp and keep; There are no dreams, but very joys to reap, No foiled desires that die before delight, No fears to see across our joys and weep. There hast thou all thy will of thought and sight, All hope for harvest, and all heaven for flight; The sunrise of whose goldenmouthed glad head To paler songless ghosts was heat and light. Here where the sunset of our year is red Men think of thee as of the summer dead, Gone forth before the snows, before thy

day, With unshod feet, with brows unchapleted. Couldst thou not wait till age had wound, they say, Round those wreathed brows his soft white blossoms? Nay, Why shouldst thou vex thy soul with this harsh air, Thy brightwinged soul, once free to take its way? Nor for men's reverence hadst thou need to wear The holy flower of grey timehallowed hair; Nor were it fit that aught of thee grew old, Fair lover all thy days of all things fair. And hear we not thy words of molten gold Singing? or is their light and heat acold Whereat men warmed their spirits? Nay, for all These yet are with us, ours to hear and hold. The lovely laughter, the clear tears, the call Of love to love on ways where shadows fall, Through doors of dim division and disguise, And music made of doubts unmusical; The love that caught strange light from death's own eyes,1 And filled death's lips with fiery words and sighs, And half asleep let feed from veins of his Her close red warm snake's mouth, Egyptianwise: And that great night of love more strange than this,2 When she that made the whole world's bale and bliss Made king of all the world's desire a slave, And killed him in mid kingdom with a kiss; Veiled loves that shifted shapes and shafts, and gave,3 Laughing, strange gifts to hands that durst not crave, Flowers doubleblossomed, fruits of scent and hue Sweet as the bridebed, stranger than the grave; All joys and wonders of old lives and new That ever in love's shine or shadow grew, And all the grief whereof he dreams and grieves, And all sweet roots fed on his light and dew; All these through thee our spirit of sense perceives, As threads in the unseen woof thy music weaves, Birds caught and snared that fill our ears with thee, Bayblossoms in thy wreath of browbound leaves. Mixed with the masque of death's old comedy Though thou too pass, have here our flowers, that we For all the flowers thou gav'st upon thee shed, And pass not crownless to Persephone. Blue lotusblooms and white and rosyred We wind with poppies for thy silent head, And on this margin of the sundering sea Leave thy sweet light to rise upon the dead.

1 La Morte Amoureuse. 2 Une Nuit de Cléopâtre. 3 Mademoiselle de Maupin.

## SONNET

(WITH A COPY OF Mademoiselle de Maupin)

This is the golden book of spirit and sense, The holy writ of beauty; he that wrought Made it with dreams and faultless words and thought That seeks and finds and loses in the dense Dim air of life that beauty's excellence Wherewith love makes one hour of life distraught And all hours after follow and find not aught. Here is that height of all love's eminence Where man may breathe but for a breathingspace And feel his soul burn as an altarfire To the unknown God of unachieved desire, And from the middle mystery of the place Watch lights that break, hear sounds as of a quire, But see not twice unveiled the veiled God's face.

## AGE AND SONG

(TO BARRY CORNWALL)

I In vain men tell us time can alter Old loves or make old memories falter, That with the old year the old year's life closes. The old dew still falls on the old sweet flowers, The old sun revives the newfledged hours, The old summer rears the newborn roses. II Much more a Muse that bears upon her Raiment and wreath and flower of honour, Gathered long since and long since woven, Fades not or falls as fall the vernal Blossoms that bear no fruit eternal, By summer or winter charred or cloven. III No time casts down, no time upraises, Such loves, such memories, and such praises, As need no grace of sun or shower, No saving screen from frost or thunder To tend and house around and under The imperishable and fearless flower. IV Old thanks, old thoughts, old aspirations, Outlive men's lives and lives of nations, Dead, but for one thing which survives— The inalienable and unpriced treasure, The old joy of power, the old pride of pleasure, That lives in light above men's lives.

# IN MEMORY OF BARRY CORNWALL

(October 4, 1874)

I

In the garden of death, where the singers whose names are deathless One with another make music unheard of men, Where the dead sweet roses fade not of lips long breathless, And the fair eyes shine that shall weep not or change again, Who comes now crowned with the blossom of snowwhite years? What music is this that the world of the dead men hears?

II

Beloved of men, whose words on our lips were honey, Whose name in our ears and our fathers' ears was sweet, Like summer gone forth of the land his songs made sunny, To the beautiful veiled bright world where the glad ghosts meet, Child, father, bridegroom and bride, and anguish and rest, No soul shall pass of a singer than this more blest.

III

Blest for the years' sweet sake that were filled and brightened, As a forest with birds, with the fruit and the flower of his song; For the souls' sake blest that heard, and their cares were lightened, For the hearts' sake blest that have fostered his name so long; By the living and dead lips blest that have loved his name, And clothed with their praise and crowned with their love for fame.

IV

Ah, fair and fragrant his fame as flowers that close not, That shrink not by day for heat or for cold by night, As a thought in the heart shall increase when the heart's self knows not, Shall endure in our ears as a sound, in our eyes as a light; Shall wax with the years that wane and the seasons' chime, As a white rose thornless that grows in the garden of time.

V

The same year calls, and one goes hence with another, And men sit sad that were glad for their sweet songs' sake; The same year beckons, and elder with younger brother Takes mutely the cup from his hand that we all shall take.1 They pass ere the leaves be past or the snows be come; And the birds are loud, but the lips that outsang them dumb.

VI

Time takes them home that we loved, fair names and famous, To the soft long sleep, to the broad sweet bosom of death; But the flower of their souls he shall take not away to shame us, Nor the lips lack song for ever that now lack breath. For with us shall the music and perfume that die not dwell, Though the dead to our dead bid welcome, and we farewell.

1 Sydney Dobell died August 22, 1874.

## EPICEDE

(James Lorimer Graham died at Florence, April 30, 1876)

Life may give for love to death Little; what are life's gifts worth To the dead wrapt round with earth? Yet from lips of living breath Sighs or words we are fain to give, All that yet, while yet we live, Life may give for love to death. Dead so long before his day, Passed out of the Italian sun To the dark where all is done, Fallen upon the verge of May; Here at life's and April's end How should song salute my friend Dead so long before his day? Not a kindlier life or sweeter Time, that lights and quenches men, Now may quench or light again, Mingling with the mystic metre Woven of all men's lives with his Not a clearer note than this, Not a kindlier life or sweeter. In this heavenliest part of earth He that living loved the light, Light and song, may rest aright, One in death, if strange in birth, With the deathless dead that make Life the lovelier for their sake In this heavenliest part of earth. Light, and song, and sleep at

last— Struggling hands and suppliant knees Get no goodlier gift than these. Song that holds remembrance fast, Light that lightens death, attend Round their graves who have to friend Light, and song, and sleep at last.

## TO VICTOR HUGO

He had no children, who for love of men, Being God, endured of Gods such things as thou, Father; nor on his thunderbeaten brow Fell such a woe as bows thine head again, Twice bowed before, though godlike, in man's ken, And seen too high for any stroke to bow Save this of some strange God's that bends it now The third time with such weight as bruised it then. Fain would grief speak, fain utter for love's sake Some word; but comfort who might bid thee take? What God in your own tongue shall talk with thee, Showing how all souls that look upon the sun Shall be for thee one spirit and thy son, And thy soul's child the soul of man to be? January 3, 1876.

## INFERIAE

Spring, and the light and sound of things on earth Requickening, all within our green sea's girth; A time of passage or a time of birth Fourscore years since as this year, first and last. The sun is all about the world we see, The breath and strength of very spring; and we Live, love, and feed on our own hearts; but he Whose heart fed mine has passed into the past. Past, all things born with sense and blood and breath; The flesh hears nought that now the spirit saith. If death be like as birth and birth as death, The first was fair—more fair should be the last. Fourscore years since, and come but one month more The count were perfect of his mortal score Whose sail went seaward yesterday from shore To cross the last of many an unsailed sea. Light, love and labour up to life's last height, These three were stars unsetting in his sight; Even as the sun is life and heat and light And sets not nor is dark when dark are we. The life, the spirit, and the work were one That here—ah, who shall say, that here

are done? Not I, that know not; father, not thy son, For all the darkness of the night and sea. March 5, 1877

## A BIRTHSONG

(For Olivia Frances Madox Rossetti, born September 20, 1875)

Out of the dark sweet sleep Where no dreams laugh or weep Borne through bright gates of birth Into the dim sweet light Where day still dreams of night While heaven takes form on earth, White rose of spirit and flesh, red lily of love, What note of song have we Fit for the birds and thee, Fair nestling couched beneath the motherdove? Nay, in some more divine Small speechless song of thine Some news too good for words, Hearthushed and smiling, we Might hope to have of thee, The youngest of God's birds, If thy sweet sense might mix itself with ours, If ours might understand The language of thy land, Ere thine become the tongue of mortal hours: Ere thy lips learn too soon Their soft first human tune, Sweet, but less sweet than now, And thy raised eyes to read Glad and good things indeed, But none so sweet as thou: Ere thought lift up their flowersoft lids to see What life and love on earth Bring thee for gifts at birth, But none so good as thine who hast given us thee: Now, ere thy sense forget The heaven that fills it yet, Now, sleeping or awake, If thou couldst tell, or we Ask and be heard of thee, For love's undying sake, From thy dumb lips divine and bright mute speech Such news might touch our ear That then would burn to hear Too high a message now for man's to reach. Ere the gold hair of corn Had withered wast thou born, To make the good time glad; The time that but last year Fell colder than a tear On hearts and hopes turned sad, High hopes and hearts requickening in thy dawn, Even theirs whose lifesprings, child, Filled thine with life and smiled, But then wept blood for half their own withdrawn.1 If death and birth be one, And set with rise of sun, And truth with dreams divine, Some word might come with thee From over the still sea Deep hid in shade or shine, Crossed by

the crossing sails of death and birth, Word of some sweet new thing Fit for such lips to bring, Some word of love, some afterthought of earth. If love be strong as death, By what so natural breath As thine could this be said? By what so lovely way Could love send word to say He lives and is not dead? Such word alone were fit for only thee, If his and thine have met Where spirits rise and set, His whom we see not, thine whom scarce we see: His there newborn, as thou Newborn among us now;
His, here so fruitfulsouled, Now veiled and silent here, Now dumb as thou last year, A ghost of one year old: If lights that change their sphere in changing meet, Some ray might his not give To thine who wast to live, And make thy present with his past life sweet? Let dreams that laugh or weep, All glad and sad dreams, sleep; Truth more than dreams is dear. Let thoughts that change and fly, Sweet thoughts and swift, go by; More than all thought is here. More than all hope can forge or memory feign The life that in our eyes, Made out of love's life, lies, And flowerlike fed with love for sun and rain. Twice royal in its root The sweet small oliveshoot Here set in sacred earth; Twice dowered with glorious grace From either heavenborn race First blended in its birth; Fair God or Genius of so fair an hour, For love of either name Twice crowned, with love and fame, Guard and be gracious to the fairnamed flower. October 19, 1875. 1 Oliver Madox Brown died November 5, 1874, in his twentieth year.

## EXVOTO

When their last hour shall rise Pale on these mortal eyes, Herself like one that dies, And kiss me dying The cold last kiss, and fold Close round my limbs her cold Soft shade as raiment rolled And leave them lying, If aught my soul would say Might move to hear me pray The birthgod of my day That he might hearken, This grace my heart should crave, To find no landward grave That worldly springs make brave, World's winters darken, Nor grow through gradual hours The cold blind seed of

flowers Made by new beams and showers From limbs that moulder, Nor take my part with earth, But find for death's new birth A bed of larger girth, More chaste and colder. Not earth's for spring and fall, Not earth's at heart, not all Earth's making, though men call Earth only mother, Not hers at heart she bare Me, but thy child, O fair Sea, and thy brother's care, The wind thy brother. Yours was I born, and ye, The seawind and the sea, Made all my soul in me A song for ever, A harp to string and smite For love's sake of the bright Wind and the sea's delight, To fail them never: Not while on this side death I hear what either saith And drink of either's breath With heart's thanksgiving That in my veins like wine Some sharp salt blood of thine, Some springtide pulse of brine, Yet leaps up living. When thy salt lips wellnigh Sucked in my mouth's last sigh, Grudged I so much to die This death as others? Was it no ease to think The chalice from whose brink Fate gave me death to drink Was thine—my mother's? Thee too, the allfostering earth, Fair as thy fairest birth, More than thy worthiest worth, We call, we know thee, More sweet and just and dread Than live men highest of head Or even thy holiest dead Laid low below thee. The sunbeam on the sheaf, The dewfall on the leaf, All joy, all grace, all grief, Are thine for giving; Of thee our loves are born, Our lives and loves, that mourn And triumph; tares with corn, Dead seed with living: All good and ill things done In eyeshot of the sun At last in thee made one Rest well contented; All words of all man's breath And works he doth or saith, All wholly done to death, None long lamented. A slave to sons of thee, Thou, seeming, yet art free; But who shall make the sea Serve even in seeming? What plough shall bid it bear Seed to the sun and the air, Fruit for thy strong sons' fare, Fresh wine's foam streaming? What oldworld son of thine, Made drunk with death as wine, Hath drunk the bright sea's brine With lips of laughter? Thy blood they drink; but he Who hath drunken of the sea Once deeplier than of thee Shall drink not after. Of thee thy sons of men Drink deep, and thirst again; For wine in feasts, and then In fields for slaughter; But thirst shall touch not him Who hath felt with sense grown dim Rise, covering lip and limb, The wan sea's water. All

fire of thirst that aches The salt sea cools and slakes More than all springs or lakes, Freshets or shallows; Wells where no beam can burn Through frondage of the fern That hides from hart and hern The haunt it hallows. Peace with all graves on earth For death or sleep or birth Be alway, one in worth One with another; But when my time shall be, O mother, O my sea, Alive or dead, take me, Me too, my mother.

## A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

I hid my heart in a nest of roses, Out of the sun's way, hidden apart; In a softer bed than the soft white snow's is, Under the roses I hid my heart. Why would it sleep not? why should it start, When never a leaf of the rosetree stirred? What made sleep flutter his wings and part? Only the song of a secret bird. Lie still, I said, for the wind's wing closes, And mild leaves muffle the keen sun's dart; Lie still, for the wind on the warm sea dozes, And the wind is unquieter yet than thou art. Does a thought in thee still as a thorn's wound smart? Does the fang still fret thee of hope deferred? What bids the lids of thy sleep dispart? Only the song of a secret bird. The green land's name that a charm encloses, It never was writ in the traveller's chart, And sweet on its trees as the fruit that grows is, It never was sold in the merchant's mart. The swallows of dreams through its dim fields dart, And sleep's are the tunes in its treetops heard; No hound's note wakens the wildwood hart, Only the song of a secret bird.

ENVOI

In the world of dreams I have chosen my part, To sleep for a season and hear no word Of true love's truth or of light love's art, Only the song of a secret bird.

## CYRIL TOURNEUR

A sea that heaves with horror of the night, As maddened by the moon that hangs aghast With strain and torment of the ravening blast, Haggard as hell, a bleak blind

bloody light; No shore but one red reef of rock in sight, Whereon the waifs of many a wreck were cast And shattered in the fierce nights overpast Wherein more souls toward hell than heaven took flight; And 'twixt the sharktoothed rocks and swallowing shoals A cry as out of hell from all these souls Sent through the sheer gorge of the slaughtering sea, Whose thousand throats, fullfed with life by death, Fill the black air with foam and furious breath; And over all these one star—Chastity.

## A BALLAD OF FRANÇOIS VILLON

PRINCE OF ALL BALLADMAKERS

Bird of the bitter bright grey golden morn Scarce risen upon the dusk of dolorous years, First of us all and sweetest singer born Whose far shrill note the world of new men hears Cleave the cold shuddering shade as twilight clears; When song newborn put off the old world's attire And felt its tune on her changed lips expire, Writ foremost on the roll of them that came Fresh girt for service of the latter lyre, Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name! Alas the joy, the sorrow, and the scorn, That clothed thy life with hopes and sins and fears, And gave thee stones for bread and tares for corn And plumeplucked gaolbirds for thy starveling peers Till death clipt close their flight with shameful shears; Till shifts came short and loves were hard to hire, When lilt of song nor twitch of twangling wire Could buy thee bread or kisses; when light fame Spurned like a ball and haled through brake and briar, Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name! Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn! Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light quick tears! Poor perfect voice, most blithe when most forlorn, That rings athwart the sea whence no man steers Like joybells crossed with deathbells in our ears! What far delight has cooled the fierce desire That like some ravenous bird was strong to tire On that frail flesh and soul consumed with flame, But left more sweet than roses to respire,

Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name?

ENVOI

Prince of sweet songs made out of tears and fire, A harlot was thy nurse, a God thy sire; Shame soiled thy song, and song assoiled thy shame. But from thy feet now death has washed the mire, Love reads out first at head of all our quire, Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name.

## PASTICHE

Now the days are all gone over Of our singing, love by lover, Days of summercoloured seas Blown adrift through beam and breeze. Now the nights are all past over Of our dreaming, dreams that hover In a mist of fair false things, Nights afloat on wide wan wings. Now the loves with faith for mother, Now the fears with hope for brother, Scarce are with us as strange words, Notes from songs of last year's birds. Now all good that comes or goes is As the smell of last year's roses, As the radiance in our eyes Shot from summer's ere he dies. Now the morning faintlier risen Seems no God come forth of prison, But a bird of plumeplucked wing, Pale with thoughts of evening. Now hath hope, outraced in running, Given the torch up of his cunning And the palm he thought to wear Even to his own strong child—despair.

## BEFORE SUNSET

In the lower lands of day On the hither side of night, There is nothing that will stay, There are all things soft to sight; Lighted shade and shadowy light In the wayside and the way, Hours the sun has spared to smite, Flowers the rain has left to play. Shall these hours run down and say No good thing of thee and me? Time that made us and will slay Laughs at love in me and thee; But if here the flowers may see One whole hour of amorous breath, Time shall die, and love shall be Lord as time was over death.

## SONG

Love laid his sleepless head On a thorny rosy bed; And his eyes with tears were red, And pale his lips as the dead. And fear and sorrow and scorn Kept watch by his head forlorn, Till the night was overworn And the world was merry with morn. And Joy came up with the day And kissed Love's lips as he lay, And the watchers ghostly and grey Sped from his pillow away. And his eyes as the dawn grew bright, And his lips waxed ruddy as light: Sorrow may reign for a night, But day shall bring back delight.

## A VISION OF SPRING IN WINTER

I

O tender time that love thinks long to see, Sweet foot of spring that with her footfall sows Late snowlike flowery leavings of the snows, Be not too long irresolute to be; O mothermonth, where have they hidden thee? Out of the pale time of the flowerless rose I reach my heart out toward the springtime lands, I stretch my spirit forth to the fair hours, The purplest of the prime; I lean my soul down over them, with hands Made wide to take the ghostly growths of flowers; I send my love back to the lovely time.

II

Where has the greenwood hid thy gracious head? Veiled with what visions while the grey world grieves, Or muffled with what shadows of green leaves, What warm intangible green shadows spread To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy bed? What sleep enchants thee? what delight deceives? Where the deep dreamlike dew before the dawn Feels not the fingers of the sunlight yet Its silver web unweave, Thy footless ghost on some unfooted lawn Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear to fret Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn and eve.

III

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star, Large nightfall, nor imperial plenilune, Nor strong sweet shape of the fullbreasted noon; But where the silversandalled shadows are, Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar, Moves with the mild gait of an ungrown moon: Hard overhead the halflit crescent swims, The tendercoloured night draws hardly breath, The light is listening; They watch the dawn of slendershapen limbs, Virginal, born again of doubtful death, Chill fosterfather of the weanling spring.

IV

As sweet desire of day before the day, As dreams of love before the true love born, From the outer edge of winter overworn The ghost arisen of May before the May Takes through dim air her unawakened way, The gracious ghost of morning risen ere morn. With little unblown breasts and childeyed looks Following, the very maid, the girlchild spring, Lifts windward her bright brows, Dips her light feet in warm and moving brooks, And kindles with her own mouth's colouring The fearful firstlings of the plumeless boughs.

V

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see, Fair face that art not, how thy maiden breath Shall put at last the deadly days to death And fill the fields and fire the woods with thee And seaward hollows where my feet would be When heaven shall hear the word that April saith To change the cold heart of the weary time, To stir and soften all the time to tears, Tears joyfuller than mirth; As even to May's clear height the young days climb With feet not swifter than those fair first years Whose flowers revive not with thy flowers on earth.

VI

I would not bid thee, though I might, give back One good thing youth has given and borne away; I crave not any comfort of the day That is not, nor on time's retrodden

track Would turn to meet the whiterobed hours or black That long since left me on their mortal way; Nor light nor love that has been, nor the breath That comes with morning from the sun to be And sets light hope on fire; No fruit, no flower thought once too fair for death, No flower nor hour once fallen from life's green tree, No leaf once plucked or once fulfilled desire.

VII

The morning song beneath the stars that fled With twilight through the moonless mountain air, While youth with burning lips and wreathless hair Sang toward the sun that was to crown his head, Rising; the hopes that triumphed and fell dead, The sweet swift eyes and songs of hours that were; These may'st thou not give back for ever; these, As at the sea's heart all her wrecks lie waste, Lie deeper than the sea; But flowers thou may'st, and winds, and hours of ease, And all its April to the world thou may'st Give back, and half my April back to me.

## CHORIAMBICS

Love, what ailed thee to leave life that was made lovely, we thought, with love? What sweet visions of sleep lured thee away, down from the light above? What strange faces of dreams, voices that called, hands that were raised to wave, Lured or led thee, alas, out of the sun, down to the sunless grave? Ah, thy luminous eyes! once was their light fed with the fire of day; Now their shadowy lids cover them close, hush them and hide away. Ah, thy snow-coloured hands! once were they chains, mighty to bind me fast; Now no blood in them burns, mindless of love, senseless of passion past. Ah, thy beautiful hair! so was it once braided for me, for me; Now for death is it crowned, only for death, lover and lord of thee. Sweet, the kisses of death set on thy lips, colder are they than mine; Colder surely than past kisses that love poured for thy lips as wine. Lov'st thou death? is his face fairer than love's, brighter to look upon? Seest thou light in his eyes, light by which love's pales

and is overshone? Lo the roses of death, grey as the dust, chiller of leaf than snow! Why let fall from thy hand love's that were thine, roses that loved thee so? Large red lilies of love, sceptral and tall, lovely for eyes to see; Thornless blossom of love, full of the sun, fruits that were reared for thee. Now death's poppies alone circle thy hair, girdle thy breasts as white; Bloodless blossoms of death, leaves that have sprung never against the light. Nay then, sleep if thou wilt; love is content; what should he do to weep? Sweet was love to thee once; now in thine eyes sweeter than love is sleep.

## AT PARTING

For a day and a night Love sang to us, played with us, Folded us round from the dark and the light; And our hearts were fulfilled of the music he made with us, Made with our hearts and our lips while he stayed with us, Stayed in mid passage his pinions from flight For a day and a night. From his foes that kept watch with his wings had he hidden us, Covered us close from the eyes that would smite, From the feet that had tracked and the tongues that had chidden us Sheltering in shade of the myrtles forbidden us Spirit and flesh growing one with delight For a day and a night. But his wings will not rest and his feet will not stay for us: Morning is here in the joy of its might; With his breath has he sweetened a night and a day for us; Now let him pass, and the myrtles make way for us; Love can but last in us here at his height For a day and a night.

## A SONG IN SEASON

I Thou whose beauty Knows no duty Due to love that moves thee never; Thou whose mercies Are men's curses, And thy smile a scourge for ever; II Thou that givest Death and livest On the death of thy sweet giving; Thou that sparest Not nor carest Though thy scorn leave no love living; III Thou whose rootless Flower is

fruitless As the pride its heart encloses, But thine eyes are As May skies are, And thy words like spoken roses; IV Thou whose grace is In men's faces Fierce and wayward as thy will is; Thou whose peerless Eyes are tearless, And thy thoughts as cold sweet lilies; V Thou that takest Hearts and makest Wrecks of loves to strew behind thee, Whom the swallow Sure should follow, Finding summer where we find thee; VI Thou that wakest Hearts and breakest, And thy broken hearts forgive thee, That wilt make no Pause and take no Gift that love for love might give thee; VII Thou that bindest Eyes and blindest, Serving worst who served thee longest; Thou that speakest, And the weakest Heart is his that was the strongest; VIII Take in season Thought with reason; Think what gifts are ours for giving; Hear what beauty Owes of duty To the love that keeps it living. IX Dust that covers Long dead lovers Song blows off with breath that brightens; At its flashes Their white ashes Burst in bloom that lives and lightens. X Had they bent not Head or lent not Ear to love and amorous duties, Song had never Saved for ever, Love, the least of all their beauties. XI All the golden Names of olden Women yet by men's love cherished, All our dearest Thoughts hold nearest, Had they loved not, all had perished. XII If no fruit is Of thy beauties, Tell me yet, since none may win them, What and wherefore Love should care for Of all good things hidden in them? XIII Pain for profit Comes but of it, If the lips that lure their lover's Hold no treasure Past the measure Of the lightest hour that hovers. XIV If they give not Or forgive not Gifts or thefts for grace or guerdon, Love that misses Fruit of kisses Long will bear no thankless burden. XV If they care not Though love were not, If no breath of his burn through them, Joy must borrow Song from sorrow, Fear teach hope the way to woo them. XVI Grief has measures Soft as pleasure's, Fear has moods that hope lies deep in, Songs to sing him, Dreams to bring him, And a redrose bed to sleep in. XVII Hope with fearless Looks and tearless Lies and laughs too near the thunder; Fear hath sweeter Speech and meeter For heart's love to hide him under. XVIII Joy by daytime Fills his playtime Full of songs loud mirth takes pride in; Night and morrow Weave round

sorrow Thoughts as soft as sleep to hide in. XIX Graceless faces, Loveless graces, Are but motes in light that quicken, Sands that run down Ere the sundown, Roseleaves dead ere autumn sicken. XX Fair and fruitless Charms are bootless Spells to ward off age's peril; Lips that give not Love shall live not, Eyes that meet not eyes are sterile. XXI But the beauty Bound in duty Fast to love that falls off never Love shall cherish Lest it perish, And its root bears fruit for ever.

## TWO LEADERS

Image 2: Greek Text

I

O great and wise, clearsouled and high of heart, One the last flower of Catholic love, that grows Amid bare thorns their only thornless rose, From the fierce juggling of the priests' loud mart Yet alien, yet unspotted and apart From the blind hard foul rout whose shameless shows Mock the sweet heaven whose secret no man knows With prayers and curses and the soothsayer's art; One like a stormgod of the northern foam Strong, wrought of rock that breasts and breaks the sea And thunders back its thunder, rhyme for rhyme Answering, as though to outroar the tides of time And bid the world's wave back—what song should be Theirs that with praise would bring and sing you home?

II

With all our hearts we praise you whom ye hate, High souls that hate us; for our hopes are higher, And higher than yours the goal of our desire, Though high your ends be as your hearts are great. Your world of Gods and kings, of shrine and state, Was of the night when hope and fear stood nigher, Wherein men walked by light of stars and fire Till man by day stood equal with his fate. Honour not hate we give you, love not fear, Last prophets of past kind, who fill the dome Of great dead Gods with wrath and wail, nor hear Time's word and man's: "Go honoured hence, go

home, Night's childless children; here your hour is done; Pass with the stars, and leave us with the sun."

## VICTOR HUGO IN 1877

"Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?"

Above the springtide sundawn of the year, A sunlike star, not born of day or night, Filled the fair heaven of spring with heavenlier light, Made of all ages orbed in one sole sphere Whose light was as a Titan's smile or tear; Then rose a ray more flowerlike, starry white, Like a child's eye grown lovelier with delight, Sweet as a child's heartlightening laugh to hear; And last a fire from heaven, a fiery rain As of God's wrath on the unclean cities, fell And lit the shuddering shades of halfseen hell That shrank before it and were cloven in twain; A beacon fired by lightning, whence all time Sees red the bare black ruins of a crime.

## CHILD'S SONG

What is gold worth, say, Worth for work or play, Worth to keep or pay, Hide or throw away, Hope about or fear? What is love worth, pray? Worth a tear? Golden on the mould Lie the dead leaves rolled Of the wet woods old, Yellow leaves and cold, Woods without a dove; Gold is worth but gold; Love's worth love.

## TRIADS

### I

I The word of the sun to the sky, The word of the wind to the sea, The word of the moon to the night, What may it be? II The sense to the flower of the fly, The sense of the bird to the tree, The sense to the cloud of the light, Who can tell me? III The

song of the fields to the kye, The song of the lime to the bee, The song of the depth to the height, Who knows all three?

## II

I The message of April to May That May sends on into June And June gives out to July For birthday boon; II The delight of the dawn in the day, The delight of the day in the noon, The delight of a song in a sigh That breaks the tune; III The secret of passing away, The cost of the change of the moon, None knows it with ear or with eye, But all will soon.

## III

I The live wave's love for the shore, The shore's for the wave as it dies, The love of the thunderfire That sears the skies, II We shall know not though life wax hoar, Till all life, spent into sighs, Burn out as consumed with desire Of death's strange eyes; III Till the secret be secret no more In the light of one hour as it flies, Be the hour as of suns that expire Or suns that rise.

# FOUR SONGS OF FOUR SEASONS

## I

WINTER IN NORTHUMBERLAND

I Outside the garden The wet skies harden; The gates are barred on The summer side: "Shut out the flowertime, Sunbeam and showertime; Make way for our time," Wild winds have cried. Green once and cheery, The woods, worn weary, Sigh as the dreary Weak sun goes home: A great wind grapples The wave, and dapples The dead green floor of the sea with foam. II Through fell and moorland, And

saltsea foreland, Our noisy norland Resounds and rings; Waste waves thereunder Are blown in sunder, And winds make thunder With cloudwide wings; Seadrift makes dimmer The beacon's glimmer; Nor sail nor swimmer Can try the tides; And snowdrifts thicken Where, when leaves quicken, Under the heather the sundew hides. III Green land and red land, Moorside and headland, Are white as dead land, Are all as one; Nor honied heather, Nor bells to gather, Fair with fair weather And faithful sun: Fierce frost has eaten All flowers that sweeten The fells rainbeaten; And winds their foes Have made the snow's bed Down in the rosebed; Deep in the snow's bed bury the rose. IV Bury her deeper Than any sleeper; Sweet dreams will keep her All day, all night; Though sleep benumb her And time o'ercome her, She dreams of summer, And takes delight, Dreaming and sleeping In love's good keeping, While rain is weeping And no leaves cling; Winds will come bringing her Comfort, and singing her Stories and songs and good news of the spring. V Draw the white curtain Close, and be certain She takes no hurt in Her soft low bed; She feels no colder, And grows not older, Though snows enfold her From foot to head; She turns not chilly Like weed and lily In marsh or hilly High watershed, Or green soft island In lakes of highland; She sleeps awhile, and she is not dead. VI For all the hours, Come sun, come showers, Are friends of flowers, And fairies all; When frost entrapped her, They came and lapped her In leaves, and wrapped her With shroud and pall; In red leaves wound her, With dead leaves bound her Dead brows, and round her A deathknell rang; Rang the deathbell for her, Sang, "is it well for her, Well, is it well with you, rose?" they sang. VII O what and where is The rose now, fairies, So shrill the air is, So wild the sky? Poor last of roses, Her worst of woes is The noise she knows is The winter's cry; His hunting hollo Has scared the swallow; Fain would she follow And fain would fly: But wind unsettles Her poor last petals; Had she but wings, and she would not die. VIII Come, as you love her, Come close and cover Her white face over, And forth again Ere sunset glances On foam that dances, Through lowering lances Of bright white rain; And make your

playtime Of winter's daytime, As if the Maytime Were here to sing; As if the snowballs Were soft like blowballs, Blown in a mist from the stalk in the spring. IX Each reed that grows in Our stream is frozen, The fields it flows in Are hard and black; The waterfairy Waits wise and wary Till time shall vary And thaws come back. "O sister, water," The wind besought her, "O twinborn daughter Of spring with me, Stay with me, play with me, Take the warm way with me, Straight for the summer and oversea." X But winds will vary, And wise and wary The patient fairy Of water waits; All shrunk and wizen, In iron prison, Till spring rerisen Unbar the gates; Till, as with clamour Of axe and hammer, Chained streams that stammer And struggle in straits Burst bonds that shiver, And thaws deliver The roaring river in stormy spates. XI In fierce March weather White waves break tether, And whirled together At either hand, Like weeds uplifted, The treetrunks rifted In spars are drifted, Like foam or sand, Past swamp and sallow And reedbeds callow, Through pool and shallow, To wind and lee, Till, no more tonguetied, Full flood and young tide Roar down the rapids and storm the sea. XII As men's cheeks faded On shores invaded, When shorewards waded The lords of fight; When churl and craven Saw hard on haven The widewinged raven At mainmast height; When monks affrighted To windward sighted The birds fullflighted Of swift seakings; So earth turns paler When Storm the sailor Steers in with a roar in the race of his wings. XIII O strong seasailor, Whose cheek turns paler For wind or hail or For fear of thee? O far seafarer, O thunderbearer, Thy songs are rarer Than soft songs be. O fleetfoot stranger, O northsea ranger Through days of danger And ways of fear, Blow thy horn here for us, Blow the sky clear for us, Send us the song of the sea to hear. XIV Roll the strong stream of it Up, till the scream of it Wake from a dream of it Children that sleep, Seamen that fare for them Forth, with a prayer for them; Shall not God care for them, Angels not keep? Spare not the surges Thy stormy scourges; Spare us the dirges Of wives that weep. Turn back the waves for us: Dig no fresh graves for us, Wind, in the manifold gulfs of the deep. XV O stout northeaster,

Seaking, landwaster, For all thine haste, or Thy stormy skill, Yet hadst thou never, For all endeavour, Strength to dissever Or strength to spill, Save of his giving Who gave our living, Whose hands are weaving What ours fulfil; Whose feet tread under The storms and thunder; Who made our wonder to work his will. XVI His years and hours, His world's blind powers, His stars and flowers, His nights and days, Seatide and river, And waves that shiver, Praise God, the giver Of tongues to praise. Winds in their blowing, And fruits in growing; Time in its going, While time shall be; In death and living, With one thanksgiving, Praise him whose hand is the strength of the sea.

## II

SPRING IN TUSCANY

Rosered lilies that bloom on the banner; Rosecheeked gardens that revel in spring; Rosemouthed acacias that laugh as they climb, Like plumes for a queen's hand fashioned to fan her With wind more soft than a wild dove's wing, What do they sing in the spring of their time? If this be the rose that the world hears singing, Soft in the soft night, loud in the day, Songs for the fireflies to dance as they hear; If that be the song of the nightingale, springing Forth in the form of a rose in May, What do they say of the way of the year? What of the way of the world gone Maying, What of the work of the buds in the bowers, What of the will of the wind on the wall, Fluttering the wallflowers, sighing and playing, Shrinking again as a bird that cowers, Thinking of hours when the flowers have to fall? Out of the throats of the loud birds showering, Out of the folds where the flaglilies leap, Out of the mouths of the roses stirred, Out of the herbs on the walls reflowering, Out of the heights where the sheer snows sleep, Out of the deep and the steep, one word. One from the lips of the lilyflames leaping, The glad red lilies that burn in our sight, The great live lilies for standard and crown; One from the steeps where the pines

stand sleeping, One from the deep land, one from the height, One from the light and the might of the town. The lowlands laugh with delight of the highlands, Whence May winds feed them with balm and breath From hills that beheld in the years behind A shape as of one from the blest souls' islands, Made fair by a soul too fair for death, With eyes on the light that should smite them blind. Vallombrosa remotely remembers, Perchance, what still to us seems so near That time not darkens it, change not mars, The foot that she knew when her leaves were September's, The face lift up to the starblind seer, That saw from his prison arisen his stars. And Pisa broods on her dead, not mourning, For love of her loveliness given them in fee; And Prato gleams with the glad monk's gift Whose hand was there as the hand of morning; And Siena, set in the sand's red sea, Lifts loftier her head than the red sand's drift. And far to the fair southwestward lightens, Girdled and sandalled and plumed with flowers, At sunset over the lovelit lands, The hillside's crown where the wild hill brightens, Saint Fina's town of the Beautiful Towers, Hailing the sun with a hundred hands. Land of us all that have loved thee dearliest, Mother of men that were lords of man, Whose name in the world's heart works as a spell, My last song's light, and the star of mine earliest, As we turn from thee, sweet, who wast ours for a span, Fare well we may not who say farewell.

## III

SUMMER IN AUVERGNE

The sundawn fills the land Full as a feaster's hand Fills full with bloom of bland Bright wine his cup; Flows full to flood that fills From the arch of air it thrills Those rustred iron hills With morning up. Dawn, as a panther springs, With fierce and firefledged wings Leaps on the land that rings From her bright feet Through all its lavablack Cones that cast answer back And cliffs of footless track Where thunders meet. The light speaks wide and loud From deeps blown clean of cloud As though

day's heart were proud And heaven's were glad; The towers brownstriped and grey Take fire from heaven of day As though the prayers they pray Their answers had. Higher in these high first hours Wax all the keen church towers, And higher all hearts of ours Than the old hills' crown, Higher than the pillared height Of that strange cliffside bright With basalt towers whose might Strong time bows down. And the old fierce ruin there Of the old wild princes' lair Whose blood in mine hath share Gapes gaunt and great Toward heaven that long ago Watched all the wan land's woe Whereon the wind would blow Of their bleak hate. Dead are those deeds; but yet Their memory seems to fret Lands that might else forget That old world's brand; Dead all their sins and days; Yet in this red clime's rays Some fiery memory stays That sears their land.

## IV

AUTUMN IN CORNWALL

The year lies fallen and faded On cliffs by clouds invaded, With tongues of storms upbraided, With wrath of waves bedinned; And inland, wild with warning, As in deaf ears or scorning, The clarion even and morning Rings of the southwest wind. The wild bents wane and wither In blasts whose breath bows hither Their greygrown heads and thither, Unblest of rain or sun; The pale fierce heavens are crowded With shapes like dreams beclouded, As though the old year enshrouded Lay, long ere life were done. Fullcharged with oldworld wonders, From dusk Tintagel thunders A note that smites and sunders The hard frore fields of air; A trumpet stormiersounded Than once from lists rebounded When strong men senseconfounded Fell thick in tourney there. From scarce a duskier dwelling Such notes of wail rose welling Through the outer darkness, telling In the awful singer's ears What souls the darkness covers, What lovelost souls of lovers, Whose cry still hangs and hovers In each man's born that hears. For there by Hector's brother And

yet some thousand other He that had grief to mother Passed pale from Dante's sight; With one fast linked as fearless, Perchance, there only tearless; Iseult and Tristram, peerless And perfect queen and knight. A shrillwinged sound comes flying North, as of wild souls crying The cry of things undying, That know what life must be; Or as the old year's heart, stricken Too sore for hope to quicken By thoughts like thorns that thicken, Broke, breaking with the sea.

## THE WHITE CZAR

[In an English magazine of 1877 there appeared a version of some insolent lines addressed by "A Russian Poet to the Empress of India." To these the first of the two following sonnets was designed to serve by way of counterblast. The writer will scarcely be suspected of royalism or imperialism; but it seemed to him that an insult levelled by Muscovite lips at the ruler of England might perhaps be less unfitly than unofficially resented by an Englishman who was also a republican.]

I

Gehazi by the hue that chills thy cheek And Pilate by the hue that sears thine hand Whence all earth's waters cannot wash the brand That signs thy soul a manslayer's though thou speak All Christ, with lips most murderous and most meek— Thou set thy foot where England's used to stand! Thou reach thy rod forth over Indian land! Slave of the slaves that call thee lord, and weak As their foul tongues who praise thee! son of them Whose presence put the snows and stars to shame In centuries dead and damned that reek below Curseconsecrated, crowned with crime and flame, To them that bare thee like them shalt thou go Forth of man's life—a leper white as snow.

II

Call for clear water, wash thine hands, be clean, Cry, What is truth? O Pilate; thou shalt know Haply too soon, and gnash thy teeth for woe Ere the outer darkness take

thee round unseen That hides the red ghosts of thy race obscene Bound nine times round with hell's most dolorous flow, And in its pools thy crownless head lie low By his of Spain who dared an English queen With half a world to hearten him for fight, Till the wind gave his warriors and their might To shipwreck and the corpseencumbered sea. But thou, take heed, ere yet thy lips wax white, Lest as it was with Philip so it be, O white of name and red of hand, with thee.

## RIZPAH

How many sons, how many generations, For how long years hast thou bewept, and known Nor end of torment nor surcease of moan, Rachel or Rizpah, wofullest of nations, Crowned with the crowning sign of desolations, And couldst not even scare off with hand or groan Those carrion birds devouring bone by bone The children of thy thousand tribulations? Thou wast our warrior once; thy sons long dead Against a foe less foul than this made head, Poland, in years that sound and shine afar; Ere the east beheld in thy bright swordblade's stead The rotten corpselight of the Russian star That lights towards hell his bondslaves and their Czar.

## TO LOUIS KOSSUTH

1877

Light of our fathers' eyes, and in our own Star of the unsetting sunset! for thy name, That on the front of noon was as a flame In the great year nigh thirty years agone When all the heavens of Europe shook and shone With stormy wind and lightning, keeps its fame And bears its witness all day through the same; Not for past days and great deeds past alone, Kossuth, we praise thee as our Landor praised, But that now too we know thy voice upraised, Thy voice, the trumpet of the truth of God, Thine hand, the thunderbearer's, raised to smite As with heaven's lightning for a sword and rod Men's heads abased before the Muscovite.

# TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH OF VILLON

## THE COMPLAINT OF THE FAIR ARMOURESS

I Meseemeth I heard cry and groan That sweet who was the armourer's maid; For her young years she made sore moan, And right upon this wise she said; "Ah fierce old age with foul bald head, To spoil fair things thou art over fain; Who holdeth me? who? would God I were dead! Would God I were well dead and slain! II "Lo, thou hast broken the sweet yoke That my high beauty held above All priests and clerks and merchantfolk; There was not one but for my love Would give me gold and gold enough, Though sorrow his very heart had riven, To win from me such wage thereof As now no thief would take if given. III "I was right chary of the same, God wot it was my great folly, For love of one sly knave of them, Good store of that same sweet had he; For all my subtle wiles, perdie, God wot I loved him well enow; Right evilly he handled me, But he loved well my gold, I trow. IV "Though I gat bruises green and black, I loved him never the less a jot; Though he bound burdens on my back, If he said 'Kiss me and heed it not' Right little pain I felt, God wot, When that foul thief's mouth, found so sweet, Kissed me—Much good thereof I got! I keep the sin and the shame of it. V "And he died thirty year agone. I am old now, no sweet thing to see; By God, though, when I think thereon, And of that good glad time, woe's me, And stare upon my changed body Stark naked, that has been so sweet, Lean, wizen, like a small dry tree, I am nigh mad with the pain of it. VI "Where is my faultless forehead's white, The lifted eyebrows, soft gold hair, Eyes wide apart and keen of sight, With subtle skill in the amorous air; The straight nose, great nor small, but fair, The small carved ears of shapeliest growth, Chin dimpling, colour good to wear, And sweet red splendid kissing mouth? VII "The shapely slender shoulders small, Long arms, hands wrought in glorious wise, Round little breasts, the hips withal High, full of flesh, not scant of size, Fit for all amorous masteries; *** ***** *****, *** *** ****** **** *** ******* ***** ** ****

***** ****** ** * ***** ****** ** **** *****? VIII "A writhled forehead, hair gone grey, Fallen eyebrows, eyes gone blind and red, Their laughs and looks all fled away, Yea, all that smote men's hearts are fled; The bowed nose, fallen from goodlihead; Foul flapping ears like waterflags; Peaked chin, and cheeks all waste and dead, And lips that are two skinny rags: IX "Thus endeth all the beauty of us. The arms made short, the hands made lean, The shoulders bowed and ruinous, The breasts, alack! all fallen in; The flanks too, like the breasts, grown thin; ** *** *** ***** *****, *** ** **! For the lank thighs, no thighs but skin, They are specked with spots like sausagemeat. X "So we make moan for the old sweet days, Poor old light women, two or three Squatting above the strawfire's blaze, The bosom crushed against the knee, Like faggots on a heap we be, Round fires soon lit, soon quenched and done; And we were once so sweet, even we! Thus fareth many and many an one."

## A DOUBLE BALLAD OF GOOD COUNSEL

Now take your fill of love and glee, And after balls and banquets hie; In the end ye'll get no good for fee, But just heads broken by and by; Light loves make beasts of men that sigh; They changed the faith of Solomon, And left not Samson lights to spy; Good luck has he that deals with none! Sweet Orpheus, lord of minstrelsy, For this with flute and pipe came nigh The danger of the dog's heads three That ravening at hell's door doth lie; Fain was Narcissus, fair and shy, For love's love lightly lost and won, In a deep well to drown and die; Good luck has he that deals with none! Sardana, flower of chivalry, Who conquered Crete with horn and cry, For this was fain a maid to be And learn with girls the thread to ply; King David, wise in prophecy, Forgot the fear of God for one Seen washing either shapely thigh; Good luck has he that deals with none! For this did Amnon, craftily Feigning to eat of cakes of rye, Deflower his sister fair to see, Which was foul incest; and hereby Was Herod moved, it is no lie, To lop the head of Baptist John For dance and jig and psaltery; Good luck has he that deals with none! Next of myself I tell, poor me, How

thrashed like clothes at wash was I Stark naked, I must needs agree; Who made me eat so sour a pie But Katherine of Vaucelles? thereby, Noé took third part of that fun; Such weddinggloves are ill to buy; Good luck has he that deals with none! But for that young man fair and free To pass those young maids lightly by, Nay, would you burn him quick, not he; Like broomhorsed witches though he fry, They are sweet as civet in his eye; But trust them, and you're fooled anon; For white or brown, and low or high, Good luck has he that deals with none!

FRAGMENT ON DEATH

And Paris be it or Helen dying, Who dies soever, dies with pain. He that lacks breath and wind for sighing, His gall bursts on his heart; and then He sweats, God knows what sweat!—again, No man may ease him of his grief; Child, brother, sister, none were fain To bail him thence for his relief. Death makes him shudder, swoon, wax pale, Nose bend, veins stretch, and breath surrender, Neck swell, flesh soften, joints that fail Crack their strained nerves and arteries slender. O woman's body found so tender, Smooth, sweet, so precious in men's eyes, Must thou too bear such count to render? Yes; or pass quick into the skies.

[In the original here follows Villon's masterpiece, the matchless Ballad of the Ladies of Old Time, so incomparably rendered in the marvelous version of D. G. Rossetti; followed in its turn by the succeeding poem, as inferior to its companion as is my attempt at translation of it to his triumph in that higher and harder field.—A. C. S.]

BALLAD OF THE LORDS OF OLD TIME

(AFTER THE FORMER ARGUMENT)

What more? Where is the third Calixt, Last of that name now dead and gone, Who held four years the Papalist? Alphonso king of Aragon, The gracious lord, duke of Bourbon, And Arthur, duke of old Britaine? And Charles the Seventh, that worthy one? Even with the good knight Charlemain. The Scot too, king of mount and mist, With half his face vermilion, Men tell us, like an amethyst From brow to chin that

blazed and shone; The Cypriote king of old renown, Alas! and that good king of Spain, Whose name I cannot think upon? Even with the good knight Charlemain. No more to say of them I list; 'Tis all but vain, all dead and done: For death may no man born resist, Nor make appeal when death comes on. I make yet one more question; Where's Lancelot, king of far Bohain? Where's he whose grandson called him son? Even with the good knight Charlemain. Where is Guesclin, the good Breton? The lord of the eastern mountainchain, And the good late duke of Alençon? Even with the good knight Charlemain.

## BALLAD OF THE WOMEN OF PARIS

Albeit the Venice girls get praise For their sweet speech and tender air, And though the old women have wise ways Of chaffering for amorous ware, Yet at my peril dare I swear, Search Rome, where God's grace mainly tarries, Florence and Savoy, everywhere, There's no good girl's lip out of Paris. The Naples women, as folk prattle, Are sweetly spoken and subtle enough: German girls are good at tattle, And Prussians make their boast thereof; Take Egypt for the next remove, Or that waste land the Tartar harries, Spain or Greece, for the matter of love, There's no good girl's lip out of Paris. Breton and Swiss know nought of the matter, Gascony girls or girls of Toulouse; Two fishwives here with a halfhour's chatter Would shut them up by threes and twos; Calais, Lorraine, and all their crews, (Names enow the mad song marries) England and Picardy, search them and choose, There's no good girl's lip out of Paris. Prince, give praise to our French ladies For the sweet sound their speaking carries; 'Twixt Rome and Cadiz many a maid is, But no good girl's lip out of Paris.

## BALLAD WRITTEN FOR A BRIDEGROOM

## WHICH VILLON GAVE TO A GENTLEMAN NEWLY MARRIED TO SEND TO HIS WIFE WHOM HE HAD WON WITH THE SWORD

At daybreak, when the falcon claps his wings, No whit for grief, but noble heart and high, With loud glad noise he stirs himself and springs, And takes his meat and

toward his lure draws nigh; Such good I wish you! Yea, and heartily I am fired with hope of true love's meed to get; Know that Love writes it in his book; for why, This is the end for which we twain are met. Mine own heart's lady with no gainsayings You shall be always wholly till I die; And in my right against all bitter things Sweet laurel with fresh rose its force shall try; Seeing reason wills not that I cast love by (Nor here with reason shall I chide or fret) Nor cease to serve, but serve more constantly; This is the end for which we twain are met. And, which is more, when grief about me clings Through Fortune's fit or fume of jealousy, Your sweet kind eye beats down her threatenings As wind doth smoke; such power sits in your eye. Thus in your field my seed of harvestry Thrives, for the fruit is like me that I set; God bids me tend it with good husbandry; This is the end for which we twain are met. Princess, give ear to this my summary; That heart of mine your heart's love should forget Shall never be: like trust in you put I: This is the end for which we twain are met.

## BALLAD AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF FRANCE

May he fall in with beasts that scatter fire, Like Jason, when he sought the fleece of gold, Or change from man to beast three years entire, As King Nebuchadnezzar did of old; Or else have times as shameful and as bad As Trojan folk for ravished Helen had; Or gulfed with Proserpine and Tantalus Let hell's deep fen devour him dolorous, With worse to bear than Job's worst sufferance, Bound in his prisonmaze with Dædalus, Who could wish evil to the state of France! May he four months, like bitterns in the mire, Howl with head downmost in the lakesprings cold, Or to bear harness like strong bulls for hire To the Great Turk for money down be sold; Or thirty years like Magdalen live sad, With neither wool nor web of linen clad; Drown like Narciss', or swing down pendulous Like Absalom with locks luxurious, Or liker Judas fallen to reprobance; Or find such death as Simon sorcerous, Who could wish evil to the state of France! May the old times come of fierce Octavian's ire, And in his belly molten coin be told; May he like Victor in the mill expire, Crushed

between moving millstones on him rolled, Or in deep sea drenched breathless, more adrad Than in the whale's bulk Jonas, when God bade: From Phœbus' light, from Juno's treasurehouse Driven, and from joys of Venus amorous, And cursed of God most high to the utterance, As was the Syrian king Antiochus, Who could wish evil to the state of France! Prince, may the brightwinged brood of Æolus To seaking Glaucus' wild wood cavernous Bear him bereft of peace and hope's least glance, For worthless is he to get good of us, Who could wish evil to the state of France.

## THE DISPUTE OF THE HEART AND BODY OF FRANÇOIS VILLON

Who is this I hear?—Lo, this is I, thine heart, That holds on merely now by a slender string. Strength fails me, shape and sense are rent apart, The blood in me is turned to a bitter thing, Seeing thee skulk here like a dog shivering.— Yea, and for what?—For that thy sense found sweet.— What irks it thee?—I feel the sting of it.— Leave me at peace.—Why?—Nay now, leave me at peace; I will repent when I grow ripe in wit.— I say no more.—I care not though thou cease.— What art thou, trow?—A man worth praise, perfay.— This is thy thirtieth year of wayfaring.— 'Tis a mule's age.—Art thou a boy still?—Nay.— Is it hot lust that spurs thee with its sting, Grasping thy throat? Know'st thou not anything?— Yea, black and white, when milk is specked with flies, I can make out.—No more?—Nay, in no wise. Shall I begin again the count of these?— Thou art undone.—I will make shift to rise.— I say no more.—I care not though thou cease.— I have the sorrow of it, and thou the smart. Wert thou a poor mad fool or weak of wit, Then might'st thou plead this pretext with thine heart; But if thou know not good from evil a whit, Either thy head is hard as stone to hit, Or shame, not honour, gives thee most content. What canst thou answer to this argument?— When I am dead I shall be well at ease.— God! what good hope!—Thou art over eloquent.— I say no more.—I care not though thou cease.— Whence is this ill?—From sorrow and not from sin. When Saturn packed my wallet up for me I well believe he put these ills therein.— Fool, wilt thou make thy servant lord of thee? Hear now the wise king's counsel; thus saith

he: All power upon the stars a wise man hath; There is no planet that shall do him scathe.— Nay, as they made me I grow and I decrease.— What say'st thou?—Truly this is all my faith.— I say no more.—I care not though thou cease.— Wouldst thou live still?—God help me that I may!— Then thou must—What? turn penitent and pray?— Read always—What?—Grave words and good to say; Leave off the ways of fools, lest they displease.— Good; I will do it.—Wilt thou remember?—Yea.— Abide not till there come an evil day. I say no more.—I care not though thou cease.

## EPISTLE IN FORM OF A BALLAD TO HIS FRIENDS

Have pity, pity, friends, have pity on me, Thus much at least, may it please you, of your grace! I lie not under hazel or hawthorntree Down in this dungeon ditch, mine exile's place By leave of God and fortune's foul disgrace. Girls, lovers, glad young folk and newly wed, Jumpers and jugglers, tumbling heel o'er head, Swift as a dart, and sharp as needleware, Throats clear as bells that ring the kine to shed, Your poor old friend, what, will you leave him there? Singers that sing at pleasure, lawlessly, Light, laughing, gay of word and deed, that race And run like folk lightwitted as ye be And have in hand nor current coin nor base, Ye wait too long, for now he's dying apace. Rhymers of lays and roundels sung and read, Ye'll brew him broth too late when he lies dead. Nor wind nor lightning, sunbeam nor fresh air, May pierce the thick wall's bound where lies his bed; Your poor old friend, what, will you leave him there? O noble folk from tithes and taxes free, Come and behold him in this piteous case, Ye that nor king nor emperor holds in fee, But only God in heaven; behold his face Who needs must fast, Sundays and holidays, Which makes his teeth like rakes; and when he hath fed With never a cake for banquet but dry bread, Must drench his bowels with much cold watery fare, With board nor stool, but low on earth instead; Your poor old friend, what, will you leave him there? Princes aforenamed, old and young foresaid, Get me the king's seal and my pardon sped, And hoist me in some basket up with care: So swine will help each other ill bested, For where one squeaks they run in heaps ahead. Your poor old friend, what,

will you leave him there?

THE EPITAPH IN FORM OF A BALLAD

WHICH VILLON MADE FOR HIMSELF AND HIS COMRADES, EXPECTING TO BE HANGED ALONG WITH THEM

Men, brother men, that after us yet live, Let not your hearts too hard against us be; For if some pity of us poor men ye give, The sooner God shall take of you pity. Here are we five or six strung up, you see, And here the flesh that all too well we fed Bit by bit eaten and rotten, rent and shred, And we the bones grow dust and ash withal; Let no man laugh at us discomforted, But pray to God that he forgive us all. If we call on you, brothers, to forgive, Ye should not hold our prayer in scorn, though we Were slain by law; ye know that all alive Have not wit alway to walk righteously; Make therefore intercession heartily With him that of a virgin's womb was bred, That his grace be not as a dry wellhead For us, nor let hell's thunder on us fall; We are dead, let no man harry or vex us dead, But pray to God that he forgive us all. The rain has washed and laundered us all five, And the sun dried and blackened; yea, perdie, Ravens and pies with beaks that rend and rive Have dug our eyes out, and plucked off for fee Our beards and eyebrows; never are we free, Not once, to rest; but here and there still sped, Drive at its wild will by the wind's change led, More pecked of birds than fruits on gardenwall; Men, for God's love, let no gibe here be said, But pray to God that he forgive us all. Prince Jesus, that of all art lord and head, Keep us, that hell be not our bitter bed; We have nought to do in such a master's hall. Be not ye therefore of our fellowhead, But pray to God that he forgive us all.

## FROM VICTOR HUGO

Take heed of this small child of earth; He is great: he hath in him God most high. Children before their fleshly birth Are lights alive in the blue sky. In our light bitter

world of wrong They come; God gives us them awhile. His speech is in their stammering tongue, And his forgiveness in their smile. Their sweet light rests upon our eyes. Alas! their right to joy is plain. If they are hungry, Paradise Weeps, and, if cold, Heaven thrills with pain. The want that saps their sinless flower Speaks judgment on sin's ministers. Man holds an angel in his power. Ah! deep in Heaven what thunder stirs, When God seeks out these tender things Whom in the shadow where we sleep He sends us clothed about with wings, And finds them ragged babes that weep!

## NOCTURNE

La nuit écoute et se penche sur l'onde Pour y cueillir rien qu'un souffle d'amour; Pas de lueur, pas de musique au monde, Pas de sommeil pour moi ni de séjour. O mère, ô Nuit, de ta source profonde Versenous, verse enfin l'oubli du jour. Verse l'oubli de l'angoisse et du jour; Chante; ton chant assoupit l'âme et l'onde: Fais de ton sein pour mon âme un séjour, Elle est bien lasse, ô mère, de ce monde, Où le baiser ne veut pas dire amour, Où l'âme aimée est moins que toi profonde. Car toute chose aimée est moins profonde, O Nuit, que toi, fille et mère du jour; Toi dont l'attente est le répit du monde, Toi dont le souffle est plein de mots d'amour, Toi dont l'haleine enfle et réprime l'onde, Toi dont l'ombre a tout le ciel pour séjour. La misère humble et lasse, sans séjour, S'abrite et dort sous ton aile profonde; Tu fais à tous l'aumône de l'amour: Toutes les soifs viennent boire à ton onde, Tout ce qui pleure et se dérobe au jour, Toutes les faims et tous les maux du monde. Moi seul je veille et ne vois dans ce monde Que ma douleur qui n'ait point de séjour Où s'abriter sur ta rive profonde Et s'endormir sous tes yeux loin du jour; Je vais toujours cherchant au bord de l'onde Le sang du beau pied blessé de l'amour. La mer est sombre où tu naquis, amour, Pleine des pleurs et des sanglots du monde; On ne voit plus le gouffre où naît le jour Luire et frémir sous ta lueur profonde; Mais dans les cœurs d'homme où tu

fais séjour La douleur monte et baisse comme une onde.

ENVOI

Fille de l'onde et mère de l'amour, Du haut séjour plein de ta paix profonde Sur ce bas monde épands un peu de jour.

## THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

Pour mettre une couronne au front d'une chanson, Il semblait qu'en passant son pied semât des roses, Et que sa main cueillît comme des fleurs écloses Les étoiles au fond du ciel en floraison. Sa parole de marbre et d'or avait le son Des clairons de l'été chassant les jours moroses; Comme en Thrace Apollon banni des grands cieux roses, Il regardait du cœur l'Olympe, sa maison. Le soleil fut pour lui le soleil du vieux monde, Et son œil recherchait dans les flots embrasés Le sillon immortel d'où s'élança sur l'onde Vénus, que la mer molle enivrait de baisers: Enfin, dieu ressaisi de sa splendeur premiére, Il trône, et son sépulcre est bâti de lumière.

## ODE

(LE TOMBEAU DE THÉOPHILE GAUTIER)

Quelle fleur, ô Mort, quel joyau, quel chant, Quel vent, quel rayon de soleil couchant, Sur ton front penché, sur ta main avide, Sur l'âpre pâleur de ta lèvre aride, Vibre encore et luit? Ton sein est sans lait, ton oreille est vide, Ton œil plein de nuit. Ta bouche est sans souffle et ton front sans ride; Mais l'éclair voilé d'une flamme humide, Flamme éclose au coeur d'un ciel pluvieux, Rallume ta lèvre et remplit tes yeux De lueurs d'opale; Ta bouche est vermeille et ton front joyeux, O toi qui fus pâle. Comme aux jours divins la mère des dieux, Reine au sein fécond, au corps radieux, Tu surgis au bord de la tombe amère; Tu nous apparais, ô Mort, vierge et mère, Effroi des humains, Le divin laurier sur la tête altière Et la lyre aux mains.

Nous reconnaissons, courbés vers la terre, Que c'est la splendeur de ta face austère Qui dore la nuit de nos longs malheurs; Que la vie ailée aux mille couleurs, Dont tu n'es que l'âme, Refait par tes mains les prés et les fleurs, La rose et la femme. Lune constante! astre ami des douleurs Qui luis à travers la brume des pleurs! Quelle flamme au fond de ta clarté molle Éclate et rougit, nouvelle auréole, Ton doux front voilé? Quelle étoile, ouvrant ses ailes, s'envole Du ciel étoilé? Pleurant ce rayon de jour qu'on lui vole, L'homme exècre en vain la Mort triste et folle; Mais l'astre qui fut à nos yeux si beau, Làhaut, loin d'ici, dans un ciel nouveau Plein d'autres étoiles, Se lève, et pour lui la nuit du tombeau Entr'ouvre ses voiles. L'âme est dans le corps comme un jeune oiseau Dont l'aile s'agite au bord du berceau; La mort, déliant cette aile inquiète, Quand nous écoutons la bouche muette Qui nous dit adieu, Fait de l'homme infime et sombre un poëte, Du poëte un dieu.

## IN OBITUM THEOPHILI POETÆ

O lux Pieridum et laurigeri deliciæ dei, Vox leni Zephyro lenior, ut veris amans novi Tollit floridulis implicitum primitiis caput, Ten' ergo abripuit non rediturum, ut redeunt novo Flores vere novi, te quoque mors irrevocabilem? Cur vatem neque te Musa parens, te neque Gratiæ, Nec servare sibi te potuit fidum animi Venus? Quæ nunc ipsa magis vel puero te Cinyreïo, Te desiderium et flebilibus lumen amoribus, Amissum queritur, sanguineis fusa comam genis. Tantis tu lacrymis digne, comes dulcis Apollini, Carum nomen eris dîs superis atque sodalibus Nobis, quîs eadem quæ tibi vivo patuit via Non æquis patet, at te sequimur passibus haud tuis, At mæsto cinerem carmine non illacrymabilem Tristesque exuvias floribus ac fletibus integris Unà contegimus, nec citharâ nec sine tibiâ, Votoque unanimæ vocis Ave dicimus et Vale.

## AD CATULLUM

Catulle frater, ut velim comes tibi Remota per vireta, per cavum nemus Sacrumque Ditis haud inhospiti specus, Pedem referre, trans aquam Stygis ducem Secutus unum et unicum, Catulle, te, Ut ora vatis optimi reviserem, Tui meique vatis ora, quem scio Venustiorem adîsse vel tuo lacum, Benigniora semper arva vel tuis, Ubi serenus accipit suos deus, Tegitque myrtus implicata laureâ, Manuque mulcet halituque consecrat Fovetque blanda mors amabili sinu, Et ore fama fervido colit viros Alitque qualis unus ille par tibi Britannus unicusque in orbe præstitit Amicus ille noster, ille ceteris Poeta major, omnibusque floribus Priore Landor inclytum rosâ caput Revinxit extulitque, quam tuâ manu Recepit ac refovit integram suâ.

## DEDICATION

1878

Some nine years gone, as we dwelt together In the sweet hushed heat of the south French weather Ere autumn fell on the vinetressed hills Or the season had shed one rosered feather, Friend, whose fame is a flame that fills All eyes it lightens and hearts it thrills With joy to be born of the blood which bred From a land that the grey sea girds and chills The heart and spirit and hand and head Whose might is as light on a dark day shed, On a day now dark as a land's decline Where all the peers of your praise are dead, In a land and season of corn and vine I pledged you a health from a beaker of mine But halfway filled to the lip's edge yet With hope for honey and song for wine. Nine years have risen and eight years set Since there by the wellspring our hands on it met: And the pledge of my songs that were then to be, I could wonder not, friend, though a friend should forget. For life's helm rocks to the windward and lee, And time is as wind, and as waves are we; And song is as foam that the seawinds fret, Though the thought at its heart should be deep as the sea.

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