Poems

by T. S. Eliot

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Poems

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Poems

Author: T. S. Eliot

Release date: December 1, 1998 [eBook #1567] Most recently updated: November 22, 2021

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1567

Credits: Bill Brewer and David Widger

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS ***

POEMS

by T. S. ELIOT

New York Alfred A. Knopf 1920

To Jean Verdenal 1889-1915

Certain of these poems first appeared in Poetry, Blast, Others, The Little Review, and Art and Letters.

CONTENTS

POEMS

Gerontion

Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar

Sweeney Erect

A Cooking Egg

Le Directeur

Mélange adultère de tout

Lune de Miel

The Hippopotamus

Dans le Restaurant

Whispers of Immortality

Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service

Sweeney Among the Nightingales

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

Portrait of a Lady

Preludes

Rhapsody on a Windy Night

Morning at the Window

The Boston Evening Transcript

Aunt Helen

Cousin Nancy

Mr. Apollinax

Hysteria

Conversation Galante

La Figlia Che Piange

POEMS

Gerontion

Thou hast nor youth nor age But as it were an after dinner sleep Dreaming of both.

Here I am, an old man in a dry month, Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain. I was neither at the hot gates Nor fought in the warm rain Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass, Bitten by flies, fought. My house is a decayed house, And the jew squats on the window sill, the owner, Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp, Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London. The goat coughs at night in the field overhead; Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds. The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea, Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter. I an old man, A dull head among windy spaces. Signs are taken for wonders. "We would see a sign": The word within a word, unable to speak a word, Swaddled with darkness. In the juvescence of the year Came Christ the tiger In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering Judas, To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero With caressing hands, at Limoges Who walked all night in the next room; By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians; By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room Shifting the candles; Fraulein von Kulp Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door. Vacant shuttles Weave the wind. I have no ghosts, An old man in a draughty house Under a windy knob. After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors And issues,

deceives with whispering ambitions, Guides us by vanities. Think now She gives when our attention is distracted And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late What's not believed in, or if still believed, In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes. These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree. The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think at last We have not reached conclusion, when I Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last I have not made this show purposelessly And it is not by any concitation Of the backward devils. I would meet you upon this honestly. I that was near your heart was removed therefrom To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition. I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it Since what is kept must be adulterated? I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch: How should I use it for your closer contact? These with a thousand small deliberations Protract the profit of their chilled delirium, Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled, With pungent sauces, multiply variety In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do, Suspend its operations, will the weevil Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn, White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims, And an old man driven by the Trades To a sleepy corner. Tenants of the house, Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar

Tra-la-la-la-la-la-laire—nil nisi divinum stabile est; caetera fumus—the gondola stopped, the old palace was there, how charming its grey and pink— goats and monkeys, with such hair too!—so the countess passed on until she came through the

little park, where Niobe presented her with a cabinet, and so departed.

Burbank crossed a little bridge Descending at a small hotel; Princess Volupine arrived, They were together, and he fell. Defunctive music under sea Passed seaward with the passing bell Slowly: the God Hercules Had left him, that had loved him well. The horses, under the axletree Beat up the dawn from Istria With even feet. Her shuttered barge Burned on the water all the day. But this or such was Bleistein's way: A saggy bending of the knees And elbows, with the palms turned out, Chicago Semite Viennese. A lustreless protrusive eye Stares from the protozoic slime At a perspective of Canaletto. The smoky candle end of time Declines. On the Rialto once. The rats are underneath the piles. The jew is underneath the lot. Money in furs. The boatman smiles, Princess Volupine extends A meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand To climb the waterstair. Lights, lights, She entertains Sir Ferdinand Klein. Who clipped the lion's wings And flea'd his rump and pared his claws? Thought Burbank, meditating on Time's ruins, and the seven laws.

Sweeney Erect

And the trees about me, Let them be dry and leafless; let the rocks Groan with continual surges; and behind me Make all a desolation. Look, look, wenches!

Paint me a cavernous waste shore Cast in the unstilted Cyclades, Paint me the bold anfractuous rocks Faced by the snarled and yelping seas. Display me Aeolus above Reviewing the insurgent gales Which tangle Ariadne's hair And swell with haste the perjured sails. Morning stirs the feet and hands (Nausicaa and Polypheme), Gesture of orang-outang Rises from the sheets in steam. This withered root of knots of hair Slitted below and gashed with eyes, This oval O cropped out with teeth: The sickle motion from the thighs Jackknifes upward at the knees Then straightens out from heel to hip Pushing the framework of the bed And clawing at the pillow slip. Sweeney addressed full length to shave Broadbottomed, pink from nape to base,

Knows the female temperament And wipes the suds around his face. (The lengthened shadow of a man Is history, said Emerson Who had not seen the silhouette Of Sweeney straddled in the sun). Tests the razor on his leg Waiting until the shriek subsides. The epileptic on the bed Curves backward, clutching at her sides. The ladies of the corridor Find themselves involved, disgraced, Call witness to their principles And deprecate the lack of taste Observing that hysteria Might easily be misunderstood; Mrs. Turner intimates It does the house no sort of good. But Doris, towelled from the bath, Enters padding on broad feet, Bringing sal volatile And a glass of brandy neat.

A Cooking Egg

En l'an trentiesme de mon aage Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues...

Pipit sate upright in her chair Some distance from where I was sitting; Views of the Oxford Colleges Lay on the table, with the knitting. Daguerreotypes and silhouettes, Her grandfather and great great aunts, Supported on the mantelpiece An Invitation to the Dance. . . . . I shall not want Honour in Heaven For I shall meet Sir Philip Sidney And have talk with Coriolanus And other heroes of that kidney. I shall not want Capital in Heaven For I shall meet Sir Alfred Mond: We two shall lie together, lapt In a five per cent Exchequer Bond. I shall not want Society in Heaven, Lucretia Borgia shall be my Bride; Her anecdotes will be more amusing Than Pipit's experience could provide. I shall not want Pipit in Heaven: Madame Blavatsky will instruct me In the Seven Sacred Trances; Piccarda de Donati will conduct me. . . . . But where is the penny world I bought To eat with Pipit behind the screen? The red-eyed scavengers are creeping From Kentish Town and Golder's Green; Where are the eagles and the trumpets? Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps. Over buttered scones and crumpets Weeping, weeping multitudes Droop in a hundred A.B.C.'s ["ABC's" signifes endemic teashops, found in all parts of London. The

initials signify "Aerated Bread Company, Limited."—Project Gutenberg Editor's replacement of original footnote]

Le Directeur

Malheur à la malheureuse Tamise! Tamisel Qui coule si pres du Spectateur. Le directeur Conservateur Du Spectateur Empeste la brise. Les actionnaires Réactionnaires Du Spectateur Conservateur Bras dessus bras dessous Font des tours A pas de loup. Dans un égout Une petite fille En guenilles Camarde Regarde Le directeur Du Spectateur Conservateur Et crève d'amour.

Mélange adultère de tout

En Amerique, professeur; En Angleterre, journaliste; C'est à grands pas et en sueur Que vous suivrez à peine ma piste. En Yorkshire, conferencier; A Londres, un peu banquier, Vous me paierez bien la tête. C'est à Paris que je me coiffe Casque noir de jemenfoutiste. En Allemagne, philosophe Surexcité par Emporheben Au grand air de Bergsteigleben; J'erre toujours de-ci de-là A divers coups de tra la la De Damas jusqu'à Omaha. Je celebrai mon jour de fête Dans une oasis d'Afrique Vêtu d'une peau de girafe. On montrera mon cénotaphe Aux côtes brûlantes de Mozambique.

Lune de Miel

Ils ont vu les Pays-Bas, ils rentrent à Terre Haute; Mais une nuit d'été, les voici à Ravenne, A l'sur le dos écartant les genoux De quatre jambes molles tout gonflées de morsures. On relève le drap pour mieux égratigner. Moins d'une lieue d'ici est Saint Apollinaire In Classe, basilique connue des amateurs De chapitaux d'acanthe que touraoie le vent. Ils vont prendre le train de huit heures Prolonger leurs misères de Padoue à Milan Ou se trouvent le Cène, et un restaurant pas cher. Lui pense aux

pourboires, et redige son bilan. Ils auront vu la Suisse et traversé la France. Et Saint Apollinaire, raide et ascétique, Vieille usine désaffectée de Dieu, tient encore Dans ses pierres ècroulantes la forme precise de Byzance.

The Hippopotamus

Similiter et omnes revereantur Diaconos, ut mandatum Jesu Christi; et Episcopum, ut Jesum Christum, existentem filium Patris; Presbyteros autem, ut concilium Dei et conjunctionem Apostolorum. Sine his Ecclesia non vocatur; de quibus suadeo vos sic habeo. S. IGNATII AD TRALLIANOS. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.

The broad-backed hippopotamus Rests on his belly in the mud; Although he seems so firm to us He is merely flesh and blood. Flesh-and-blood is weak and frail, Susceptible to nervous shock; While the True Church can never fail For it is based upon a rock. The hippo's feeble steps may err In compassing material ends, While the True Church need never stir To gather in its dividends. The 'potamus can never reach The mango on the mango-tree; But fruits of pomegranate and peach Refresh the Church from over sea. At mating time the hippo's voice Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd, But every week we hear rejoice The Church, at being one with God. The hippopotamus's day Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts; God works in a mysterious way- The Church can sleep and feed at once. I saw the 'potamus take wing Ascending from the damp savannas, And quiring angels round him sing The praise of God, in loud hosannas. Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean And him shall heavenly arms enfold, Among the saints he shall be seen Performing on a harp of gold. He shall be washed as white as snow, By all the martyr'd virgins kiss, While the True Church remains below Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

Dans le Restaurant

Le garcon délabré qui n'a rien à faire Que de se gratter les doigts et se pencher sur mon épaule: "Dans mon pays il fera temps pluvieux, Du vent, du grand soleil, et de la pluie; C'est ce qu'on appelle le jour de lessive des gueux." (Bavard, baveux, à la croupe arrondie, Je te prie, au moins, ne bave pas dans la soupe). "Les saules trempés, et des bourgeons sur les ronces— C'est là, dans une averse, qu'on s'abrite. J'avais septtans, elle était plus petite. Elle etait toute mouillée, je lui ai donné des primavères." Les tâches de son gilet montent au chiffre de trente-huit. "Je la chatouillais, pour la faire rire. J'éprouvais un instant de puissance et de délire." Mais alors, vieux lubrique, a cet âge... "Monsieur, le fait est dur. Il est venu, nous peloter, un gros chien; Moi j'avais peur, je l'ai quittee a mi-chemin. C'est dommage." Mais alors, tu as ton vautour! Va t'en te décrotter les rides du visage; Tiens, ma fourchette, décrasse-toi le crâne. De quel droit payes-tu des expériences comme moi? Tiens, voilà dix sous, pour la salle-de-bains. Phlébas, le Phénicien, pendant quinze jours noyé, Oubliait les cris des mouettes et la houle de Cornouaille, Et les profits et les pertes, et la cargaison d'etain: Un courant de sous-mer l'emporta tres loin, Le repassant aux étapes de sa vie antérieure. Figurez-vous donc, c'etait un sort penible; Cependant, ce fut jadis un bel homme, de haute taille.

Whispers of Immortality

Webster was much possessed by death And saw the skull beneath the skin; And breastless creatures under ground Leaned backward with a lipless grin. Daffodil bulbs instead of balls Stared from the sockets of the eyes! He knew that thought clings round dead limbs Tightening its lusts and luxuries. Donne, I suppose, was such another Who found no substitute for sense; To seize and clutch and penetrate, Expert beyond experience, He knew the anguish of the marrow The ague of the skeleton; No contact possible to flesh Allayed the fever of the bone. . . . . Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye Is underlined for emphasis; Uncorseted, her friendly bust

Gives promise of pneumatic bliss. The couched Brazilian jaguar Compels the scampering marmoset With subtle effluence of cat; Grishkin has a maisonette; The sleek Brazilian jaguar Does not in its arboreal gloom Distil so rank a feline smell As Grishkin in a drawing-room. And even the Abstract Entities Circumambulate her charm; But our lot crawls between dry ribs To keep our metaphysics warm.

Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service

Look, look, master, here comes two religious caterpillars. The Jew of Malta.

Polyphiloprogenitive The sapient sutlers of the Lord Drift across the window-panes. In the beginning was the Word. In the beginning was the Word. Superfetation of [Greek text inserted here], And at the mensual turn of time Produced enervate Origen. A painter of the Umbrian school Designed upon a gesso ground The nimbus of the Baptized God. The wilderness is cracked and browned But through the water pale and thin Still shine the unoffending feet And there above the painter set The Father and the Paraclete. . . . . The sable presbyters approach The avenue of penitence; The young are red and pustular Clutching piaculative pence. Under the penitential gates Sustained by staring Seraphim Where the souls of the devout Burn invisible and dim. Along the garden-wall the bees With hairy bellies pass between The staminate and pistilate, Blest office of the epicene. Sweeney shifts from ham to ham Stirring the water in his bath. The masters of the subtle schools Are controversial, polymath.

Sweeney Among the Nightingales

[Greek text inserted here]

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees Letting his arms hang down to laugh, The zebra stripes along his jaw Swelling to maculate giraffe. The circles of the stormy moon Slide westward toward the River Plate, Death and the Raven drift above And

Sweeney guards the hornèd gate. Gloomy Orion and the Dog Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas; The person in the Spanish cape Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees Slips and pulls the table cloth Overturns a coffee-cup, Reorganized upon the floor She yawns and draws a stocking up; The silent man in mocha brown Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes; The waiter brings in oranges Bananas figs and hothouse grapes; The silent vertebrate in brown Contracts and concentrates, withdraws; Rachel née Rabinovitch Tears at the grapes with murderous paws; She and the lady in the cape Are suspect, thought to be in league; Therefore the man with heavy eyes Declines the gambit, shows fatigue, Leaves the room and reappears Outside the window, leaning in, Branches of wisteria Circumscribe a golden grin; The host with someone indistinct Converses at the door apart, The nightingales are singing near The Convent of the Sacred Heart, And sang within the bloody wood When Agamemnon cried aloud, And let their liquid droppings fall To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse A persona che mai tornasse al mondo, Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse. Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero, Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

Let us go then, you and I, When the evening is spread out against the sky Like a patient etherized upon a table; Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets, The muttering retreats Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells: Streets that follow like a tedious argument Of insidious intent To lead you to an overwhelming question.... Oh, do not ask, "What is it?" Let us go and make our visit. In the room the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo. The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes, The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes Licked its tongue into the corners

of the evening, Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains, Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys, Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap, And seeing that it was a soft October night, Curled once about the house, and fell asleep. And indeed there will be time For the yellow smoke that slides along the street, Rubbing its back upon the window panes; There will be time, there will be time To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet There will be time to murder and create, And time for all the works and days of hands That lift and drop a question on your plate; Time for you and time for me, And time yet for a hundred indecisions, And for a hundred visions and revisions, Before the taking of a toast and tea. In the room the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo. And indeed there will be time To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?" Time to turn back and descend the stair, With a bald spot in the middle of my hair— (They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!") My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin, My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin— (They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!") Do I dare Disturb the universe? In a minute there is time For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse. For I have known them all already, known them all: Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons, I have measured out my life with coffee spoons; I know the voices dying with a dying fall Beneath the music from a farther room. So how should I presume? And I have known the eyes already, known them all— The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase, And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin, When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall, Then how should I begin To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways? And how should I presume? And I have known the arms already, known them all— Arms that are braceleted and white and bare (But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!) Is it perfume from a dress That makes me so digress? Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl. And should I then presume? And how should I begin? . . . . . Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes Of lonely

men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? I should have been a pair of ragged claws Scuttling across the floors of silent seas. . . . . And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully! Smoothed by long fingers, Asleep... tired... or it malingers. Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me. Should I, after tea and cakes and ices, Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis? But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed, Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter, I am no prophet—and here's no great matter; I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker, And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker, And in short, I was afraid. And would it have been worth it, after all, After the cups, the marmalade, the tea, Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me, Would it have been worth while, To have bitten off the matter with a smile, To have squeezed the universe into a ball To roll it toward some overwhelming question, To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead, Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"— If one, settling a pillow by her head, Should say: "That is not what I meant at all; That is not it, at all." And would it have been worth it, after all, Would it have been worth while, After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets, After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor— And this, and so much more?— It is impossible to say just what I mean! But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen: Would it have been worth while If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl, And turning toward the window, should say: "That is not it at all, That is not what I meant, at all." . . . . . No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be; Am an attendant lord, one that will do To swell a progress, start a scene or two, Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool, Deferential, glad to be of use, Politic, cautious, and meticulous; Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse; At times, indeed, almost ridiculous— Almost, at times, the Fool. I grow old... I grow old... I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled. Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach? I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach. I have heard the mermaids singing,

each to each. I do not think that they will sing to me. I have seen them riding seaward on the waves Combing the white hair of the waves blown back When the wind blows the water white and black. We have lingered in the chambers of the sea By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Portrait of a Lady

Thou hast committed— Fornication: but that was in another country And besides, the wench is dead. The Jew of Malta.

I Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do— With "I have saved this afternoon for you"; And four wax candles in the darkened room, Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead, An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid. We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips. "So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul Should be resurrected only among friends Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room." —And so the conversation slips Among velleities and carefully caught regrets Through attenuated tones of violins Mingled with remote cornets And begins. "You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends, And how, how rare and strange it is, to find In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends, (For indeed I do not love it... you knew? you are not blind! How keen you are!) To find a friend who has these qualities, Who has, and gives Those qualities upon which friendship lives. How much it means that I say this to you— Without these friendships—life, what cauchemar!" Among the windings of the violins And the ariettes Of cracked cornets Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own, Capricious monotone That is at least one definite "false note." —Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance, Admire the

monuments Discuss the late events, Correct our watches by the public clocks. Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks. II Now that lilacs are in bloom She has a bowl of lilacs in her room And twists one in her fingers while she talks. "Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know What life is, you should hold it in your hands"; (Slowly twisting the lilac stalks) "You let it flow from you, you let it flow, And youth is cruel, and has no remorse And smiles at situations which it cannot see." I smile, of course, And go on drinking tea. "Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall My buried life, and Paris in the Spring, I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world To be wonderful and youthful, after all." The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune Of a broken violin on an August afternoon: "I am always sure that you understand My feelings, always sure that you feel, Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand. You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel. You will go on, and when you have prevailed You can say: at this point many a one has failed. But what have I, but what have I, my friend, To give you, what can you receive from me? Only the friendship and the sympathy Of one about to reach her journey's end. I shall sit here, serving tea to friends...." I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends For what she has said to me? You will see me any morning in the park Reading the comics and the sporting page. Particularly I remark An English countess goes upon the stage. A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance, Another bank defaulter has confessed. I keep my countenance, I remain self-possessed Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired Reiterates some worn-out common song With the smell of hyacinths across the garden Recalling things that other people have desired. Are these ideas right or wrong? III The October night comes down; returning as before Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees. "And so you are going abroad; and when do you return? But that's a useless question. You hardly know when you are coming back, You will find so much to learn." My smile falls heavily among the bric-à-brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me." My self-possession flares up for a second; This is as I had reckoned. "I have been wondering frequently of late (But our beginnings never know our ends!) Why we have not developed into friends." I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark Suddenly, his expression in a glass. My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark. "For everybody said so, all our friends, They all were sure our feelings would relate So closely! I myself can hardly understand. We must leave it now to fate. You will write, at any rate. Perhaps it is not too late. I shall sit here, serving tea to friends." And I must borrow every changing shape To find expression... dance, dance Like a dancing bear, Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape. Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance— Well! and what if she should die some afternoon, Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose; Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand With the smoke coming down above the housetops; Doubtful, for quite a while Not knowing what to feel or if I understand Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon... Would she not have the advantage, after all? This music is successful with a "dying fall" Now that we talk of dying— And should I have the right to smile?

Preludes

I The winter evening settles down With smell of steaks in passageways. Six o'clock. The burnt-out ends of smoky days. And now a gusty shower wraps The grimy scraps Of withered leaves about your feet And newspapers from vacant lots; The showers beat On broken blinds and chimney-pots, And at the corner of the street A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps. And then the lighting of the lamps. II The morning comes to consciousness Of faint stale smells of beer From the sawdust-trampled street With all its muddy feet that press To early coffee-stands. With the other masquerades That time resumes, One thinks of all the hands That are raising dingy shades In a thousand furnished rooms. III You tossed a blanket from the bed, You

lay upon your back, and waited; You dozed, and watched the night revealing The thousand sordid images Of which your soul was constituted; They flickered against the ceiling. And when all the world came back And the light crept up between the shutters, And you heard the sparrows in the gutters, You had such a vision of the street As the street hardly understands; Sitting along the bed's edge, where You curled the papers from your hair, Or clasped the yellow soles of feet In the palms of both soiled hands. IV His soul stretched tight across the skies That fade behind a city block, Or trampled by insistent feet At four and five and six o'clock; And short square fingers stuffing pipes, And evening newspapers, and eyes Assured of certain certainties, The conscience of a blackened street Impatient to assume the world. I am moved by fancies that are curled Around these images, and cling: The notion of some infinitely gentle Infinitely suffering thing. Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh; The worlds revolve like ancient women Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

Rhapsody on a Windy Night

Twelve o'clock. Along the reaches of the street Held in a lunar synthesis, Whispering lunar incantations Disolve the floors of memory And all its clear relations, Its divisions and precisions, Every street lamp that I pass Beats like a fatalistic drum, And through the spaces of the dark Midnight shakes the memory As a madman shakes a dead geranium. Half-past one, The street lamp sputtered, The street lamp muttered, The street lamp said, "Regard that woman Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door Which opens on her like a grin. You see the border of her dress Is torn and stained with sand, And you see the corner of her eye Twists like a crooked pin." The memory throws up high and dry A crowd of twisted things; A twisted branch upon the beach Eaten smooth, and polished As if the world gave up The secret of its skeleton, Stiff and white. A broken spring in a factory yard, Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left Hard and curled and ready to

snap. Half-past two, The street-lamp said, "Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter, Slips out its tongue And devours a morsel of rancid butter." So the hand of the child, automatic, Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along the quay. I could see nothing behind that child's eye. I have seen eyes in the street Trying to peer through lighted shutters, And a crab one afternoon in a pool, An old crab with barnacles on his back, Gripped the end of a stick which I held him. Half-past three, The lamp sputtered, The lamp muttered in the dark. The lamp hummed: "Regard the moon, La lune ne garde aucune rancune, She winks a feeble eye, She smiles into corners. She smooths the hair of the grass. The moon has lost her memory. A washed-out smallpox cracks her face, Her hand twists a paper rose, That smells of dust and old Cologne, She is alone With all the old nocturnal smells That cross and cross across her brain. The reminiscence comes Of sunless dry geraniums And dust in crevices, Smells of chestnuts in the streets And female smells in shuttered rooms And cigarettes in corridors And cocktail smells in bars." The lamp said, "Four o'clock, Here is the number on the door. Memory! You have the key, The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair, Mount. The bed is open; the tooth-brush hangs on the wall, Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life." The last twist of the knife.

Morning at the Window

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens, And along the trampled edges of the street I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids Sprouting despondently at area gates. The brown waves of fog toss up to me Twisted faces from the bottom of the street, And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts An aimless smile that hovers in the air And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

The Boston Evening Transcript

The readers of the Boston Evening Transcript Sway in the wind like a field of ripe corn. When evening quickens faintly in the street, Wakening the appetites of life in some And to others bringing the Boston Evening Transcript, I mount the steps and ring the bell, turning Wearily, as one would turn to nod good-bye to Rochefoucauld, If the street were time and he at the end of the street, And I say, "Cousin Harriet, here is the Boston Evening Transcript."

Aunt Helen

Miss Helen Slingsby was my maiden aunt, And lived in a small house near a fashionable square Cared for by servants to the number of four. Now when she died there was silence in heaven And silence at her end of the street. The shutters were drawn and the undertaker wiped his feet— He was aware that this sort of thing had occurred before. The dogs were handsomely provided for, But shortly afterwards the parrot died too. The Dresden clock continued ticking on the mantelpiece, And the footman sat upon the dining-table Holding the second housemaid on his knees— Who had always been so careful while her mistress lived.

Cousin Nancy

Miss Nancy Ellicott Strode across the hills and broke them, Rode across the hills and broke them— The barren New England hills— Riding to hounds Over the cow-pasture. Miss Nancy Ellicott smoked And danced all the modern dances; And her aunts were not quite sure how they felt about it, But they knew that it was modern. Upon the glazen shelves kept watch Matthew and Waldo, guardians of the faith, The army of unalterable law.

Mr. Apollinax

When Mr. Apollinax visited the United States His laughter tinkled among the teacups. I thought of Fragilion, that shy figure among the birch-trees, And of Priapus in the shrubbery Gaping at the lady in the swing. In the palace of Mrs. Phlaccus, at Professor Channing-Cheetah's He laughed like an irresponsible foetus. His laughter was submarine and profound Like the old man of the sea's Hidden under coral islands Where worried bodies of drowned men drift down in the green silence, Dropping from fingers of surf. I looked for the head of Mr. Apollinax rolling under a chair Or grinning over a screen With seaweed in its hair. I heard the beat of centaur's hoofs over the hard turf As his dry and passionate talk devoured the afternoon. "He is a charming man"—"But after all what did he mean?"— "His pointed ears... He must be unbalanced,"— "There was something he said that I might have challenged." Of dowager Mrs. Phlaccus, and Professor and Mrs. Cheetah I remember a slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon.

Hysteria

As she laughed I was aware of becoming involved in her laughter and being part of it, until her teeth were only accidental stars with a talent for squad-drill. I was drawn in by short gasps, inhaled at each momentary recovery, lost finally in the dark caverns of her throat, bruised by the ripple of unseen muscles. An elderly waiter with trembling hands was hurriedly spreading a pink and white checked cloth over the rusty green iron table, saying: "If the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden, if the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden..." I decided that if the shaking of her breasts could be stopped, some of the fragments of the afternoon might be collected, and I concentrated my attention with careful subtlety to this end.

Conversation Galante

I observe: "Our sentimental friend the moon! Or possibly (fantastic, I confess) It may be Prester John's balloon Or an old battered lantern hung aloft To light poor travellers to their distress." She then: "How you digress!" And I then: "Some one frames upon the keys That exquisite nocturne, with which we explain The night and moonshine; music which we seize To body forth our vacuity." She then: "Does this refer to me?" "Oh no, it is I who am inane." "You, madam, are the eternal humorist, The eternal enemy of the absolute, Giving our vagrant moods the slightest twist! With your air indifferent and imperious At a stroke our mad poetics to confute—" And—"Are we then so serious?"

La Figlia Che Piange

O quam te memorem Virgo...

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair— Lean on a garden urn— Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair— Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise— Fling them to the ground and turn With a fugitive resentment in your eyes: But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair. So I would have had him leave, So I would have had her stand and grieve, So he would have left As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised, As the mind deserts the body it has used. I should find Some way incomparably light and deft, Some way we both should understand, Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand. She turned away, but with the autumn weather Compelled my imagination many days, Many days and many hours: Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers. And I wonder how they should have been together! I should have lost a gesture and a pose. Sometimes these cogitations still amaze The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means

that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this

license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or

1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.” • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works. • You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work. • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to

identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work

electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need

are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and

charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility:

www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.