

**VARIOUS**

POEMS OF

TO-DAY: AN

ANTHOLOGY

Various

**Poems of To-Day: an Anthology**

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# Various

## Poems of To-Day: an Anthology

### PREFATORY NOTE

This book has been compiled in order that boys and girls, already perhaps familiar with the great classics of the English speech, may also know something of the newer poetry of their own day. Most of the writers are living, and the rest are still vivid memories among us, while one of the youngest, almost as these words are written, has gone singing to lay down his life for his country's cause. Although no definite chronological limit has been set, and Meredith at least began to write in the middle of the nineteenth century, the intention has been to represent mainly those poetic tendencies which have become dominant as the influence of the accepted Victorian masters has grown weaker, and from which the poetry of the future, however it may develop, must in turn take its start. It may be helpful briefly to indicate the sequence of themes. Man draws his being from the heroic Past and from the Earth his Mother; and in harmony with these he must shape his life to what high purposes he may. Therefore this gathering of poems falls into three groups. {viii} First there are poems of History, of the romantic tale of the world, of our own special tradition here in England, and of the inheritance of obligation which that tradition imposes upon us. Naturally, there are some poems directly inspired by the present war, but nothing, it is hoped, which may not, in happier days, bear translation into any European tongue. Then there come poems of the Earth, of England again and the longing of the exile for home, of this and that familiar countryside, of woodland and meadow and garden, of the process of the seasons, of the "open road" and the "wind on the heath," of the city, its deprivations and its consolations. Finally there are poems of Life itself, of the moods in which it may be faced, of religion, of man's excellent virtues, of friendship and childhood, of passion, grief, and comfort. But there is no arbitrary isolation of one theme from another; they mingle and interpenetrate throughout, to the music of Pan's flute, and of Love's viol, and the bugle-call of Endeavour, and the passing-bell of Death.

May, 1915.

## 1. ALL THAT'S PAST

Very old are the woods;  
And the buds that break  
Out of the briar's boughs,  
When March winds wake,  
So old with their beauty are—  
Oh, no man knows  
Through what wild centuries  
Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks;  
And the rills that rise  
Where snow sleeps cold beneath  
The azure skies  
Sing such a history  
Of come and gone,  
Their every drop is as wise  
As Solomon.

Very old are we men;  
Our dreams are tales  
Told in dim Eden  
By Eve's nightingales;  
We wake and whisper awhile,  
But, the day gone by,  
Silence and sleep like fields  
Of amaranth lie.

*Walter de la Mare.*

## 2. PRE-EXISTEHCE

I laid me down upon the shore  
And dreamed a little space;  
I heard the great waves break and roar;  
The sun was on my face.

My idle hands and fingers brown  
Played with the pebbles grey;  
The waves came up, the waves went down,  
Most thundering and gay.

The pebbles, they were smooth and round  
And warm upon my hands,  
Like little people I had found  
Sitting among the sands.

The grains of sands so shining-small  
Soft through my fingers ran;  
The sun shone down upon it all,  
And so my dream began:

How all of this had been before;  
How ages far away  
I lay on some forgotten shore  
As here I lie to-day.

The waves came shining up the sands,  
As here to-day they shine;  
And in my pre-pelasgian hands  
The sand was warm and fine.

I have forgotten whence I came,  
Or what my home might be,  
Or by what strange and savage name  
I called that thundering sea.

I only know the sun shone down  
As still it shines to-day,  
And in my fingers long and brown  
The little pebbles lay.

*Frances Cornford.*

### 3. FRAGMENTS

Troy Town is covered up with weeds,  
The rabbits and the pismires brood  
On broken gold, and shards, and beads  
Where Priam's ancient palace stood.

The floors of many a gallant house  
Are matted with the roots of grass;  
The glow-worm and the nimble mouse  
Among her ruins flit and pass.

And there, in orts of blackened bone,  
The widowed Trojan beauties lie,  
And Simois babbles over stone  
And waps and gurgles to the sky.

Once there were merry days in Troy,  
Her chimneys smoked with cooking meals,  
The passing chariots did annoy  
The sunning housewives at their wheels.

And many a lovely Trojan maid  
Set Trojan lads to lovely things;  
The game of life was nobly played,  
They played the game like Queens and Kings.

So that, when Troy had greatly passed  
In one red roaring fiery coal,  
The courts the Grecians overcast  
Became a city in the soul.

In some green island of the sea,  
Where now the shadowy coral grows  
In pride and pomp and empery  
The courts of old Atlantis rose.

In many a glittering house of glass  
The Atlanteans wandered there;  
The paleness of their faces was  
Like ivory, so pale they were.

And hushed they were, no noise of words  
In those bright cities ever rang;  
Only their thoughts, like golden birds,  
About their chambers thrilled and sang.

They knew all wisdom, for they knew  
The souls of those Egyptian Kings  
Who learned, in ancient Babilu,  
The beauty of immortal things.

They knew all beauty—when they thought  
The air chimed like a stricken lyre,  
The elemental birds were wrought,  
The golden birds became a fire.

And straight to busy camps and marts  
The singing flames were swiftly gone;  
The trembling leaves of human hearts  
Hid boughs for them to perch upon.

And men in desert places, men  
Abandoned, broken, sick with fears,  
Rose singing, swung their swords agen,  
And laughed and died among the spears.

The green and greedy seas have drowned  
That city's glittering walls and towers,  
Her sunken minarets are crowned  
With red and russet water-flowers.

In towers and rooms and golden courts  
The shadowy coral lifts her sprays;  
The scrawl hath gorged her broken orts,  
The shark doth haunt her hidden ways,

But, at the falling of the tide,  
The golden birds still sing and gleam,  
The Atlanteans have not died,  
Immortal things still give us dream.

The dream that fires man's heart to make,  
To build, to do, to sing or say  
A beauty Death can never take,  
An Adam from the crumbled clay.

*John Masefield.*

## 4. FALLEN CITIES

I gathered with a careless hand,  
There where the waters night and day  
Are languid in the idle bay,  
A little heap of golden sand;  
And, as I saw it, in my sight  
Awoke a vision brief and bright,  
A city in a pleasant land.

I saw no mound of earth, but fair  
Turrets and domes and citadels,  
With murmuring of many bells;  
The spires were white in the blue air,  
And men by thousands went and came,  
Rapid and restless, and like flame  
Blown by their passions here and there.

With careless hand I swept away  
The little mound before I knew;  
The visioned city vanished too,  
And fall'n beneath my fingers lay.  
Ah God! how many hast Thou seen,  
Cities that are not and have been,  
By silent hill and idle bay!

*Gerald Gould.*

## 5. TIME, YOU OLD GIPSY MAN

Time, you old gipsy man,  
Will you not stay,  
Put up your caravan  
Just for one day?

All things I'll give you,  
Will you be my guest,  
Bells for your jennet  
Of silver the best,  
Goldsmiths shall beat you  
A great golden ring,  
Peacocks shall bow to you,  
Little boys sing,  
Oh, and sweet girls will  
Festoon you with may,  
Time, you old gipsy,  
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,  
Last night in Rome,  
Morning, and in the crush  
Under Paul's dome;  
Under Paul's dial  
You tighten your rein—  
Only a moment,  
And off once again;  
Off to some city  
Now blind in the womb,  
Off to another  
Ere that's in the tomb.

Time, you old gipsy man,  
Will you not stay,  
Put up your caravan  
Just for one day?

*Ralph Hodgson.*

## 6. A HUGUENOT

O, a gallant set were they,  
As they charged on us that day,  
A thousand riding like one!  
Their trumpets crying,  
And their white plumes flying,  
And their sabres flashing in the sun.

O, a sorry lot were we,  
As we stood beside the sea,  
Each man for himself as he stood!  
We were scattered and lonely—  
A little force only  
Of the good men fighting for the good.

But I never loved more  
On sea or on shore  
The ringing of my own true blade,  
Like lightning it quivered,  
And the hard helms shivered,  
As I sang, "None maketh me afraid!"

*Mary E. Coleridge.*

## **7. ON THE TOILET TABLE OF QUEEN MARIE-ANTOINETTE**

This was her table, these her trim outspread  
Brushes and trays and porcelain cups for red;  
Here sate she, while her women tired and curled  
The most unhappy head in all the world.

*J. B. B. Nichols.*

## 8. UPON ECKINGTON BRIDGE, RIVER AVON

O pastoral heart of England! like a psalm  
Of green days telling with a quiet beat—  
O wave into the sunset flowing calm!  
O tired lark descending on the wheat!  
Lies it all peace beyond that western fold  
Where now the lingering shepherd sees his star  
Rise upon Malvern? Paints an Age of Gold  
Yon cloud with prophecies of linked ease—  
Lulling this Land, with hills drawn up like knees,  
To drowse beside her implements of war?

Man shall outlast his battles. They have swept  
Avon from Naseby Field to Severn Ham;  
And Evesham's dedicated stones have stepp'd  
Down to the dust with Montfort's oriflamme.  
Nor the red tear nor the reflected tower  
Abides; but yet these eloquent grooves remain,  
Worn in the sandstone parapet hour by hour  
By labouring bargemen where they shifted ropes.  
E'en so shall man turn back from violent hopes  
To Adam's cheer, and toil with spade again.

Ay, and his mother Nature, to whose lap  
Like a repentant child at length he hies,  
Not in the whirlwind or the thunder-clap  
Proclaims her more tremendous mysteries:  
But when in winter's grave, bereft of light,  
With still, small voice divinelier whispering  
—Lifting the green head of the aconite,  
Feeding with sap of hope the hazel-shoot—  
She feels God's finger active at the root,  
Turns in her sleep, and murmurs of the Spring.

*Arthur Quiller-Couch.*

## 9. BY THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES AT CHARING CROSS

Sombre and rich, the skies;  
Great glooms, and starry plains.  
Gently the night wind sighs;  
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings  
Around me: and around  
The saddest of all kings  
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides  
Hard by his own Whitehall:  
Only the night wind glides:  
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court; and yet,  
The stars his courtiers are:  
Stars in their stations set;  
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,  
The fair and fatal king:  
Dark night is all his own,  
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:  
The stars; or those sad eyes?  
Which are more still and great:  
Those brows; or the dark skies?

Although his whole heart yearn  
In passionate tragedy:  
Never was face so stern  
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death  
By beauty made amends:  
The passing of his breath  
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life and hapless? Nay:  
Through death, life grew sublime.  
*Speak after sentence?* Yea:

And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head  
Bare to the stars of doom:  
He triumphs now, the dead,  
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,  
Vexed in the world's employ:  
His soul was of the saints;  
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!  
Men hunger for thy grace:  
And through the night I go,  
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet when the city sleeps;  
When all the cries are still:  
The stars and heavenly deeps  
Work out a perfect will.

*Lionel Johnson.*

## 10. TO THE FORGOTTEN DEAD

To the forgotten dead,  
Come, let us drink in silence ere we part.  
To every fervent yet resolvèd heart  
That brought its tameless passion and its tears,  
Renunciation and laborious years,  
To lay the deep foundations of our race,  
To rear its stately fabric overhead  
And light its pinnacles with golden grace.

To the unhonoured dead.  
To the forgotten dead,  
Whose dauntless hands were stretched to grasp the rein  
Of Fate and hurl into the void again  
Her thunder-hoofed horses, rushing blind  
Earthward along the courses of the wind.  
Among the stars, along the wind in vain  
Their souls were scattered and their blood was shed,  
And nothing, nothing of them doth remain.  
To the thrice-perished dead.

*Margaret L. Woods.*

## 11. DRAKE'S DRUM

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,  
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)  
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,  
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,  
Wi' sailor-lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,  
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',  
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,  
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)  
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,  
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,  
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;  
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,  
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,  
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)  
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,  
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.  
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,  
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;  
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'  
They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago!

*Henry Newbolt.*

## 12. THE MOON IS UP

The moon is up: the stars are bright  
The wind is fresh and free!  
We're out to seek for gold to-night  
Across the silver sea!  
The world was growing grey and old:  
Break out the sails again!  
We're out to seek a Realm of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.

We're sick of all the cringing knees,  
The courtly smiles and lies!  
God, let Thy singing Channel breeze  
Lighten our hearts and eyes!  
Let love no more be bought and sold  
For earthly loss or gain;  
We're out to seek an Age of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.

Beyond the light of far Cathay,  
Beyond all mortal dreams,  
Beyond the reach of night and day  
Our El Dorado gleams,  
Revealing—as the skies unfold—  
A star without a stain,  
The Glory of the Gates of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.

*Alfred Noyes.*

### 13. MINORA SIDERA

Sitting at times over a hearth that burns  
With dull domestic glow,  
My thought, leaving the book, gratefully turns  
To you who planned it so.

Not of the great only you deigned to tell—  
The stars by which we steer—  
But lights out of the night that flashed, and fell  
To night again, are here.

Such as were those, dogs of an elder day,  
Who sacked the golden ports,  
And those later who dared grapple their prey  
Beneath the harbour forts:

Some with flag at the fore, sweeping the world  
To find an equal fight,  
And some who joined war to their trade, and hurled  
Ships of the line in flight.

Whether their fame centuries long should ring  
They cared not over-much,  
But cared greatly to serve God and the king,  
And keep the Nelson touch;

And fought to build Britain above the tide  
Of wars and windy fate;  
And passed content, leaving to us the pride  
Of lives obscurely great.

*Henry Newbolt.*

## 14. MUSING ON A GREAT SOLDIER

*Fear? Yes . . . I heard you saying  
In an Oxford common-room  
Where the hearth-light's kindly raying  
Stript the empanelled walls of gloom,  
Silver groves of candles playing  
In the soft wine turned to bloom—  
At the word I see you now  
Blandly push the wine-boat's prow  
Round the mirror of that scored  
Yellow old mahogany board—  
I confess to one fear! this,  
To be buried alive!*

My Lord,  
Your fancy has played amiss.

Fear not. When in farewell  
While guns toll like a bell  
And the bell tolls like a gun  
Westminster towers call  
Folk and state to your funeral,  
And robed in honours won,  
Beneath the cloudy pall  
Of the lifted shreds of glory  
You lie in the last stall  
Of that grey dormitory—  
Fear not lest mad mischance  
Should find you lapt and shrouded  
Alive in helpless trance  
Though seeming death-beclouded:

For long ere so you rest  
On that transcendent bier  
Shall we not have addressed  
One summons, one last test,  
To your reluctant ear?  
O believe it! we shall have uttered  
In ultimate entreaty  
A name your soul would hear  
Howsoever thickly shuttered;  
We shall have stooped and muttered  
*England!* in your cold ear. . . .  
Then, if your great pulse leap  
No more, nor your cheek burn,  
Enough; then shall we learn

'Tis time for us to weep.

*Herbert Trench.*

## 16. HE FELL AMONG THIEVES

"Ye have robbed," said he, "ye have slaughtered and made an end,  
Take your ill-got plunder, and bury the dead;  
What will ye more of your guest and sometime friend?"  
"Blood for our blood," they said.

He laughed: "If one may settle the score for five,  
I am ready; but let the reckoning stand till day:  
I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive."  
"You shall die at dawn," said they.

He flung his empty revolver down the slope,  
He climb'd alone to the Eastward edge of the trees;  
All night long in a dream untroubled of hope  
He brooded, clasping his knees.

He did not hear the monotonous roar that fills  
The ravine where the Yassin river sullenly flows;  
He did not see the starlight on the Laspur hills,  
Or the far Afghan snows.

He saw the April noon on his books aglow,  
The wistaria trailing in at the window wide;  
He heard his father's voice from the terrace below  
Calling him down to ride.

He saw the gray little church across the park,  
The mounds that hid the loved and honoured dead;  
The Norman arch, the chancel softly dark,  
The brasses black and red.

He saw the School Close, sunny and green,  
The runner beside him, the stand by the parapet wall,  
The distant tape, and the crowd roaring between  
His own name over all.

He saw the dark wainscot and timbered roof,  
The long tables, and the faces merry and keen;  
The College Eight and their trainer dining aloof,  
The Dons on the daïs serene.

He watch'd the liner's stem ploughing the foam,  
He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of her screw;  
He heard her passengers' voices talking of home,  
He saw the flag she flew.

And now it was dawn. He rose strong on his feet,  
And strode to his ruin'd camp below the wood;  
He drank the breath of the morning cool and sweet;  
His murderers round him stood.

Light on the Laspur hills was broadening fast,  
The blood-red snow-peaks chilled to a dazzling white;  
He turn'd, and saw the golden circle at last,  
Cut by the eastern height.

"O glorious Life, Who dwellest in earth and sun,  
I have lived, I praise and adore Thee."  
A sword swept.  
Over the pass the voices one by one  
Faded, and the hill slept.

*Henry Newbolt.*

## 16. ENGLAND

Shall we but turn from braggart pride  
Our race to cheapen and defame?  
Before the world to wail, to chide,  
And weakness as with vaunting claim?  
Ere the hour strikes, to abdicate  
The steadfast spirit that made us great,  
And rail with scolding tongues at fate?

If England's heritage indeed  
Be lost, be traded quite away  
For fatted sloth and fevered greed;  
If, inly rotting, we decay;  
Suffer we then what doom we must,  
But silent, as befits the dust  
Of them whose chastisement was just.

But rather, England, rally thou  
Whatever breathes of faith that still  
Within thee keeps the undying vow  
And dedicates the constant will.  
For such yet lives, if not among  
The boasters, or the loud of tongue,  
Who cry that England's knell is rung.

The fault of heart, the small of brain,  
In thee but their own image find;  
Beyond such thoughts as these contain  
A mightier Presence is enshrined.  
Nor meaner than their birthright grown  
Shall these thy latest sons be shown,  
So thou but use them for thine own.

By those great spirits burning high  
In our home's heaven, that shall be stars  
To shine, when all is history  
And rumour of old, idle wars;  
By all those hearts which proudly bled  
To make this rose of England red;  
The living, the triumphant dead;

By all who suffered and stood fast  
That Freedom might the weak uphold,  
And in men's ways of wreck and waste  
Justice her awful flower unfold;  
By all who out of grief and wrong

In passion's art of noble song  
Made Beauty to our speech belong;

By those adventurous ones who went  
Forth overseas, and, self-exiled,  
Sought from far isle and continent  
Another England in the wild,  
For whom no drums beat, yet they fought  
Alone, in courage of a thought  
Which an unbounded future wrought;

Yea, and yet more by those to-day  
Who toil and serve for naught of gain,  
That in thy purer glory they  
May melt their ardour and their pain;  
By these and by the faith of these,  
The faith that glorifies and frees,  
Thy lands call on thee, and thy seas.

If thou hast sinned, shall we forsake  
Thee, or the less account us thine?  
Thy sores, thy shames on us we take.  
Flies not for us thy famed ensign?  
Be ours to cleanse and to atone;  
No man this burden bears alone;  
England, our best shall be thine own.

Lift up thy cause into the light!  
Put all the factious lips to shame!  
Our loves, our faiths, our hopes unite  
And strike into a single flame!  
Whatever from without betide,  
O purify the soul of pride  
In us; thy slumbers cast aside;  
And of thy sons be justified!

*Laurence Binyon.*

## 17. THE VOLUNTEER

"He leapt to arms unbidden,  
Unneeded, over-bold;  
His face by earth is hidden,  
His heart in earth is cold.

"Curse on the reckless daring  
That could not wait the call,  
The proud fantastic bearing  
That would be first to fall!"

O tears of human passion,  
Blur not the image true;  
This was not folly's fashion,  
This was the man we knew.

*Henry Newbolt.*

## 18. MANY SISTERS TO MANY BROTHERS

When we fought campaigns (in the long Christmas rains)  
With soldiers spread in troops on the floor,  
I shot as straight as you, my losses were as few,  
My victories as many, or more.  
And when in naval battle, amid cannon's rattle,  
Fleet met fleet in the bath,  
My cruisers were as trim, my battleships as grim,  
My submarines cut as swift a path.  
Or, when it rained too long, and the strength of the strong  
Surged up and broke a way with blows,  
I was as fit and keen, my fists hit as clean,  
Your black eye matched my bleeding nose.  
Was there a scrap or ploy in which you, the boy,  
Could better me? You could not climb higher,  
Ride straighter, run as quick (and to smoke made you sick)  
. . . But I sit here, and you're under fire.

Oh, it's you that have the luck, out there in blood and muck:  
You were born beneath a kindly star;  
All we dreamt, I and you, you can really go and do,  
And I can't, the way things are.  
In a trench you are sitting, while I am knitting  
A hopeless sock that never gets done.  
Well, here's luck, my dear;—and you've got it, no fear;  
But for me . . . a war is poor fun.

*Rose Macaulay.*

## 19. THE DEFENDERS

His wage of rest at nightfall still  
He takes, who sixty years has known  
Of ploughing over Cotsall hill  
And keeping trim the Cotsall stone.

He meditates the dusk, and sees  
Folds of his wonted shepherdings  
And lands of stubble and tall trees  
Becoming insubstantial things.

And does he see on Cotsall hill—  
Thrown even to the central shire—  
The funnelled shapes forbidding still  
The stranger from his cottage fire?

*John Drinkwater.*

## 20. THE DEAD

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,  
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.  
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,  
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.

These had seen movement, and heard music; known  
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;  
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;  
Touched flowers and furs, and cheeks. All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter  
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,  
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance  
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white  
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,  
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

*Rupert Brooke.*

## 21. THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

*Rupert Brooke.*

## 22. FOR THE FALLEN

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;  
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time:  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known  
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,  
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,  
To the end, to the end, they remain.

*Laurence Binyon.*

## 23. SHADOWS AND LIGHTS

What gods have met in battle to arouse  
This whirling shadow of invisible things,  
These hosts that writhe amid the shattered sods?  
O Father, and O Mother of the gods,  
Is there some trouble in the heavenly house?  
We who are captained by its unseen kings  
Wonder what thrones are shaken in the skies,  
What powers who held dominion o'er our will  
Let fall the sceptre, and what destinies  
The younger gods may drive us to fulfil.

Have they not swayed us, earth's invisible lords,  
With whispers and with breathings from the dark?  
The very border stones of nations mark  
Where silence swallowed some wild prophet's words  
That rang but for an instant and were still,  
Yet were so burthened with eternity,  
They maddened all who heard to work their will,  
To raise the lofty temple on the hill,  
And many a glittering thicket of keen swords  
Flashed out to make one law for land and sea,  
That earth might move with heaven in company.  
The cities that to myriad beauty grew  
Were altars raised unto old gods who died,  
And they were sacrificed in ruins to  
The younger gods who took their place of pride;  
They have no brotherhood, the deified,  
No high companionship of throne by throne,  
But will their beauty still to be alone.

What is a nation but a multitude  
United by some god-begotten mood,  
Some hope of liberty or dream of power  
That have not with each other brotherhood  
But warred in spirit from their natal hour,  
Their hatred god-begotten as their love  
Reverberations of eternal strife?  
For all that fury breathed in human life,  
Are ye not guilty, answer, ye above?

Ah, no, the circle of the heavenly ones,  
That ring of burning, grave, inflexible powers,  
Array in harmony amid the deep  
The shining legionaries of the suns,  
That through their day from dawn to twilight keep

The peace of heaven, and have no feuds like ours.  
The morning Stars their labours of the dawn  
Close at the advent of the Solar Kings,  
And these with joy their sceptres yield, withdrawn  
When the still Evening Stars begin their reign,  
And twilight time is thrilled with homing wings  
To the All-Father being turned again.

No, not on high begin divergent ways,  
The galaxies of interlinked lights  
Rejoicing on each other's beauty gaze,  
'Tis we who do make errant all the rays  
That stream upon us from the astral heights.  
Love in our thickened air too redly burns;  
And unto vanity our beauty turns;  
Wisdom, that gently whispers us to part  
From evil, swells to hatred in the heart.  
Dark is the shadow of invisible things  
On us who look not up, whose vision fails.  
The glorious shining of the heavenly kings  
To mould us in their image naught avails,  
They weave a robe of many-coloured fire  
To garb the spirits thronging in the deep,  
And in the upper air its splendours keep  
Pure and unsullied, but below it trails  
Darkling and glimmering in our earthly mire.

With eyes bent ever earthwards we are swayed  
But by the shadows of eternal light,  
And shadow against shadow is arrayed  
So that one dark may dominate the night.  
Though kindred are the lights that cast the shade,  
We look not up, nor see how, side by side,  
The high originals of all our pride  
In crowned and sceptred brotherhood are throned,  
Compassionate of our blindness and our hate  
That own the godship but the love disowned.  
Ah, let us for a little while abate  
The outward roving eye, and seek within  
Where spirit unto spirit is allied;  
There, in our inmost being, we may win  
The joyful vision of the heavenly wise  
To see the beauty in each other's eyes.

A. E.

## 24. BRUMANA

Oh shall I never never be home again!  
Meadows of England shining in the rain  
Spread wide your daisied lawns: your ramparts green  
With briar fortify, with blossom screen  
Till my far morning—and O streams that slow  
And pure and deep through plains and playlands go,  
For me your love and all your kingcups store,  
And—dark militia of the southern shore,  
Old fragrant friends—preserve me the last lines  
Of that long saga which you sang me, pines,  
When, lonely boy, beneath the chosen tree  
I listened, with my eyes upon the sea.

O traitor pines, you sang what life has found  
The falsest of fair tales.  
Earth blew a far-horn prelude all around,  
That native music of her forest home,  
While from the sea's blue fields and syren dales  
Shadows and light noon spectres of the foam  
Riding the summer gales  
On aery viols plucked an idle sound.

Hearing you sing, O trees,  
Hearing you murmur, "There are older seas,  
That beat on vaster sands,  
Where the wise snailfish move their pearly towers  
To carven rocks and sculptured promont'ries,"  
Hearing you whisper, "Lands  
Where blaze the unimaginable flowers."

Beneath me in the valley waves the palm,  
Beneath, beyond the valley, breaks the sea;  
Beneath me sleep in mist and light and calm  
Cities of Lebanon, dream-shadow-dim,  
Where Kings of Tyre and Kings of Tyre did rule  
In ancient days in endless dynasty,  
And all around the snowy mountains swim  
Like mighty swans, afloat in heaven's pool.

But I will walk upon the wooded hill  
Where stands a grove, O pines, of sister pines,  
And when the downy twilight droops her wing  
And no sea glimmers and no mountain shines  
My heart shall listen still.  
For pines are gossip pines the wide world through

And full of runic tales to sigh or sing.  
'Tis ever sweet through pines to see the sky  
Blushing a deeper gold or darker blue.  
'Tis ever sweet to lie  
On the dry carpet of the needles brown,  
And though the fanciful green lizard stir  
And windy odours light as thistledown  
Breathe from the lavdanon and lavender,  
Half to forget the wandering and pain,  
Half to remember days that have gone by,  
And dream and dream that I am home again!

*James Elroy Flecker.*

## 25. A LYKE-WAKE CAROL

Grow old and die, rich Day,  
Over some English field—  
Chartered to come away  
What time to Death you yield!  
Pass, frost-white ghost, and then  
Come forth to banish'd men!

I see the stubble's sheen,  
The mist and ruddled leaves,  
Here where the new Spring's green  
For her first rain-drops grieves.  
Here beechen leaves drift red  
Last week in England dead.

For English eyes' delight  
Those Autumn ghosts go free—  
Ghost of the field hoar-white,  
Ghost of the crimson tree.  
Grudge them not, England dear,  
To us thy banished here!

*Arthur Shearly Cripps.*

## 26. A REFRAIN

Tell the tune his feet beat  
On the ground all day—  
Black-burnt ground and green grass  
Seamed with rocks of grey—  
"England," "England," "England,"  
That one word they say.  
Now they tread the beech-mast,  
Now the ploughland's clay,  
Now the faery ball-floor of her fields in May.  
Now her red June sorrel, now her new-turned hay,  
Now they keep the great road, now by sheep-path stray,  
Still it's "England," "England,"  
"England" all the way!

*Arthur Shearly Cripps.*

## **27. WHERE A ROMAN VILLA STOOD, ABOVE FREIBURG**

On alien ground, breathing an alien air,  
A Roman stood, far from his ancient home,  
And gazing, murmured, "Ah, the hills are fair,  
But not the hills of Rome!"

Descendant of a race to Romans-kin,  
Where the old son of Empire stood, I stand.  
The self-same rocks fold the same valley in,  
Untouched of human hand.

Over another shines the self-same star,  
Another heart with nameless longing fills,  
Crying aloud, "How beautiful they are,  
But not our English hills!"

*Mary E. Coleridge.*

## 28. HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS

He walked in glory on the hills;  
We dalesmen envied from afar  
The heights and rose-lit pinnacles  
Which placed him nigh the evening star.

Upon the peaks they found him dead;  
And now we wonder if he sighed  
For our low grass beneath his head,  
For our rude huts, before he died.

*William Canton.*

## 29. IN THE HIGHLANDS

In the highlands, in the country places,  
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,  
And the young fair maidens  
Quiet eyes;  
Where essential silence cheers and blesses,  
And for ever in the hill-recesses  
*Her* more lovely music  
Broods and dies.

O to mount again where erst I haunted;  
Where the old red hills are bird-enchanted,  
And the low green meadows  
Bright with sward;  
And when even dies, the million-tinted,  
And the night has come, and planets glinted,  
Lo, the valley hollow  
Lamp-bestarred!

O to dream, O to awake and wander  
There, and with delight to take and render,  
Through the trance of silence,  
Quiet breath;  
Lo! for there, among the flowers and grasses,  
Only the mightier movement sounds and passes;  
Only winds and rivers,  
Life and death.

*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

### 30. IN CITY STREETS

Yonder in the heather there's a bed for sleeping,  
    Drink for one athirst, ripe blackberries to eat;  
Yonder in the sun the merry hares go leaping,  
    And the pool is clear for travel-wearied feet.

Sorely throb my feet, a-tramping London highways,  
    (Ah! the springy moss upon a northern moor!)  
Through the endless streets, the gloomy squares and byways,  
    Homeless in the City, poor among the poor!

London streets are gold—ah, give me leaves a-glinting  
    'Midst grey dykes and hedges in the autumn sun!  
London water's wine, poured out for all unstinting—  
    God! For the little brooks that tumble as they run!

Oh, my heart is fain to hear the soft wind blowing,  
    Souging through the fir-tops up on northern fells!  
Oh, my eye's an ache to see the brown burns flowing  
    Through the peaty soil and tinkling heather-bells.

*Ada Smith.*

## 31. MARGARET'S SONG

Too soothe and mild your lowland airs  
For one whose hope is gone:  
I'm thinking of a little tarn,  
Brown, very lone.

Would now the tall swift mists could lay  
Their wet grasp on my hair,  
And the great natures of the hills  
Round me friendly were.

In vain!—For taking hills your plains  
Have spoilt my soul, I think,  
But would my feet were going down  
Towards the brown tarn's brink.

*Lascelles Abercrombie.*

## 32. TO S. R. CROCKETT

Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are flying,  
Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,  
Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying,  
My heart remembers how!

Grey recumbent tombs of the dead in desert places,  
Standing stones on the vacant wine-red moor,  
Hills of sheep, and the homes of the silent vanished races,  
And winds, austere and pure:

Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,  
Hills of home! and to hear again the call;  
Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees crying,  
And hear no more at all.

*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

## 33. CHILLINGHAM

### I

Through the sunny garden  
The humming bees are still;  
The fir climbs the heather,  
The heather climbs the hill.

The low clouds have riven  
A little rift through.  
The hill climbs to heaven,  
Far away and blue.

### II

O the high valley, the little low hill,  
And the cornfield over the sea,  
The wind that rages and then lies still,  
And the clouds that rest and flee!

O the gray island in the rainbow haze,  
And the long thin spits of land,  
The roughening pastures and the stony ways,  
And the golden flash of the sand!

O the red heather on the moss-wrought rock,  
And the fir-tree stiff and straight,  
The shaggy old sheep-dog barking at the flock,  
And the rotten old five-barred gate!

O the brown bracken, the blackberry bough,  
The scent of the gorse in the air!  
I shall love them ever as I love them now,  
I shall weary in Heaven to be there!

### III

Strike, Life, a happy hour, and let me live  
But in that grace!  
I shall have gathered all the world can give,

Unending Time and Space!

Bring light and air—the thin and shining air  
Of the North land,  
The light that falls on tower and garden there,  
Close to the gold sea-sand.

Bring flowers, the latest colours of the earth,  
Ere nun-like frost  
Lay her hard hand upon this rainbow mirth,  
With twinkling emerald crossed.

The white star of the traveller's joy, the deep  
Empurpled rays that hide the smoky stone,  
The dahlia rooted in Egyptian sleep,  
The last frail rose alone.

Let music whisper from a casement set  
By them of old,  
Where the light smell of lavender may yet  
Rise from the soft loose mould.

Then shall I know, with eyes and ears awake,  
Not in bright gleams,  
The joy my Heavenly Father joys to make  
For men who grieve, in dreams!

*Mary E. Coleridge.*

## 34. SUSSEX

God gave all men all earth to love,  
But since our hearts are small,  
Ordained for each one spot should prove  
Beloved over all;  
That as He watched Creation's birth  
So we, in godlike mood,  
May of our love create our earth  
And see that it is good.

So one shall Baltic pines content,  
As one some Surrey glade,  
Or one the palm-grove's droned lament  
Before Levuka's trade.  
Each to his choice, and I rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—  
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

No tender-hearted garden crowns,  
No bosomed woods adorn  
Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,  
But gnarled and writhen thorn—  
Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim,  
And through the gaps revealed  
Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim  
Blue goodness of the Weald.

Clean of officious fence or hedge,  
Half-wild and wholly tame,  
The wise turf cloaks the white cliff edge  
As when the Romans came.  
What sign of those that fought and died  
At shift of sword and sword?  
The barrow and the camp abide,  
The sunlight and the sward.

Here leaps ashore the full Sou'west  
All heavy-winged with brine,  
Here lies above the folded crest  
The Channel's leaden line;  
And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,  
And here, each warning each,  
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring  
Along the hidden beach.

We have no waters to delight  
Our broad and brookless vales—  
Only the dewpond on the height  
Unfed, that never fails,  
Whereby no tattered herbage tells  
Which way the season flies—  
Only our close-bit thyme that smells  
Like dawn in Paradise.

Here through the strong unhampered days  
The tinkling silence thrills;  
Or little, lost. Down churches praise  
The Lord who made the hills;  
But here the Old Gods guard their round,  
And, in her secret heart,  
The heathen kingdom Wilfrid found  
Dreams, as she dwells, apart.

Though all the rest were all my share,  
With equal soul I'd see  
Her nine-and-thirty sisters fair,  
Yet none more fair than she.  
Choose ye your need from Thames to Tweed,  
And I will choose instead  
Such lands as lie 'twixt Rake and Rye,  
Black Down and Beachy Head.

I will go out against the sun  
Where the rolled scarp retires,  
And the Long Man of Wilmington  
Looks naked toward the shires;  
And east till doubling Rother crawls  
To find the fickle tide,  
By dry and sea-forgotten walls,  
Our ports of stranded pride.

I will go north about the shaws  
And the deep ghylls that breed  
Huge oaks and old, the which we hold  
No more than "Sussex weed";  
Or south where windy Piddinghoe's  
Begilded dolphin veers,  
And black beside wide-banked Ouse  
Lie down our Sussex steers.

So to the land our hearts we give  
Till the sure magic strike,  
And Memory, Use, and Love make live  
Us and our fields alike—

That deeper than our speech and thought,  
Beyond our reason's sway,  
Clay of the pit whence we were wrought  
Yearns to its fellow-clay.

God gives all men all earth to love,  
But since man's heart is small  
Ordains for each one spot shall prove  
Beloved over all.  
Each to his choice, and I rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—  
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

*Rudyard Kipling.*

## 35. THE SOUTH COUNTRY

When I am living in the Midlands,  
That are sodden and unkind,  
I light my lamp in the evening:  
My work is left behind;  
And the great hills of the South Country  
Come back into my mind.

The great hills of the South Country  
They stand along the sea,  
And it's there, walking in the high woods,  
That I could wish to be,  
And the men that were boys when I was a boy  
Walking along with me.

The men that live in North England  
I saw them for a day:  
Their hearts are set upon the waste fells,

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