



Poems

by

John Hewitt

May 1933 —

12th May

O God this is too much
I am both deaf and blind
and lack the sense of touch
to brake and gear my mind.

The pale Laburnum's gold
still hesitant and shy,
the bluebells, fortnight old,
that make the glade a sky,

the Hawthorn just in bud,
the chestnuts' climbing flame,
have so brimmed up my blood
I am abashed by shame.

My mind reels ^{astaggered} ~~and~~ ^{yet} ~~pro~~
so vast the high delight . . .
I still know the regret
that haunts the infinite.

X

I who have known your body's excellence
 By sight, by touch, by every eager sense,
 Have sought and live in constant faith to find
 a snare of words to net your wayward mind.

My happiest days, before you came, were spent
 with quiet books and poets eloquent,
 and when the anxious thought made waste of time
 devoted to the discipline of rhyme,
 my answer was: by gentle martyrdom
 the spirit gathers strength. Its use will come.

So now I know the use my wit foretold:
 and fear the lesson in the steady mould.

I have gone down the little roads in spring
 when April showers have laid the light march dust,
 when gorse made Sanarkand of journeying
 and twenty miles an hour was bread of trust.

And I have seen high banks of primroses
 wheel past the mossy milestones of delight
 till sycamore and beech were spinning trees.
 Caburn's gilt, or flecked with low-thorn white.

So waiting at a corner for the sign
 of colored light to wink & twitching eye,
 racket in the grinding motor's dusty line
 with chimney stack and steeple for a sky

a moment I have left the slanting road,
 the careless people darting here and there,
 the squealing brakes, the tramcar's swaying load,
 the twisting coils of petrol in the air,

to pass along the little lanes in spring
when april showers have laid the light march dust,
when one makes Samarkand of journeying
and twenty miles an hour is breach of trust.

I have held immortal speech
with the fir, the larch, the beech,
and have shared a jilt joke
with the sycamore and oak:
but I bade the time o' day
to a comrade in the hay.

So therein I am as rich,
free of field and road and ditch,
as the wisest tramp that lies
stiff beneath december skies.

I have taken every spring
 as a civil hint to sing,
 and the summer's warm delay
 craved a lyric night and day,
 but for all my diligence
 they have brought me scanty fence:
 weary hands and drowsy brain
 look for sympathy in vain.
 and my years go tiptoe past
 each one shorter than the last
 till before I know they'll be
 not a leaf on any tree
 not a faggot laid in store
 when the snow heaps up the door,
 not a stick to mark the spot
 where I lie in earth forgot.

But she don't make eyes thought
 at the crazy words I sought

for my consolation here
 whispers in the chilling air:
 You shall gain in God's good time
 blessing for this batch of rhyme.

X

1515.

I walked with Love beside the crying sea;
the air was sweet and imminent with God,
for all the earth rejoiced with eager spring,
green gold, sky blue, and on the tree
the Hawthorn's cloudy revelry
with here and there the chestnut blossoming...
and as we trod
the lively sea blown turf
and watched the surf and gulls far whiter than the surf
we knew the truth that lies beyond the scope
of measured atom, calculated hope,
of spectrum or of telescope,
how if we listen, God in every part
speaks quiet wisdom to the waiting heart.
So for a sacred moment standing there
we merged as one with water earth and air
intertwined
with Love too deep to be articulate.

16 9

I walked with other loves before
beside the vast unheeding sea,
talked loud to drown the breaker's roar
and knelt beneath the wind bent tree

Yet always I was well aware
of how the process of the tide
made us mere specks in sunny air
and trivial our passion's pride.

But now I find a love that is
so part of nature's alchemy,
equaled with all her mysteries
and elemental as the sea,

that I can bid defiance of
the sullen gnawing tooth of time
knowing the ocean & my love
as fabric of eternal rime.

You may dislike me, hate my studied tongue,
 mock my conceit, swear never to forgive
 the noisy arrogance of being young,
 my coarse insistence that my verse will live.

But I have seen the loveliest of things,
 a woman, and a hilltop and a tree,
 a babbling Cuckoo with sunset in its wings,
 and golden whin, seapinks, and gull white sea.

So too I hear the music of delight
 and stum, the fall and target of your wit,
 my dullness shall but make them seem more bright
 till beacomed, near, I glimpse the infinite.

I lost my way, misread the yellow sign,
 and floundered up and down the narrow lanes,
 the month was May, the day was warm and fine,
 the hedges brighter for the recent rains.

I had a place to go, appointment made,
 an urgent message and a hurry home,
 but lost and worried, helplessly delayed,
 I could not even find the road I'd come.

My squealing brakes drove heavy fleeced sheep
 to jam and jostle up a little hill,
 and hens and children scattered at the leap
 the shrieking car made round a round mill.

With jangled nerves I let the engine roar
 but sudden beauty gave me instant ease!
 O somewhere not far out of Cannock Chase
 a garden with two flowering apple trees.

I who was apt at written verse
 who found the structure of a song
 more easy if the theme were curse,
 whose poetry was born of wrong,

who never saw a sunset come
 upon a day quite free from hate,
 but heard the trumpet and the drum,
 saw pipeheads glitter at the gate.

I shod with ayen, cloaked with scorn,
 who pointed finger, clenched the fist,
 wrote up to you one bright spring morn
 and found me say love lutanist.

O Chestnut blossom I have done you wrong,
 have let your moon blood past and disappear
 without the valediction of a song
 to pay ^{to suit} my joy's rent of another year.

No consolation is it that before I was,
 you thrust no reckless blossom to the sky,
 and mowed these quiet petals on the grass
 the never rain and wind swept crying by:

Or that when I am sixfoot under ground
 in ~~that~~ ^{you} old hill that holds my father's bones
 year after year your candles will be found
 until both sun and earth are bare stones.

No, rather somehow saying you I say
 the sap and fruitage of the growing earth,
 be lost an instant in the endless Spring
 that hurries all thro' birth and death and birth.

We park the noisy car on Douglas Top,
step out & climb a little fence of stone,
walk over tufted grass & heather blown
by constant west. There was a sudden drop,
a ragged moorland locket with stacks of peat,
and brown bogwater in the setting sun,
a winding road with sharp edges into that sun
like tramlines down a crashing city street.

Then a flatter valley where the road ran white
by pillared gates and hedges ^{freshly} ~~newly~~ green
small barns and houses thrust white planks between
rusty willow trees in clusters newly bright.

So ~~to~~ we would have held communion with
the stoned wraiths that haunt the cloudy crest
the little houses might have jay and nest
and make an nervous worship of a myth.

There is a place this moment bright
with newly coined laburnum gold,
with eage Hawthorn pink and white
when closter ward them safe from cold.

But this I love a tree as much
as I can find the heart to love
a living thing that feels my touch
and trembles not with pain thereof

That all may blossom carelessly:
I shall not go to see them there
for those that walk that way with some
are gone into the bitter air.

At twelve we hear the nightingale
 make melody in Berkshire woods —
 a scientific fairy tale
 equating with our sickly words.

To grocer toasting lazy we
 a red brick villa, to Bankers
 who lives beside him in the row
 with Lawyer, Draper, with the clerk

The bird cries out immortally
 putting its life into a song.

Who knows, in years that are to be
 there may not fall a deeper way
 and grocer toasting lazy we
 a red brick villa may overbear
 by fumbling switch a radio
 a poet wing a song from pen!

Turn age whittling
 Lord Mayor of London
 So say the bells of
 my childhood's delight.
 But the strain changes
 as the years vanish
 now with night time
 I hear a new song:

Shall I	win the
Dublin	Sweepstake?
And if	I do
that shall	happen
will it	make me
better	poet
or a	lazy
drunken	rascal?

Any minute now the signal will come,
 the waking siren, the flapping flag, the trumpet.
 Is the flask full, and the rug in the case,
 the gas turned off at the main, bolts shot in the basement?
 The clean collar, and the tennis shirt folded,
 and the winter overcoat for the promenade may be cold.
 What books are you taking, if any? There will be time
 between stations at least to hear far bells chiming:
 and long nights cursing, waiting to be off,
 but standing by till the down train puffing
 brings back word that the line is clear,
 and the crowd is hoarse and tired of cheering.

The cornsnake in the meadow
 cries out against the rain,
 because a heavy shadow
 makes twilight of the lane.

The chestnut time is over,
 the Hawthorn not yet come,
 so lover close by lover
 must listen and be dumb.

With scarcely troubled thought in memory
 we can bring back the blossom to the tree,
 the sky that best accords, the cloud that seems
 stark fancy for the fabric of our dreams.
 And having these conformed in every part
 we can regain the lifting of the heart
 that moment meant. Yet something is amiss,
 the petals' bound with wire, the sunlight is
 the dying glow of old lamp burning out,
 and in the lark's song rings a cry of doubt.

But, knowing this, and knowing life can give,
 though barren hours of being, thoughts that live
 in recollection only I am rich
 in that but yesterday a landscape which
 contained the full stuff of a lifetime's love,
 broke into flame, made me aware thereof,
 trees greening to the tips, and gorse slight,
 bluebells not spent yet, while the hawthorn white
 and heavy in the rain-washed evening air

spread all the hedges thro' the valley where
 small cows and houses and fantastick trees
 seemed as render and perfect artistries
 of faery craftsmen . . .

2815

The place was barren, turfstacks lined the road,
 there were no hedges, not a living thing
 made traffic in the sky where sunset glowed
 a watery gold. There was no call to sing.

A cottage, roofless, grassy to the door,
 and nettles in the cold and crumbling hearth
 with green and summy puddles in the floor.

X

And glass / or / The Ruined Castles; /
also / The Transformation, / with some
other Poems.)

By the / Rev. Samuel Burdy, /
Author of Skelton's Life; Vindication, etc /
Dublin / ... 1802

Here Samuel Burdy spent neglected years
at tillage of a crop woud always fail
for men are barren soil the barley ears
are big and bursting over all Lecale.

And in this place he labored at his verse
to tell the legends of the time toothed walls,
of saint defense, of rebels tall and fierce,
of beacon flames, and lonely trumpet calls.

So when to Ballyhoman first he came,
the 'all the air was troubled with unrest.

for maynadwhin had set the fields aflame,
and hawthorn white tipped every hedge's crest,

I did not turn my fancy-forage wit
to memory of Ireland's bitter wrong
tho' every mossy stone was mended with it
and sorrow deepened with the skylark's song.

I felt my hand stretch out across the dark
What old person poet with his rimes
for he had seen the whin and heard the lark
and curst the barren exile of his times.

3rd

Emotional plabbers has sapped us all.

We are out of training, gone soft and slow.

When the tensions come we flop

and argue how wise and clever and subtle we are in
doing so.

God great is a hardness at the core

and energy and bitterness and strength:

So that we can get up and take a second sock on the jaw

when we have once measured our length
on the floor.

25
3rd

X Shire Donald Seen from Hotel Window

Great elemental mountains high in cloud,
with April uddered leaping waterfalls,
and force wind launch armadas of huge Arjos.
Munclausa guidebook to the Peaks of Heaven.
Enlargement of the Spirit. Bidge of Brest.
Jall fancies mask the stars, glow past the moon.
Eschult in Bigness. Sreatest Eva was.
Milton's a football. Watch me Soar and Soj.
The waiter murmured: Coffee in the Lounge?

With lengthened scope a car gives we set out
 to comb the country's hedges for our pleasure;
 At least of forty blossoms little doubt,
 and ten or twenty more a fitting measure.

Now we return, an easy order done,
 for having run both hill and hollow over:
 Here's naught but speedwell and red campion,
 wood violet, wild hyacinth and clover.

Poems in June

[14 15]

I cannot, such the craft that I have learned,
 the masters worshippit, quiet candles burned,
 make melody of Marx and by the pride.
 For tractor will not turn aside,
 nor let the lark go by without a song
 because the city squares are still with wrag.

Let these who will be stiff steelguttered verse,
 make gearbox lyrics, cry them worshippers
 of oily foot and greasy overall,
 the sea, a cliff, a gannet's call
 still seem to me more worth
 my brief attention on this cooling earth.

Pattin's Valley

I have known me who carried with me
 as shining moment in their dusty years
 a sea spread out just round a white road's bend,
 or comrade crying thro' ^{the moon's bright sphere,} a night of tears,
 a tree that tapped the window, or a field
 sick with red nettle and its flowering thorn,
 a flight of pigeons when the church bell pealed,
 a field of clover or a field of corn.

Am I then foolish that I put in time
 (Even that's demoted) such that I have known
 because the tedious fashion of the time
 rates steel and concrete over leaf and bone...
 and picks for praise from sunny country side
 a Langair's shadow, or a pylon's pride?

I thought of death last night as how the dead
 lie bloated and diseased in streaming clay,
 while ^{ants} maggots nest in swollen bowels or in lead,
 and maggots make the mouth an alley way.

I thought of those dead thousands who are laid
 beneath the sunny grass, the wind shook tree,
 and all at once I started up afraid
 lest crust should crack and earth give place to see.

I cried to heaven in my sweating dread
 "Thou thou hast made us beggars of a breath
 O'ir Christ's sake never resummat the dead
 let's rat clean bone the moment after death."

X
 A shining moment bars the soul of Greece,
 The classic quality, the hard bright light,
 The age we lonely ecstasies of fears,
 The talant focus of the infinite.

The sun at noon in cloudless summer sky,
 The high waves breaking on the rippled sand,
 While gentle winds made little hissing cry
 Along the rushy limits of the land.

Jird of sea's kin, you took the sun for lover,
 And, drowsed in his embrace, lay slumbering:
 Then suddenly a white jull passing over
 Caught all the sunlight on his foamy wing.

I have said before and I say again
 That the world be wide and a man be strong
 yet death is the bitter end of men
 and the best thing left is a snatch of song.

So let me put a snatch of song
 the tilt of a chin, the glance of an eye
 that men may remember what joys belong
 to those who love and laugh and die.

X
 Let me go out some early-morn in June
 when pale stars flicker in the leafy boughs
 and child-faced moon
 comes tiptoe to the house . . .

When dayglow dies
 behind the stark black hills and soft winds rise
 with melancholy in their dewy cries .

For having seen black winter driven in
 before the lifted banners of the spring
 and watch with sharpened sight the land begin
 to greet with green
 the feathers dim

of new-tund brook and newly stretched wing,
 and knowing summer never can fulfil
 the promise of the bud, the sticky thrill

of flowering chestnut I would go before
 the fallen leaf drifts lightly to my door

The fear that death may not be final end,
 that we may go into the dark alone
 that what lies rotting under cracking stone
 is not the shattered image of my friend:
 These break upon me; should I not to spend
 a month's thought on death, chill winds as blown
 a gossamer spirit and black waters moan
 with grief no lilted song can ever mend.

I have no fear at guttering of breath,
 at candle snuff, or half a minute's reck
 that the smoke ^{twists} ~~spires~~ thro' the window as is lost:
 but I lose heart when fancy peoples death
 with shadowy traffic of frail ghost with ghost,
 thin leprous hands and lips that cannot speak.

I know the place where I must surely lie
 of life or not my days with long call,
 a plotting group of Jews, a tower, a wall
 that skirts a dusty road... a quiet sky
 above a hill that shelters from the storm.

In summer when the sun beats pitiless
 The eaves will shade. In winter's sharp distress
 The drifted snow will wrap and keep me warm.

And I shall have good company and kin,
 resume, perhaps, the story left untold,
 and cap it with ^{a verse} another of my own...
 and this the quiet intervals the din
 of blackbird, thrush and sky lark overbold
 about the trailing roses on the stone.

No hunter lured to risk his sweated pence
 by lazy crazy song of fabulous odds
 who yokes curses to the shouting fence,
 or gazes at steady elegance of gods;

I spend my corn with care, spread wide my net,
 and shape my progress as a gentle slope,
 prepare for famine, guard against regret,
 and draw the quiet dividends of life.

If I, my love, were maritulate
 there'd be no dreary song tores: your rest:
 And I should have no troubled hours in quest
 of measured phrase and syllable of weight
 wherewith to name your beauty and equate
 o lyrics to the endurance of your breast.
 Yet what the pain, if you, times' love-hiest
 should go with the night uncelebrate?

For life ^{this} ^{is} ^{not} ^{an} ^{un} ^{ending} ^{war} ^{with} ^{time},
 and measured ^{has} ^{no} ^{success} ^{by} ^{his} ^{defeat}..

So of the student clamor of my time
 still urgent me a moment in the street
 to dream of beauty in the ancient way
 my spirit, though unrooted, will be gay.

Let innocence be lost, be trampled on,
 and crumbled underneath the rampant stone,
 let tedious dawn tread after tedious dawn
 and rain and snow come spiriting from the air.

The that dark husbandman experience
 shall stake these acres in his broadcast stride,
 shall sow from wood's edge to the new wire fence
 and back again along the river side.

The coming harvest is the synthesis
 of time and life's delight in virgin mind...
 the laughing best grown seed and sower is
 the only leaf with weariness to bind.

X

The challenge of the meadowgrass
 against the tar macadam road.
 revolt of hedges and thick trees
 against the pylons' naked stride.

The 'spring be skreveld' was lost
 that cries along suburban lane
 there still is thunder, sleet or rust
 to bogle in the laughing dawn.

The gramophones are put away.
 The autisms and the fords depart;
 and silence takes the sunset bay,
 save once the rumble of a cart
 and once the rattle of a rail.
 Be near me Lord I must not fail.

I must not let a foolish rage,
 a hate of asphalt and cement
 call up a fierce and simple age
 to overcome our state content
 but let dear pity in my mind
 do penance for these deaf and blind.

X

This is the prayer of the villa garden,
the plea of the small suburban park:

Oh Gray old father pity and pardon
our fear of poverty hunger and dark.

I want thy ^{redemption} salvation, but state its cost in
symbols and words written on parchment,
three terms fees, of an untext cluster,
a ^{wireless} radio license, and a ^{night} day on the beach,
week at

X

This is the song of the Wesleyan Chapel,
this is what and why we believe . . .

It was all because of a tree and an apple,
a talking snake, and a girl called Eve . . .

So we gather to block a Sunday,
sing in the choir, or pass the plate
As square deal done, at least this one day,
(God reigns, Christ seals, we add the date.)

Yet in the midst of the anthem singing,
sometimes high thro' the mumbled prayers
we hear a whiff of cracking and swinging,
and a mad stampede down the temple stairs.

I find in you the Summit of delight.

We have gone down the little roads in spring,
 when joss was gay and Hawthorn blossoming,
 and in you caught they have done more bright.
 You take the mountain top as native right,
 and walk with mist and ^{wind} cloud, a wayward thing,
 Love sun's caress, are happy wandering
 by sea's roar, or thro' stony woods ^{at} by night.

All this has been rich nurture for my heart
 who follow beauty in the high old way —
 I'd thought to face the lonely path apart,
 have never a comrade, never long to stay —
 Now you are come, let equal progress start
 and flags and drums make merry holiday.

You, by the tether of a native wit,
 haul to my buoyant fancy when the skies,
 unwatcht of me, are full of bodiny cries,
 and stormclouds muster, red as Cerin lit:
 yet are the first to cry a winged lit
 when the barbed arrow of my humor flies
 against the dark battalions fears and lies
 that still besiege the 'embattled Infinite.

Such comfort I can draw from you who should
 have walkt with Paris or that Poona Lord,
 or stain'd a dwarf with Venetian blood,
 or crown'd a new king with a restless sword:
 Yet more beside me thro' a sunset wood
 and cap my vision with a shining word.

The Irish way our gesture and your speech
 and surely mate for all my manhood's force,
 but the true blood runs shouting thro' its course
 in urgent fever ecstasy to reach,
 yet since all folk are strangers each beach
 and find themselves confused inheritors
 of tattered stocks and unremembered source
 I know not whence you landed on this beach,

nor what your race and kindred, you who are,
 with small breasts and soft pouting lips to press,
 a dark brown maiden of some old Greek tale,
 yet carry in your heart an orient star,
 have Helen's pride, and Mary's tenderness,
 and the high laughing spirit of the Gael.

I come to you as one that has been lost,
 stolen by gipsies on the windy heath,
 tho' happy in their company, beneath
 the shouting fair, the sunny valley cross,
 the lovely April and autumnal frost.
 knew all the time he drew an alien breath,
 as sworn he would go back, even after death,
 and greet his nearest kin as just by lost.

So I have found you as at last am come
 to native air and old familiar trees
 the best of life yet left to make a home
 secure from winds and long assault of seas
 when ~~islanded~~ we two shall mate and breed
 a rock-deck race from ~~feared~~ ^{shadowy} exile freed.

19-33

X

30th

I know the heart of man cannot unfold,
 grows rich and deep without long chastening,
 endure scant summer, and defeated spring,
 and early winter ruining autumn's gold:
 be humbled by disaster tho' overbold

sent out large fleets expecting no such thing,
 and live for fifty years an exile king
 to win a bankrupt sceptre, blind and old.

I know this well and would have wiser heart,
 have sweeter fancy and serene thought:
 am ready to do traffic in that mart,
 and buy redemption at the figure sought,
 yet at what signal, by what line depart
 and what light happens all is wisely brought?

30

47

X. Thirst.

And I have also journeyed here,
 have gysied always towards the South,
 by dribbled wine, by Munich beer,
 the old man's fist across his mouth:

by water brought in jolting cart
 5 days of drought, by beating brown
 deep streams that cleave a hill apart,
 by fountains in a sunny town,

by cupped hands dripping to the wrist;
 by water spiders in the well;
 by ^{mountain huddle} quiet rivers thro' a mist;
 by cocoa in a cheap hotel;

by sulky brooks on hot dry stones;
 by ferns that overhang a pool;
 by rock spring no one names or owns
 and covered when the tide is full:

by tea from nervous slaking hand
of black silk lady in the loom:
by coffee from a coffee stand,
by glasses in a smoky room.

~~by Larry in on watchman's cot;
by rusty kettle of a lamp:
by spilling jug of reaping folk;
by bottle smashed against a lamp;~~

But where shall ^{drink} ~~at~~ at journey's end,
in tumbled tavern, hostlet new?
With what, of any, laughing friend?
Or how will taste the bitter brew?

Poems in July.

I too have come by hand, by face,
by voice, by gesture, smell and taste,
by tangled paths from place to place
from cradle to boy and waste.

The hands that chaff my frozen hands
and brought the warm life stinging back,
or sorted music ~~and~~ the stends
and tightened cello strings gone slack,

or shaken out above a crowd
and clenched upon a world of wrong
made temple tops of reeling cloud
and tread of men the bravest song.

The faces whirling in a glass,
the mouths I kiss or would have kissed,
the dark hair bedded in sweet grass,
the white limbs moving in a mist,

The voices, voices I have heard
quarrel across the Liverpool,
the small boy's voice that learned a word
and found it long and beautiful.

20-33

10 51

These men have been companions of my thought,
and midnight streets where only harlots walk
have flatly echoed with their ghostly talk,
as shadows mustered where they once had fought:
and there ~~have been~~ ^{are} quiet places I have found
whose very names are drumbeats to my heart
where when disaster drifted them apart
defeated these beyond familiar ground.

So with slow step and bitter thought I face
the little lanes of Antrim, seek once more
for any friendly gesture or known face
across gates or the cottage door:
but there is not one man in any place
recalls the baffled flight to Donegore.

Unveiled the Statue - It is well we should
 see the stark honor of his treason shame
 who laid this land with fratricidal blood,
 was held as office, left us but a name.

Nay, if we must have statues let them be
 to those whose hearts and hands are clean and pure -
 Andyet McCracken, O'Connell and Connolly
 need us not slow to make their fame secure.

'Tis past, 10 years' high noon;
 He sat dies in the tree.
 Fall soon, O leaves, fall soon,
 drift down to cover me:

For I would sleep away
 the black and barren night.
 The roads I know by day
 look strange by candlelight.

111k
Molvo's for Child's Copy Book

I was five and twenty and not unwise —
to follow the dream in a woman's eyes.

I too was foolish, hasty and wrong
to part my strength for the belt of a song.

I too am defeated, who sought to give
permanence to the fugitive.

I also have clay in my eyes and mouth
who troubled my thought with the west and the South.

And I with three lie crumbled beneath
the new built barns that spelt my death.

55
1115
Two Epitaphs X

He was foolish, eager hearted,
took the wind's way west and south.
Now he lies, all roads gone over,
dust in eyes and ears and mouth.

He was thoughtful, cautious witted,
weighed the chance and charge of stairs,
never reached the rim of mountains;
boards across his face he lies.

Life is unending pain,
 and joy is bought by woe...
 Spring decks the thorn in rain
 with momentary snow.

Already as I turn
 to gaze on what was fair
 autumnal torches burn
 and under the strain.

I could have gone as soon
 nor overstaid the race,
 come with the Easter moon,
 and left with harrow snows,

but that I was afraid,
 clung to the little pain,
 lest I should wake dismayed
 and find death too in vain.

Carnival (21-33)

I have gone in beneath the naphtha flare,
 flung fence on painted boards & watcht the dice,
 pulled levers, & returned the mirror's stare
 that spread my limbs out, got my fortune twice,

once from a yellow card, and once again
 from a old woman with some grace & lev,
 have flung a wooden ball at wooden men,
 and high in swing seen stars & faces blur.

Yet all the while I moved as in a dream,
 knew passing folk fantastic masks that leered,
 as oar with elbows in a noisy stream
 from light to night appeared & disappeared,
 and felt the cheapjack fun, the tinsel strife,
 unreal almost and absurd as life.

A funeral dragged thro' the city centre
during the lunch hour rush
as the whirling crowd was held up for a while
for cafe' coffee and tea.

I walettr the host of lifted hats
as the cold black faces under them
as the hearse moved on . . .

A vast ache murmured inside me
mad as a kitten
mad
mad

These people all will die someday
and be shuffled away
and stuffed in a hole in the ground . . .

What is it all about?
I wanted to shout

but my lips could not open.

I wanted to poke the crumpled vests
and roar in to the startled ears
You too will die
will die
will die
and so will I

and so will I .



I sojourned with the brittle-witted men,
 who plot creation on a careful graph,
 Blueprint the poet, narrow plots to ten,
 and fumble figures for an epitaph.

But all the time I best my troubled mind
 to learn their steady formulae by heart
 the universe remaining unconquered
 set thought adrift, made winged fancy start.

Life is more rich, is sweeter to the touch
 is thicker in the fabric to the hand...
 than these bleak definitions of the Tenth,
 No man can give the feel and breath of land.

The tigers roarin, and the hare is torn
 by bloody talon, tho' a grim disease
 bulge white fish bellies in thick weedy seas
 and Coasts black the sun, blight rot the corn,

I have gone out and walked beneath the sky,
 have stood at spring upon a golden hill,
 have jested with companions until
 tale stars died out before a hot July,

and having known delight I take no care,
 no more protest than apple on the fire,
 for I have lived for love and learned from her
 it is, for me, a friendly universe.

I am grown sad tonight
 with brooding on my youth
 as the far wandering light
 that was the torch of truth.

Those who companioned me,
 and aboard the flying gleam
 we followed aimlessly
 a moon, a hazy dream:

and I am left alone
 to catch the rainbow's tail
 to anchor to a stone
 the sunset's crowded sail.

I think of early friends
 as how we kept to make
 magnificent amends
 for hungry children's sake...

We talked, on shaky chairs,
 at corner or at park
 and up rat-riddled stairs
 we tiptoed in the dark...

We wrote our burning dreams,
 besmattered on rage...
 Even yet the splendor gleams
 about the dusty page.

And as a rest from strife,
 we led our rights of care
 as earnest of new life
 who rid of hunger's woe.

Today I can recall
the eyes and lips —
yet those but marginal,
I write it off as lies —

For those my early friends
their youth's bright debts laid
have sought their meagre ends
and have not been betrayed:

save Ralph alone — I
who to we walk apart
have still the ecstatic eye,
the pity eager heart

65
21/2

We gathered in an upper room,
and sat about a rusty stove.

Blue jets of flame lit thro' the loom.
We argued of the things we love.

O'Connor, Moran, and MacBride,
Jack Callender, and John M'Wade
with Ralph and Paddy at my side
and once or twice M'Connell stayed.

The back & forward eagerly
till eyes trembled on each lip . . .
dictatorship . . . democracy . . .
democracy . . . dictatorship . . .

Now from that little attic dim
each one has gone what seemed the
most profitable path to him,
and ending all in anarchy.

What can I say of love
 That men will shoot and sing
 Who now in nervous legions move
 Fearful of such a thing?

For I would fill the street
 and cross the roads with praise,
 play Raleigh to immortal feet,
 make trumpet of a phrase.

who now must come alone
 or only for one ear
 that should have heard the angles blow
 across a hemisphere.

X Actaeon [22-33.]

As that poor huntsman stalking unaware
 came suddenly on Dian in a pool
 where dipping branches kept the sunlight cool,
 and shook gold fingers in the crystal air,
 dismay'd by wonder's surfeit hardly dare
 gaze on the shining body beautiful,
 but straightway must cry out, light blinded fool,
 till the brown goddess saw him standing there.

I, finding you, unthought of, am like him
 who for his insolence was driven away,
 his dogs behind him like a forest fire.
 Thro sunny glades, dark thickets green & dim,
 I have been followed, followed night and day
 by the loud baying tongues of my desire.

In Memoriam: Paul Byrne.

I sat in silence laboring at verse
but broken stanzas shivered from my brain,
as one that crows beneath a dreary curse,
will struggle with a tedious load in vain...

At first it was the sad and witer sight
of those poor children singing in the street
old, ragged cloth, ill shod, with faces bright,
mercet, banner marshald, wa mission treat.

And then it was the memory of those
a name above a shill that brought to mind
who rose when Master's youth & courage rose
and now are tangled grasses in the wind:

but most of all the baffling mystery
of that young man I knew who now is dead,
He seemed to fumble closely for life's key
for all the wise and cautious things he said.

He moved with quiet dignity and grace
and left me doubtful of my violence.

There was a certain beauty in his face.

- The mingled sorrows in the stange's sense:

and I was left alone with ragged rimes,
with indignation, pity, and dismay
as that the troubled sunburst of the times
were caught a focus in a narrow ray.

1.0.M.

I said: I am not big enough
to put this island in a song.

My broody is coarse & rough,
would do my passion for her wrap.

There is another island fair
more meets the compass of my wit.
I'll take a earnest sojourn there
and make a worthy say of it.

I went. And in a boarding house
found attic under heavy roof.
I chose the bardic strain to rouse
to put my sanity to proof.

The say is but a catalog:—
of sights & smells, of noises heard:
the midnight yapping of a dog;
the quawking of a backyard bird:

28.

the branchy antlers in the hall,
the mottling carpet on the floor,
the colorprints upon the wall,
the brass plate screwed against the door;

the apples of discolored wax
behind a case of broken glass:
the volumes with red leather backs:
the vases filled with dusty grass:

the woolly pattern of the rug:
the patchwork quilt: the broken chair:
the housemaid like a toby jip
with dulcet service whet air:

the skimming girl who cleaned the shoes,
and whisker the landings after ten . . .
the bachelor who hated Jews:
the spinster who mistrusted men

the bloke 'ood and 'is uter fun;

71

The happy family of four,
The widower from Warrington:
The sailor ma for Singapore

28/15.

With these dear friends, the witnesses of sense,
I have explored far acres of delight,
Have cowed the cliff, subdued sun's violence,
and walked abroad merrily thro' the night.

All pity has been gathered in one cry;
a tree's tilt's caused a pilgrimage to start,
and rain a current makes in July
has brought back more than Eda to my heart.

Sonnet. [23-33.]

I came upon you, as on a clear night
a boy first makes acquaintance of the sky,
the scope and space to play how vast and high,
the first and moving stars how large and bright.
Then having learned to concentrate his sight
not in the random restless ecstasy
but full on narrow segment steadily
til he has glimpsed the core and flame of light.

There too I stoh: forever as we run
longer move before us to the end
The sun goes down to bring a greater sun.
No secret's ever wholly given up
And tho' I learn how far the rays extend
I cannot gauge th' essential nature of
the daybreak or the rainbow nor call love

29th.

X

I never learned the truth at school
that east and west and day and night
are never quite so beautiful
as north and now, are never quite.

I got by heart geography
that held no clue to Brendan's Isle,
and maps became quite mad to me
when I had walked my seventh mile

Now I have moved and talked with men
from fire to fire along the slope
I cannot find, twist 1 and 10,
the true arithmetic of rope

75

Poems in September.

101

my mood tonight's for lean, the foolish keep
out on the heath with fist open - the sky;
I too have babbled, lost and wandering,
and thunder's deaf applause has drowned my cry.

102

X
I have had traffic with the restless corn,
but shadowy shadowy in a fitful dream.
I know not if I am a sunset flail
that clouds the years ebb in a dust of notes,
or no more sharply etched in young July,
flickering in the mist, a myth in the dew.

vst

We walk thro leafy woods in Hertfordshire
in our first English summer, felt the place
more bellad-peopled and far lonelier
than where the waters of the Nine Glens race
in leaden hurry to the cliff-bound sea.

The English dead were part of earth & air
and every tree was more than merely tree
as tho some human memory made it fair.

Our antient hills have memories of a kind
of shadowy legends and the little folk
but this old kingdom fills the quiet mind
with dreams of earthy peasants' life as oak.

77

X

vst

Cry hail to factory and the bundled smoke,
the roaring engine, and the slanting town
the marshaled herds of lever-tending folk;
these will go down to dust, these will go down.

Have I not seen against a windy sky
a figure mount the long field's raggy crown,
Ere Christ was born the horses heard his cry:
He drove his plow across a Roman town.
drives

New Verse.

nr

The little men scratch out and scribbled in
set bleak thoughts in bleak order and were proud
of all the harsh cacophony and din
that marked their epoch insolent and loud.

But rain blew lightly from the scattered West,
and wind made frolic with the jetted smoke:
beyond the town a skylark tilled his nest
and blackbirds sang in Hawthorn and in oak.

Verulamium A.D. 1933

101- 75

We stood where Roman matrons chid their slaves,
put finger on the pots they had let fall,
saw nameless infants dug from lonely graves
who should have lain by those without the wall,
ground heel on pavement where the sandals wore
the step down in their traffic many a year,
and moved with care across the better floor
where weary lords stripped off their dusty gear.

And for a moment in the August air
a chariot clattered down the heedless street
as one leant forward with dark blowing hair
the cobbles striking with his steel bright feet.

But sudden pity laid a chilling fist
upon my bounding heart. A scraping spade
flung up with lurching shoulder and deft wrist

Epitaph on a man NOT dead

2nd S.

This body has been sanctified by use:

this mind has sold the foragings of sense.

What if the bolts and tappets rattled loose,
it was the journey's length and violence -

2nd .

I have gone out. The path ahead's unknown;
The country has been sketched before a dream:
but I must have a chart that's mine alone,
with here a skylark market and there a dawn,
high gables loud with sparrows, or a house
where night wind makes thin ghoully revelry,
flax holes, and gates with thrust damp nuzzled cows,
and farmboy's whistle, or a April sky.

I'll look for these and plot the points with care,
that Cater people may compare the route.
How shall I know the pulling station? where?
and whose patrol scout stop at my salute?

With you I knew a happy Irish spring,
 have caught thro' places rich with your delight:
 Conglens in rain, and high Carles clamoring,
 hot noon on sandhills, early stars and night.

Yet English woods, in our first summer there,
 will always be a background for my thought,
 for you have don't with blossoms in your hair,
 where old monks felter'd, weary a distraught,

and walking in the moon at Hertfordshire,
 we've crost the stubble, marvel'd at the sheaves,
 rejoic'd in clove, deem'd earth kinder
 than where our bleak hills lift their barren eaves.

In quiet cloister'd places we have known
 the wit and love of long forgotten men,
 translated into beauty out of stone
 as wrong from life and fix'd in stone open.

And we have fast together thro' the star,
 heard last night's jester crack his latest joke,
 stood gaping up while bells of Westminster
 blew over London and its steepled smoke.

My wits and senses keen for loving you
 have made these ever sharper in my mind
 til not a nettle but is sweet with dew
 roads lead in anglt but noorland merry wind.

O thou who art the glass thro' which I see
 creation clearer and the joy of breath
 be thou a second self, enwrapping me
 til, double-sensed, I fling the tape at death.

Sonnet 24-33

By nature possessed, with a little tongue,
 it may be your misfortune that we met
 when life sneaks past and I no longer young
 find starting project unfulfilled as yet;
 I may, from my tense attitude unstung,
 give up my warning wit to bleak regret,
 and fill our little world with endless fret
 until deathrest's crackle bell for you is rung.

'Ware them and weigh the chances carefully:
 are you bony amble? Ready for the throw?
 Would slate your mind and body for a dream?
 Leave friendly camps and native belts you know
 for perilous climb from crag to creaking belt
 only to catch the light as rock rimmed beam?

When I was young I used to wish I were
 creator so that after my own mind
 the stars would swing in comfort-louder air,
 and fayed and talented things grow ^{soft} and kind.

Now I have played with easy words, with clay,
 with wood and color I am glad that God
 still hears and runs the universe his way,
 ignores my whim and picks his period.

For when you make a thing and it goes wrong
 it eases hurt to blame the circumstance:
 You've got to grin when what you meant for song
 is taken up, applauded as a dance...

And yet you are not easy in your lead
 you fumbled maybe, let your fancy nod
 or should have thought of so and so instead...
 It's good to throw the blame of it on God.

Conference week

my love & I who live among a greedy fistled race

have walked while & talked while with happy hearted folk:

have learnt to know strange accents & both brown & yellow face;
and caught to hear a german tell a little german joke.

And for the first time we have heard and answered with delight
to 'Conrad' who a Herder or a Chummin has spoken,
who have trudged home with heavy hearts in black drumstatted night;
our vision blown to scattered rags and our high courage broken.

So how we live for fifty years with love and art and rhyme
and miss the singing barricade, the thunder, and the smoke,
our hearts will hoard the memory and pleasure of the time
we walked and talked, gay spirited, with justice-seeker folk.

Mementos of G.G-S.

8-12 15.

The old professor at the end of term

gives general lessons, not *royer ex cathedra*,

and ventures literary gossip of his youth

Some night well past midnight I went out
across the quad to ~~the~~ seat beneath the elm.

I had it sat there more than ten whole minutes
when I heard people coming thro' the moonlight.

Two men with voices I could not distinguish.

They came and sat on the other side of the tree
and were quite unaware of my transient presence

But the proximity habbed me at once

to first which one was Browning . . . Robert, of course.

And what was he saying? a taleful blurted out.

I'd always been warded apart leaves dropping, my dear,

so I got up and went back to my rooms alone.

Sonnet. [25-33]

Our love is full of memorable things,
 not the white passion flaring and soon dead,
 but quiet joy that weaves on endless thread
 deer moments rich with wisdom's traffickings: -
 Hawth, say, in sunset, when a lost lark sings: -
 the noon thro' Dipswell trees that rises red
 to fill the leaves: needs arching overhead,
 stars perch on rigging, dawn a grey gull's wings: -

a thousand more when of we share the life
 given by old forgotten happy men
 who knew the craft of chisel and of knife -
 our love being fed on these gives back again,
 must give - have we not felt it in the blood -
 new sweetness to the stone, new strength to wood.

I have praised her loudly but they have not listened,
 I have spoken of her beauty and her wit:
 another dream in this man's eyes has listened,
 while that one's cynic ad is proud of it.

I will not speak again, for having spoken
 my eloquence has died away and I
 am lonely as a man whose voice has broken
 upon a mountain's sheer conspiracy.

I should have lived before, and written verses
 for men who knew that life is rich and sweet;
 then were no need for shaken fists or curses
 against skull midnight in the reeking sheet,

against bleak spirits tied to useless labor,
 or hungry at the corners in the rain -
 Or when a man has beauty for his neighbor
 his heart must sing, the singing being his pain. [over]

yet I will praise her in the poet's fashion,
will spell in verse her loveliness and grace -
the smoldering words flare up with Torch passion
and this town wakes, a fire encircled place.

I praise my lady, beautiful and witty,
and add as third her gentleness of heart -
There have been those who looked on grace as duty
and walked, proud & weas, upon the hills ~~apart~~^{apart}.

And others too whose beauty was a candle
for wigs to dull or brighten up the flame.
My lady's looks have been enough to kindle
one torch that blinks the stars clean out for shame:

for each star calls to mind a deed I seek. Lady
and makes me sick with longing and old fears -
Yet this sweet mind, kind heart, and lovely body,
stays slow, transmutes the metal of my years -

And I who would have been a poetaster
in Cleopatra's Egypt, Helen's Troy,
by beauty's strength may rise a winged master,
shot with delight, and pinioned with joy.

What's wit or beauty of the hearts' unkind
 or comeliness of feature with a truant mind.
 Sweet thought can give delight and subtil grace
 to neapre limb, stiff gesture, unaccustomed face;
 and kindliness of gentle look or hand
 can speak what only birds and children understand

So even if you were not in your right
 both wise and lovely these woud make your body bright.

Sonnet [26-33]

When the first thumping crocus of the year
 pierces sod to dare the snowflake, and to bring
 storm vexed spirits rest from buffeting,
 and summon back from seadin hemisphere
 the season's lush young vigor, you my dear,
 broke on my fancy like an eager spring
 and I was ware, as in one tilted wing
 -all summer stirs, my destiny shone clear.

So to the seasons win and bring again
 defeat of blossom and dictatorship
 of dark and cold I cannot be dismayd
 by harsh despair or penitent of fair.
 but seal'd love's errand by your yielding life
 take time's thrusts with unconquerable blade.

Sonnet

[27-33]

I thought, halfdrunken by the love of you,
 spring unapproacht for beauty and delight:
 the fresh clear tang o'day, the tooth of night
 equated sweetly with my fancy's line.
 But when the winds sank and the roses grew
 alert and dewy in the long warm light
 I dream'd the summer's bounty infinite
 yet dreading autumn's sullen retinue.

Now autumn's on us and the trees grow bare
 cry for the splendor fallen, fallen down:
 but richer glory overspreads the air
 and love inhabits an enchanted town.
 Already there are muster'd everywhere
 defences that shall win a world's renown.

Walk every day awhile beneath the trees
 at any hour with whatso speed you please,
 that is, if you are not content to live
 unfocusst, star oppressst, and fugitive.

You will ^{not know} forget at first that underground
 the tense roots twist and quiver round and round:
 but soon you'll feel a stream of living power
 make circuit from branch to or chestnut flower
 sheer thro' the green sad air to root deep fingers.

Tho' the flow's endless some stout rigid ligers
 flowing and drifting thro' the sad green air
 til trunks are daemon and leaves rip and tear
 the sheets of sunlight into ragged tatters:
 gold scales of magic fish in deep green waters,
 jay broke caught in, and young Soldilocks,
 or singing mermaids on spray-crested rocks.

Its' bound to bench and desk awhile to free,
The life open in some rain slender tree —

Stone builds its wall of China, towers its Rome,
but touch of wood is friendly, sign of home,
cradles at birth and when we come to die
slaves of clay's traffic and the claps of sky.

The Choice

The cry goes up for Britain : O Mother make your choice .
Speak to the waiting nations with wisdom in your voice .
You who have quelled the jungle and bridged the foaming flood
who cleared the surgeon's lancet and freed the fevered blood,
you who have scoured the ocean to liberate the slave,
to whom the world's four corners are camping ground and grave :
Livingston, Palou, Moffatt, Carey, their names are bright
where hearts hearts forgather upon the shores of light :
you who have given shelter to the lonely sailed men
till time should stroke their dream afloat and give them strength again —
cry to the waiting peoples that life is such and sweet,
that there shall be no hungry to clamor in the street :
that's nature's kind and offers her acres of increase
if men but heed the signal and bring the age of peace :
that not a foot shall go unshod or grate with heat or flame
if men but make of brotherhood — a banner not a name .
We wait and hearken, Mother, We hearken and are dumb .
Lift up you hand to beckon and singing we shall come ."
The cry goes up for Britain : O Mother make your choice .

97
23rd.

Speak to the waiting peoples with courage in your voice."

Then Britain spoke: "To the Eastward where the Rhine cleaves the hills
My winged Legions hover with power that maims or kills.

In Africa, black Africa, my honor's bought and sold.

I sweep the tribesmen to the waste and blight the land for gold.

And where our men, Zshukedi, stood with virtue and with grace,

I wheel the heavy cannon up, and drive him from the place.

And where the Arab massacres the humble Christian folk

I helpless, watch the villages go up in towering smoke.

And the 'my sons have harvested and half the world is dead

I let the hungry children starve and whimper in the street."

The cry goes up for Britain, and bitter is the voice,

"O Britain, Blake's on Britain, is this your final choice?"

I know your wit & spirit, know your touch,
Have seen day breaks & cities thro' your eyes:
Unwillingly and willingly learnt much
and loved you under many-changing skies.

Yet tho' we two with eagerness have made
Surrender of our being, by some fate
There lingers somewhere in you, unbetrayed,
The unsolved atom, still inviolate.

Man lives but surrender. Christ's high cross
 is heart o' truth. We must give up - give up,
 build walls and ramparts of our bitter loss
 and drain, not sip, the dumbly proffered cup.

A tree is tree by giving up the eyes
 a shifting screen of green beyond our words,
 by cleaving earth and separating skies,
 as nesting, nesting season-troubled birds;

but not in being tree, a thing apart
 that shuts the stars out that it will not see.
 or sighs along the wind a broken heart -
 sore-baffled by time's strange economy.

So I have sought to reach my spirit's light
 by spending all my life on love and verse,
 have bid the faggot raise a higher light
 the smoke and ashes do it with their curse.

You too have made surrender of your heart
 til I bedazzled with love can scarce define
 who first made such and such a fancy start
 your wit & wisdom's mingled so with mine.

And yet when I would make the final throw,
 be lost entire in you and poetry
 behind my brain strange baying creatures go:
 they lean me in, pad round, and harry me.

Sonnet [28-33]

What stars have planned you, what wild comets set
 the course you follow I shall never know;
 from mystery to mystery ~~as~~ we go
 as innocent of hope as of regret
 But there is much the dull brain must forget
 so swift the action and the wit so slow
 that eager heart remembers ever. So
 I am content while heart beats happy yet.

All things are dark. All men are ignorant.
 We fumble blindly in a shadowshow,
 and yet I am assured of joy enough,
 the scribbled love may be a madman's rant
 or weather vane that marks what tempest's flow:
 for heart recalls the dawn that shaped our love.

Sonnet [29-33]

When common people speak to me of love
 I, ever arrogant, am prone to sneer
 at small ambition, littleness held dear
 and the dull comfort in their dreams thereof.
 Their sentiment has never fire enough
 to kindle into passion, or burn clear.
 Yet shamed at least by their so niggard sphere
 they call down wordy rhetoric from above.

Let these bleat lovers sip of mingled dust-
 and delicate salute of life to life
 or dreary exile in far banished land

1st Part { 21st - 23rd - 28th
September -

Tristan

A Narrative Poem in Heroic Couplets.

As the year turns and autumn's anxious care
loads creaking wagon, thro' the woodland bare
'tis my delight to stride at set of sun
when, the winds fallen and day's labor done,
quiet broods over all the countryside:
the stacks, the sheaves, the uncut acres wide,
eve-misted meadows, lanes leaf carpeted,
with sorrowful old stories in my head
of lovers unvictorious and dead.

For they have died in eagerness of spring,
or come to die after long wandering
on summer's crest. But now time trembles on:
their passion lasts not til the frosty dawn -
So thro' this dearth and banishment of joy
I seek (in stanza years must not destroy)
to fix my troubled fancy high and bright
above the hurl and tumult of the night.

105
and gain me peace and rest from vexed thought
that we thro' love to bitterness are brought
as tho' the salt of sorrow must have place
in passions that the world gazes at and praises.
For surely there was beauty in some face
that lived for love with no rime-heavy phrases:
and men we never knew who dwelt maybe
in Helen's Troy or by the Cretan sea
knew love's bright metal all unstained of rust
for happy years, before they came to dust
and left no bitter music in the wind
to bring grief singing back into the mind.

So I get strength by telling slowly over
some golden brodered story of a lover
most unlike me who loved another girl
with not a feature, not a single curl
resembling yours, and how they came to die
because fate shaft the play implacably.
And I rejoice in that we two are not
starcrossed and webbed in pitiable plot,

but follow paths where no high tempest's storm
and keep to valley meadows safe and warm.

The let me shape a ^{an incident} moment in a song
that is not beyond black with emberd wroth,
that that came later, and they both are laid,
these famous lovers in the seagreen shade.

When the proud Mark, : beginneth thus the tale :
saw Tristân love the beautiful and pale
dear lady, Isolt, he had brought to be
king's wife and consort from the Irish sea,
he, dreading passion that might work them woe,
bid this, his sister's youngling, turn from them and go
to Allenayne, maybe, or Russe, or France,
where there were deeds to do with pennon lance
and call his sword to succor; where he might
win favor hand of some fair lady bright,
or helply fall in some bonescattered plain
where one might seek his name and kin in vain.

197
Young Tristân bow'd before the King's command,
and sought him haven in his cloud dim land:
but love with eager feet fled after him,
and followed, followed to the sea's gold rim,
calling him back, calling him over and over
to Lyonesse with the string, the hay and the clover,
the wind in the high corn, and the rain's hiss,
the summer evenings when his lady's kiss
burnt its red rose on his pallid cheek,
and brum'd with love's old magic he dare not speak.

Beloved Heart, your beauty is no less
than that wave sculptured queen is Lyonesse.
You are as skilled in fancy and as wise
as Maeve or Helen. Your far traveled eyes
have mastered thought and poetry beyond
the narrow shores to which Greek girls are bound.
And yet your mind's as gleaming and intense
as any legendary innocence.
And your bright-majesty has so mastered me
that the oak leaves dip and flicker from the tree

I walk the spring gay hillsides of delight —
when I first went with Lere. In darkening night
I toss and wake because your image there
stands laughing in gold room with wind comb'd hair.

So, surely were you caught from me by fate,
as set in dream dim island desolate
I would go out to seek you, never rest
till life or loss and weary breast on breast,
bring back the rapture of our eager spring.

Your life and mine have had their wandering —
yours more than mine: and yet no household food,
boards leave to counter, desk, or village school,
I've had my luck: except the dreary hell
of teaching half-starved message boys to spell,
or mending ^{dubious history} French or Latin to a lord
whose father's made ^{him rich} (a fortune selling) stout,
need never do my spirit violence
by weighing tea or pilup sticky pence;
I get my living by the care of art,

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am paid for knowing painter's names by heart —
My best luck's you... But now no more o' this.
The story's Tristram's... Tristram's, only his.

[2nd Part October 12th.

When Tristram had once more in Lyonesse
he wore the habit and the ragged dress
of one who was an eremite lest he should
be noted of the King's high brotherhood
and baled to court by busy witted folk,
where Mark on finding thus his order broke
should bind or slay.

And is remembered glade
the young man bided, of the sun afraid,
and only wending forth at eve for bread
and needed victual to some woodman's stead,
where his poor raiment and his gentle mien
drew back the shot bolts.

Spring was young and green
on hill and brake. The countryside was gay,

and deckt her freshest for the Easter day
when the King's Son of Heaven should arise
from cold black earth to comfortable skies
and bid me sing for joy that death was slain
and gave the via boudage of the rain,
the hails' whip, and the anger of the storm.

The word was noised in cottage and in farm
that Marc and his gold company should come
with drum and flag to his high castle home
here to make worship for the season's grace.
Then Tristram deend, she too at gentler pace
would follow with her fairer retinue,
So, seeking out the bridle path he knew
I selt lovd brather than the King's highway
where myling branches made a greener day,
he cut his name upon a willow wand
and raised it in the grasses just beyond
the hoof narrow ruts where her keen eye should mark
the laced letters. Since the way was dark
he bound a trail of honeysuckle bright-

111
tho not in flower yet, where winds deft and light
would set asway the salley and compel
his lady's gaze to question and to dwell...

You too have gone thro woods more grand than these
and brought bright words of how the sea far trees
have richer spring and more magnificent
decline and fall than those weath which we went
that rain clear morning to the shining glen.

You love, have spoken of the maples' glory
and squandered wealth, and how the lakes look when
the ice breaks... We forget young Tristram's story.

When the proud Marc rode by with floy and spear
young Tristram stole apart and hid him near
the woodland way; and in an hour was ware
of Isolt and her raidens passing there.

Breath held and clenched fist - strained & white of knuckle
til nodding falgry struck the honeysuckle,
he stood not in a death tense agony

saw moving gaze sort out the tangled tree .

We too have gone down little roads in strip
from Strangford inland slowly motoring,
have stoppt while you stretch up to cut and take
the flowering goatleaf . I have lifted you
beyond the scathe of thorn, for blossom's sake
this shower of leafspelt rain or early dew,
and you have filled the car with golden whinn
one night in April . . . Let me not begin
for all your days with growing things are bright
til even ivy has its own delight . . .

When Isolt saw the cerver name she badde
the company ride on, save Brangwen, maid
and close Bearts' sister, t' whom she shewd the sign,
and stak: This perilous love's a fault o' thine,
so you must bear the danger, share with me
the troubled secret and the mystery .
So seek him out he surely bides anear
and bid him greet me, Bring him - Bring him here .

113
The Knight was found, and brought when, with ease:
and for awhile love e-crilled in the trees .

So that sweet spring while still at Lintagel
King Marc and his gay fellowship did dwell
the lovers had their stolen brief delight .

Yet the new streak of love as erred with night
the parting came a-gone . The later tale
is black with sorrow . . . for a faithful sail
bore him across the heart dividing sea
to a new world in a new country .

It is not time to speak of that . But one
made a sweet ballad . . . the years ago
of that short snatch of joy vouchsaf't to them
as a gay thread embroider'd round the hem
of a dark robe of pity . I have sung
this ballad in our sunless English tongue,
and put for love's own sake and my delight
my story close to Tristan's . . . that you might

not deem me craven to employ my art
on an old legend distant from your heart,
for all things unconfined I think or do
have scope or purpose none save love of you.

2nd October

What lovely dream of beauty
has kept men satisfied?
a paradise in a sunset:
a snow rich country side:

an apple tree in autumn:
a high familiar wall;
white stars within the rippling
skylark's or curlew's call:

I keep my dream of beauty,
unchallengeable grace
you

The rattle storms the factory yard, men burn the wheat and cotton,
and hungry soldiers in the street remember we've forgotten:
and lads who'd paint the pictures that would make Davinci humble
walk homeless on the hills alone or sit a starve or grumble.
In Europe's dozen capitals men plot new ways of fighting,
new rot gas, new blinding fumes, more subtle dynamiting.

Across the world the ring chains, are broken and are dying
because a dream, a madman's dream, ran by with banners flying.

There's terror in the air tonight, a witch's brew's abrewing,
and all that I have ever done was hardly worth the doing.

Who I name queens who have been wise and fair,
 first of all poets' labors of delight:
 with raven hair or with red golden hair,
 with sunbrow body amorous or white:

I call queens who broke the world up with a smile,
 or ruled a little land with skill and sense:
 at making lowland rich richer Nile
 set more than Troy aflame with violence:

I call up each in turn in the mind's eye
 and lo! the names like body out of mist
 at everyone that comes in suddenly
 you in my arms at dawn, awake and trust.

It seems great joy is only struck out of a broken heart
 with Homer blind, & Milton blind, & Blake's wit's gone astray:
 and in a little country town he played a townsman's part
 who sent Lear out into the storm and in the thunder's way:

The exile had not quarrelling with greedy fist'd kin,
 and Middleton in Brussels with a bullet in his head:
 the limping lord whose eagle eye was blacked into sin,
 and Chatterton & Davidson & Keats & Dunsen dead.

What then's the choice? To have a life that's rich & sweet & free,
 and maybe write a verse or two in praise of one dear face,
 the laugh together at the vines and huts to hill or sea
 and take the drawing of the blinds with elegance and grace,

or brood upon earth's mystery and brieve & break your heart,
 stand lonely on the rocks or in the candle melting tower,
 or play with bleeding side & lands the country townsman's part
 who built white finnecks of thought with bitterness & tower?

Phlebas

Death by Water

Then at the isle of Oaëa the home of the daughter of dawn
 where the nymphs dance gay in the twilight over the dew heavy lawn,
 we grounded our galley triumphant and slept on the beach of white sand,
 but when the bright Goddess of Morning stretcht forth her rose dabbled
 I orders a number of comrades to go to the House of the Witch
 and bring back the corse of Elfenor we had left like a log in a ditch.
 and seeking the highest of headlands we cut the dry logs for a pyre
 and buried the shards & the remnants when the ashes were raked from the fire.
 Then filling a mound high above him, we raised a tall column of stone
 and set his long oar for a beacon and left the dead sailor alone.

Odyssey XII

He'd take no quarter but discharged his gun
 shout at the ring of Spaniards. He was one
 we mist right well. He woudnt come on board
 even when the bulwin was shifted and stored.

His age was, I stand reckon, eighty four:
 he'd been with Cromwell in his Irish war.
 Six foot, gray headed, by the name of Swan,
 he was a very merry fighting man.

Danprie: Voyages vol. i p.p. 219-220.

And then ye see my thumb: he moved his pint,
and held his fist up with the short blunt thumb.

The bigger bit it in a bloody temper
before I had a chance to stick my knife...

Then when we anchored off Juan Fernandez
and sent a landing party to the spring

Tom went with them and as he left the ship

I dropt an empty tin upon his head

and shouted: Bring his bones back all together
and I'll return the tin can to his people...

He never came alive again. They brought
his broken body back upon a plank...

He fell into a gully, broke his neck,

and had to be hauled up with belts and rope

So every time I see a can of beans
I always think of Tom. I can't forgive

myself for bein' such a bloody fool...
to lead his blarney. Thanks as the...
with...

And coming down the Tigris to the Base
we struck a sandbank almost every hour
and had to be hauled off. The stretchers were

so crowded that we had to move them up
against each other right along the sides

and when we hit a bank a few dropt off
but we had neither time nor na to save 'em

and let 'em drain. They'd die in any case
and that saved their post mortems.

I was tired

of rippin' men's chests open every day...

7th October

Salute to the Newly Born

O little child, altho my angry voice
sounds only as a blurred discordant noise
on ears that have unrelaid yesterday
yet I salute you, for you too will share
— all the desperate delights of air
that rock me on this planet. You will achieve
the grief that chokes the heart up, and the joys
keen at the signal, ere the course is run
forgetting the heave and hup of breath,
ages recalled when the tense cord is worn
and half remembered the clench of death.

You too will see the ripe wheat harvested,
the sunlight thro' tree tangles overhead,
grave dawns too splendid for the scope of words,
and flight of birds, and magic flight of birds.

You'll learn the comfortable touch of wood,
kindly as cradle, table, board, and bed.

and intimate as stick or welcome gate,
and stone will greet you, half misunderstood,
flint to your knees but walls about your head,
and landmarks with the heart confederate.

Water is friendly too, but not so near,
will play you pranks to batter on your heart,
waft in your vessel to the bannered pier
or leave you beached.

Gay singing brooks will start
clear rhythms within your mind that suddenly
swirl and are lost against a rotten tree,
or lisp into the rushes and are gone . . .

Both air and fire, that flying elements,
will be impartial in the reckoning,
bear up or dash the sunward soaring wing,
revive or burn, soothe brow or the wide rent
blow bitterly and whistle insolent.

And yet these are not life's most pitiful

There's the hard craft to learn, the skill to win,
the chafing spirit set to life and school,
and broken ere the tournament begin.

There's hope that's shattered by a foolish word;
and Laffiness, starting in a flash,
hot circles space, and crumbles into ash:
the meteor: the instant sunstruck bird;
the leaping salmon ending in a splash.

There's death in harvest, and there's death in shrimp,
chance snatch-at-proving useless: and deceit
with fist as fist on shoulder in the sheet,
and pistol in the alley: altered hearth
returns - 15 at the end of wandering:
fat days of glut, and laggard years of dearth.

O little sister I have said too much,
have uttered my own sorrow and my rage,
last thought of your bright eyes, your finger's clutch
in large and weary hooding on the age.

125
Were I t'express a wish or a command
that you should learn and hearing might obey,
and compact of the best I understand,
this is the troubled question I would say:

If you want light - the candle still must burn,
or this mad planet that's life's crib and tomb,
where time's too short and there's too much to learn -

Creech back into the comfortable womb.

I heard above the presipice of sleep
 the turning earth moan pitiful and deep.
 I spoke: O weary mother wouldst be rid
 of the tired weight of loaves and pyramids?

May: moan the voice: canst thou not save me, please,
 from vermin man, my itchy skin's disease.

Harvest Festival

Altho' twas not the sabbath day
 the litten windows glimmered gay,
 and eager people running bore
 sheaves and loaves thro' the church door.
 I, stepping heard sweet choirboys sing
 rehearsal of their thanksgiving . . .

But at the gate, in rain gay street,
 with fluttered rays, and ill shod feet,
 a thin man ~~played~~ whistled on a fife
 Eternal life eternal life.

Three Sonnets to Karl Marx

[30, 31, 32 - 1933]

1

I came to you with nervous step and slow
 put off the climb / o time / and time again.
 I said: The men that know you are not men
 my mind inclines to, or know the things I know
 but all the while insistent bytes blow
 and dream dead men swing out into the night
 as on incredible peaks breaks phantom light
 giving splitsecond gates at arcs of snow.

So I have come to you with measured breath:
 steel heels and staff have pivoted my weight,
 dead set on one side send a certain death
 in avalanche of dull predestined fate,
 and on the other sheer abyss of loss
 that grips a life's delights in one coin's loss.

11

Your clear plateau now gives my spirit rest
 that has not rested since I first began
 to love the sight of beauty angry man
 who marches with the ranked dispossessed
 because the sweetest things and lowliest
 are banded against the wombward-slum-sick child.
 I too since then have gone unreconciled,
 Patis' bitter cancer gnawing at my breast.

But now my bitterness and naked grief
 blow from me in the inevitable air
 that strips the clean tree of the rotted leaf
 and now I know that branches swept and bare
 are happy prelude to a nobler spring
 than I have seen in lowland wayfaring.

Writing lungs buoyed up with this ecstatic air,
 my eyes unblinded by salt futile tears,
 with sharper senses, and alert ears
 I turn to climb the ~~ster~~ be candle stair,
 where singing conch's shearing thro my hair
 shall smitty song til shod with song I reach
 magnificent simplicity of speech
 and fix life's core in shape a child may share.

For in this freedom you have given me,
 freedom from frenzied thought and feeble rage,
 I cannot make old psalms of slavery
 and mussy with the fetters of a age,
 with easy limbs, and in this brighter day
 I cannot move the old ungainly way.

Now I am in my leafy youth and thrust
 green heavy branches to my utmost bound
 with arrogant denial of the dust
 that murlars root and fibre underground.

The leaves still lovely go when summers go
 and waning beauty's eloquent of grief
 I do not dread the feathers of the snow
 that cry defeat to worm tormented leaf:

for I have seen a tree in autumn reach
 bare wile limbs to started gusty rain,
 and know the bare magnificence of speech
 more rich than youth's luxuriance of pain.

X

Tho I may start for the open road and ring of the leaping sun
I always seek my four kind walls when the longest journey's done:

and tho I praise the heaving hills and the path beneath my feet
I am happier far in the garden plot or safe in the sounding street.

Tho I have stood on a hill alone and talked to a lonely God
I long for my neighbor's gossip and the lanes my fathers trod.

I have but little dread of death and the rain-washed skulls' white grin
if I be laid in familiar ground near the friendly bones of my kin.

Son of, suicide

October's end, October's end,
leafladen the wet winds moan
and he who was the son of my friend
goes out on the road alone.

I cannot tell what prompted him,
or what wild trumpets' start
came crying back from the red earth's rim
to tap at his lonely heart.

I do not know if the root of his grief
or whether he loved or sinned . . .
I only see the drifting leaf
and the rain and sleet in the wind

29/15

Four sages stood by Alexander's grave
whom men had called victorious and brave.

One spoke his thought: A little box of mould
is all his wealth who owned the Indies' gold.

The second then: Earth's limits knew his sway
who's well content with two bare yards of clay.

The third: And he whose wagons bristled with spoil
and tore the earth, is smothered by the soil.

The fourth: The King whose sun-eclipsing throne
rose mid earth's millions sleeps alone... alone...

135
29/15

I am so overcome
by beauty and delight
that I cannot name
each joy-murdering thought:

for at each lovely sight
I burn up like flame,
yet when fires die out
am left cold and dumb.

29/15.

My life has kept the level place
I have not scaled the peaks of pain
nor shuddered in the noon's disgrace
or crossed the refuge of the rain . . .

I have not worn the stole of grief
nor covered beneath hate's cruel sting,
I have endured the falling leaf
and the rash insolence of spring.

137
29/15.

[Sonnet 33-1933.]

All Hallows' Eve. Was spare a hurried thought
for little stars that glimmer in the night,
for holy names of such as bravely fought
forgotten in the long battle that we still must fight.

These names that are not borne as flags aloft,
or hurled above the spears as charging cry
but such as murmured over of it and of it
will succeed the lone heart in agony . . .

All Hallows' Eve. When we are in the dust,
and Caughing youth runs eager to the war
that bares bright blade between unjust and just
and holds high journey on a little star
may we be thought of in this quiet throng
and kept in memory by some spray of song.

30th

I believe and I believe ...
That is how a creed is writ.
Love at dawn and Love at eve
with a spice of hate to it ...

Love at birth and Love at death
with a hearty spice of hate
then each breath's a living breath
and you are most fortunate ...

for the dismal end of most —
so the ways their fathers went
move and speak as ghost-to-ghost
damned and indifferent —

31st 39

Sonnet 34-1933

I do not praise thy beauty. Not some
alone wast given this glory in.

Proud step, head's toss and delicate tilt of chin
are seen by all and praised by all who see.

And I have found in dead men's poetry
such levelness of rain I would begin
to shape my thought and bind my fancy in
verse fit to rival theirs and honor thee

So I will praise what ^{no poet else has} ~~never~~ ^{has been} known
and bid me in the kept and hurried time
that lies ahead recall, recall again
the healing touch, the gentleness of love
writ bright as sunlight, thought as sweet as rain,
that overtakes the anagnorisis of time

Poems in November.

11th

I sitting in a train
when the air was bright with frost
sought to make an epigram
for the comfort of the sad
for the succour of the lost
and redemption of the bad
at the trivial cost
of the first-ready skill in verse I had.

But before the infinite
challenge of each hopeless face
there was not one word of grace
I could raise that seems to fit.
With this sudden shrinkage of my wit
hopelessly I could but phrase
God, why are these folk alive
They grow, they work, they eat, they weave,
They lie upon a narrow bed at last
a little lonely narrow bed at last
and are a portion of the chanceless best?

B.B.-C
October 1937

Northman
Summer 38

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Dendie

11th

I would have her go to school
at the cragged mountain pool,
learn the best arithmetic
with ten pebbles and a stick:
know by climbing up a tree
the wisdom of geography
master grammar word for word
in the deft phrases of a bird:
know a splash of stone's winding rings
more account than dreamy things
and a rabbit's scent in night
more than all the verse we write.

Then her body disciplined
by the sweet rigor of the wind,
taught by water, ice a fire
what is worthy of desire:
taught by water fire and ice
went of thought the only vice;

learn of hills and arts thereby
any doubtful dream to try,
may she leave the oldest school
happy, strong, and beautiful.

Take any little artisan:
he works, is workless, wed or not;
he eats what food he knows he can;
he spends or saves what pay he's got.

O do the sum when he has died
add, multiply, subtract, divide:

The only answers there can be
are 0 or else ∞.

We are the galley slaves of chance,
the dupes of hope, the fools of time.
There is no pattern in the dance
no meaning in the random rime;
and the we move with speed or grace
we have no more significance
than clouds across the moon's bright face.

If you could probe into each heart,
bid slay the passers in the street
you'd find what seems a meagre part-
drum loud with triumph or defeat.

An ugly hag with taloned hand
who scrapes in bins or bundles rags
moves tabored across the land
in palanquin with tossing flags.

22nd.

The little clerks in villa gardens
are sweeping the fallen leaves together
and raking things to the twisting smoke. . .
So to a clearing come in frosty weather
in fancy twitcht my belt of undrest leather
halloed with cuppt hands, begged their earnest pardons,
and squelched down to venison with the hairy woodland folk.

27th.

The year's elt passed without the pomp of song
for I was too intent at laboring,
first thought a case of art & help of friends
who brard the dull spectator's stupid gaze.
He in a back hall in a grim back street
complete with aspidistria in the window
I spelt the poet's alphabet to men.

145
22nd.

Two days and nights the pile of things has burned:
blue smoke at noon, against the stars is white,
and passing there my sober thought has turned
on winter and inevitable night.

28th

This is the wintry season
the unromantic part,
the turning to hungry reason
and the philosophic heart:

the stripping to bone a sinew
the shedding of selves one by one,
the finding crying within you
the imminent skeleton.

But in this prose & basis
must root the blossoming
that lights the eager faces
toward the shouting spring.

I am not old enough as yet to praise
 the naked gesture of the stare and lean;
 I have gone thro, not singing thirty days,
 black winter's woodcut innocent of green.

A cuboid spring with leaves at angles set
 as solid volumes of the flowering thorn
 has shape and form beyond the thin blood's fret
 that make it somehow noble to be born.

a watercolor autumn pale and cool
 delights my mind with subtlety of thought
 but leaves the heart unwarm, too beautiful;
 a sober virtue being yet untaught.

But winter does not ever sting the mind
 to painful shock of rapture or surprise
 its core & meaning seems so hard to find
 & being found seems not to make men wiser.

Th' amoeboid immortality is vain
 that bids us live in children over again,
 and find thought's consolation in a blind
 but earnest chemist blending to mind
 inflicting pain but always wishing to be kind.
 The stuff of me to live again and stir
 in rivulet, mosquito, juniper,
 is small delight to one who lood til death
 the pointing finger, the beauty baffled breath,
 the eye's rejoicing, all the senses' praise
 for myriad fancies focused in my days.

It is the play of senses merged in one
 that makes worthwhile endurance of the sun.
 For when a chance encounter is referred
 to an existing unity of sense
 its value's drained, as thought is one with word,
 and fixed forever in art's permanence.

29th.

Variation of an Epitaph.

I drove at times for what seemed worth my strife,
wove ad books I loved, and talk of art.

I burnt my fingers in the fires of life,
yet late to leave the bitterness and smart.

29th.

149

Sonnet 36.

When I am nervous, jerky and unkind,
or querulous, and easily upset,

there is no stanza that I know of yet
can make articulate the troubled mind . . .

The bleak lines tremble in a wayward blind
unrhythmic strain. The inevitable feet
tear the clean mesh of fancy's fine spun net
that fumbling fingers try a fail to bind.

So tho' dead poets made a purge of song
and shed their troubles in a poem's scope
and my ^{and my} dull sense too may well be born of wrong

it leaves me chill upon a cloud ground slope
nor is delivering trumpet, but a gong
crackled loud, that calls me from the distant hope

I know you well. Have I not heard you speak
 disparagement of little kindly men
 who ride in hans, read ^{Answers} "Fitts" every week
 and climb to bed each night at half past ten.

You have proclaimed the artist's freedom, and
 indubitable right to stagger home,
 with book of verse or bottle in his hand
 when day's gold wing alights on spire and dome.

You have despised the bondage to the desk,
 the office clock, the proper thing to do...
 announce the poet's spirit's arabesque
 forever treading paths forever new.

Yet I can see you, I can see you, sir,
 your hobolemic air, poetic rays,
 forgotten all, while you, a officer,
 or bench square salute perfidious flags.

Perhaps when near the Khyber or the hills
 that push the sky up when your engines roar
 you will remember little bush hills
 you loved to climb & sit on... years before!

35th

I do not blame him for his breakaway,
 his mad stampede to gain the fence heerd.
 There have been moments in a bitter day
 my route's depended on a single word.

I do not blame him that he has gone back,
 back to the wallow, and the breath warm byre,
 who trumpeted along a cloudy track
 with feet flit bloody but keen eyes afire.

But what I blame is that the wise old cow
 will low to calves who have impatient eyes.
 "Before the horns are big upon your brow
 you'll come back moaning, sick & black with flies."

O times the enemy
 he does no bitter wrong:
 made savage mock of me
 and my triumphant song.

I was too young to know
 that those I strove with then
 would find strange roads to go
 and finish less than men.

But bitterest of all
 that one I thought to be
 obedient to the call
 of joy and poetry

should turn his face away
 gird on a soldier's blade
 slaming the light of day
 so dully unafraid

when sober organ roared

and christian church was loud
 with mumble mumble word
 and the ignorant gaping crowd.

30th

A Finis

Shake hands with head, be wist luck, walk away.
 See down's left blink with belly deep dismay.
 Remember Bull's fist with snuffing gratitude
 or some black Ciceronian cane scold platitude.
 Recall affection for the lonely goal,
 scrum's reek & seniors' walk across the field.

30th.

Bleak Weather

Frost by its challenge to the leaping blood
 forces momentum on the spiring tips.
 The showery sun stabs thro' the gleaming wood
 and clouded song breaks from the parted lips:

while rain forever seeping underground
 whispers to root a soft encouraging,
 fills earth & air with its sweet growing sound
 and where no birds are sweetly doth sing.

But these bleak days of neither frost nor rain
 bleak gray dark days cut by the raw east wind
 are death to spirit, for a heart in pain
 can find no solace in a gale's thinning.

It somehow seems prevision of the earth
 - those long cooling days that lie ahead
 when the last man has whined at his birth
 and raged he's been round him dry and dead

30th

155

Fictile.

1 jumble pots together in a case:
 Greek cups with painted figures on its edge
 with here and there an old immortal face,
 goatherds or maidens dancing thro' the sedge:

a water bottle that has jolted thro'
 some pilgrimage by Chaucer never sung:
 a Wedgwood teapot - Wedgwood Jasper blue
 a earthen bell Sicilian peasants rung:

a pair of types held maybe with gold
 of Marlow, Heywood or uproarious Ben
 when Keats was with a fellowship
 and those that wrote it were not less than men:

a sailor's mug with ancient homely rhyme
 of love that beheads the heart dividing sea...
 a jig with happy Erin in her prime
 depicted in a dance with Liberty.

I cannot fail to think of loving hands
that made them or that held them up with joy
I all at once inhabit myriad lands
as Roman farmer or Egyptian boy...

Yet thought checks fancy: when my people die
and when we walk over our old bones
what happy shades will we be remembered by
that for our hates as Nero's this atones.

Fragment for Election Song.

"O Ulster's ours", Craigavon said, "and what we have we hold".
The lying trumpet shake once more from brazen throat and bold.
I thought of Ulster, claimed as his, where I had spent my days,
the fetid slums, the flooded fields, the drink-foul city ways
the smokeless chimneys at the yards that once rayed and stirred
with myriad figures moving where now a lonely bird
beats past the gables to the hills or turns and calls a pen
for memory of the thronged ships and the strong hearty men...
at corners of the dismal town they gather in the rain
repeat the rumour, cap the lie, or hum a curst refrain
that keeps them cleft and helpless, recalling banished time,
and make a long-dead monarch's wrong hot cause for present crimes.

30th.

Care not O little Jesus tho the year
brings robins to look reasonable now
slum children sicken, milk & eggs are dear,
and trouble scores across the widow's brow.

The nations run their suicidal race -
leave contraceptives bishops bid and pray -
A prince gets tumbled in a steeplecase
and heresefait women praise the latest play

159

30th

When the Fair's held and thousands fill the place
and caravans from time and space
You must not be dismayed by all the stir
the throng & noise make levelier,
and that fat laughing Banker wife will lend
more than the hearts' prepared to spend.

Continuity

May cover birdsong. Put a tariff on
 springs twittering imports it will be in vain
 the skylit defy electric signs at dawn
 wind smudge smoke scribble rain set to Spain.

And in the steel clean ~~lowers~~ lowers of radio
 when crisis men lick thin platitudes to spare
 life will resume with stoppages by snow
 or pistol shot at broadcast of a race.

Poems in December.

I woke this morning to the sound of birds
who were in lyric frost and tree and fence
and hardly free from dream I sought for words
to fix the fancy in sweet permanence —

Of such a song bright human harmony —
But my slick thesis met a sharp defect
for gazing from my window I could see
'twas gangster starlings cleaning up the street.

I have to thank the wisdom of
 time's strenuous economy
 that boarded up the larger love
 til I stand staid above and free
 of eager youth's anxiety . . .

Had any passion filled my days
 when I was daring sales of spring
 we'd both have missed this summer grace
 of golden song and sunrich wing:
 wind wreckt 'd been a sterile thing . . .

Corn rots, men starve . I pen my tedious song . . .
 tucker my brow with theme of prosody . . .
 Corn rots, men starve . I got the accents wrong . . .
 or thought rips thro' my verse's filigree .

See me impatient, quarrelsome or loud:
 the things that move me mood clay moulder'd men . . .
 a sonnet neat resettled makes me proud
 a bungled couplet drops no cold apen . . .

When winter sets thin trees against a night
 washt clean and dark I psychoanalyse
 my weary spirits' intellectual right
 to overcome the venace of the skies .

There'll be no comfort til I match my verse
 with something bigger than my narrow wit
 I'll not be free until a arrowy curse
 suovers its challenge to the infinite .

Go back. Go back, before you are mistaken:
 the fife's all call, the trumpets call "Go back,
 for if you keep ahead you'll be forsaken
 and left alone to climb the blizzard's track.

Go back. Go back: the warring boyle's spoken.
 Give heed but ad seek men's ways open.
 They will be poorer if you too are broken.
 Go back and build the barricade with men.

Builder

Having death in me, being born to die,
 and envious of things I have not made
 which may perhaps last out more days than I
 and being of green growing things afraid
 it is my duty while I yet have time
 to smear and smash and dirty all I can
 with brick and slate, with mortar, stone and lime,
 'til where trees grew rise villas to my plan.

From loving cares that stifle
and tenderness that kills
deliver me and set me
on gale frequented hills

From hands that would have helped me
but break and cannot mend,
be near me, lovely woman,
be near me and defend.

While yet the eve is tireless
and moon with wander wakes
Give me the strength, Beloved
to make my own mistakes.

A rounded sun behind a twiggy tree:
the middle distance quiet in a mist...
lit trams tilt gravely fast like craft at sea;
a newsboy ballads on his frosty fist...

A leaf falls somewhere crisp beneath the trees:
keels hammer out a stanza hard and clear.
But weary heart, its summer harvested,
gazes vacant at the onset of the year.

What comfort can there be in stall and manger,
 what succour in the story of the Kings
 if man to man speaks guardedly as stranger
 tho' bound together in disastrous things?

We must be brothers, must break down the fences
 that mark my little plot - aloof from yours:
 Live fully to the scope of five bright senses
 Best being dead no shred of self endures

The Kennel Show was splendid, roofs to leak,
 grates guaranteed to smoke, a tiles to crack
 with rents from £47 a week
 for those with back to back and ... back to back ..
 to Palaces for Poms, of basalt black
 at easy rates let out to Jew and whores
 with anethyline ventholes in the floors.

Christ did this thing! without a guarantee!!

An amateur! No wonder he fell flat.

Business is business. Pray where should I be
if I conducted my affairs like that?

This holly that afore time turned my thought
on Christ, the thorns and the blood beaded brows,
once pondered on and reverently brought
to deck with garland seasonal holly,
now means no more than ivy, less than oak,
has skill or craft no more to saddle me
when the sleet and drizzle ragged folk
gape at the log shop window's lighted tree.

Snow's friendly, tucks the houses in to sleep,
wraps roof and sill, and strokes with gentle hand:
and when our doors are drifted drifted deep
a quiet glory spreads across the land

Fire's warmer somehow, food more hurriedly
snatched between train and hair takes on delight,
books yield more beauty, richer poetry
roves round the flame say comfortable night.

The earth, too, 's first in some relation to
a providential sky above the roof...
all movements guaranteed beneath the blue
the lively stars are set in unaloof.

The bread comes, long before the frost's retreat
someone goes out and leaves across the snow
the pockmark puddles of unresting feet,
will not abide, has somewhere else to go.

and all at once the earth begins to turn,
to dinner's cold, grates smoke, books tire the eyes...
while frantically fantastic planets burn
with angry crests down formidable skies.

Boom of a race and in society
where hustlers' morals limit our dull scope...
where no trees lovely save an apple tree,
and that because there's always harvest hope...

When men have offered with compelling hand
a blithe salvation - offered without price
I should be' stoop and failed to understand
transaction in such foolish merchandise

But no - for once I who will barter aught
with any chapman and in any mart,
snatch at the bargain, something got for naught:
yet all the time suspicious in my heart.

Come, father, tell my friend your famous story
 of how that night — some fifty years ago —
 you with the others, dead series, saw the glory
 of the heaven's legions row on row . . .

The old man mumbled, with the story tangled
 with talk of John Baptism, Macabees,
 spears shone, flags snivled, camel belts harsh jangled,
 the prophet stood in Jordan with his knees,

Then puzzled for the telling was disjointed
 the friend asked: and this infant to be King . . .

You sir, must have been sorely disappointed
 that fifty years has brought you no such thing.
 Nay: wheezed the old man: God in heaven used it
 took back the child, new flesh could not be stood it.

Already Christmas Eve: no friendly snow
 has scarfed the little chimneys. Cold and dry
 a bleak wind wanders sadly to and fro
 and makes night horrid with its dismal cry

Grim grim open street lamps are flickering.
 The sign boards clatter. Bare trees moan and crack.
 A stale earth unredeemable by spring
 swings on erratic orbit bent and weak.

I bent my head when: no rebel word
 bespoke despair tho there were strains of grief
 in life... The bright rain sliding from the leaf,
 the creaking tree, the cloud surmounting bird,
 not one of these cried for another place
 where winged, boughs or lucidity
 have wider scope and are more safely free
 from failure's sentence as the clay's disgrace.

Only from man, man fugitive and small,
 Lawless and whining round a lonely flame,
^{both} ~~dreamer~~ ~~maker~~ and saved by dreams celestial,
 who gives a little troubled dirt a name;
 only from him comes stir of discontent
 as clamor for release from benishment.

I have come thro a narrow place in time
 from boyhood's foothills thro the cleft of youth...
 the weather has been fair: a lonely climb
 along the boulders gradients of truth.

I pause this instant, draw a deeper breath,
 not knowing in what bright air my future lies
 in what arc's limit lay my bones in death
 or what the landscape as the spreading skies.

The next ascent is sheer into the cloud
 taken on the hill's long shoulder anywhere
 with crest fast mist to fail of word make proud
 of stride should falter - in the tangled air.

The latter clouds melt down the noonclear sky
 til what was stars seemed dark hot into space
 flickered with golden music bright and high
 and filled with joy a bare and lonely place.

At once the cloud bank was a mountain range
 I trod untended centuries ago
 with common thought. Remotest and strange
 the wet sheets and the dusky lamp lights glow,

I saw the moon last night, his friendly face
 turned towards me with a knowing sort of look
 as tho' he'd seen me in some other place
 and wondered if I'd feel implied rebuke.

I'd lost the rapture of that scented wood,
 forgot the quiet ecstasy we knew
 when at that Deepwell gate we gazing stood
 and saw earth's balance rhythm run slow and true.

adelfhi Grottesque Carnival

So in the tented ground where showmen come
 on festive eve I wandered dismally
 saw rusty coated Barker with a drum
 and heard the dreary burden of his cry
 then under canvas flap that hid the sky
 but let the winds join little brothers in
 I gaped at freaks and monsters strange as sin

The Human Seal who balanced on his nose
 a paper spill and juggled with a stick

The Tattooed Lady with too little clothes:
 the Spotted Lady meant to make you sick:

the Indiarubber Man whose only trick
 was pulling up the skin from his pimply chest
 and La Belle Éve' Miss Blackpool - fully dressed.

The slick of shawls and dirty bodies round
 the slate floors the blue thick air

the spittle - slipping puddles on the ground
 conspired to fill my belly with despair.
 So staggering out and round I knew not where
 I came upon a sideshow and went in
 and gaped at freaks and monsters strange as sin...

The Grocer with his hand turned into cheese
 The Bishop with his talks to single men
 the juggling Auditor who balances
 long rows of oughts that always add to ten
 the villagerden clerk who once again
 rolled lawn, clipped roses, talked across a wall
 to villagerden ditto not so tall.

or

The Grocer with his heart turned into cheese
 the Boxing Bishop with short talks to men
 the Politician looking for crises
 to bear him up and gently down again
 the Searded Barker snarling in his den
 the Spotted Spaniard who three times a week
 sells submarines and gas to Turk and Greek.

The smallest whiskey drinker on the Earth,
The tallest bible reader in Brazil
The only Nazi who has given birth
to babies that saluted crying "Heil
The bankrupt Yankee who once bought the Mill
called Calvary: in transit both were broken
and since that time he has not smiled or spoken.
There's neither cross nor Christ - all Hoboken.

The Australian waded with the Magic Bat
that scored six hundred in an afternoon
The Admiral who eats a feathered hat
made from the toenails of a green baboon
The only Slovak who arrives too soon
and spent the time in perfecting a league
with cardboard boxes string and some intrigue

The team of fasting Men who sit upon
a pile of loaves and die by dull degrees
This was perhaps the Greatest Piece of Fun
The Four Protectors nearly came up to these
No build

slight new addition to notice with a sigh
birds, bees and clouds last taxless thro the sky.

The Greatest Thrill for half a Century
was when a Young Man knelt and laid his down
for tank to crush, shell smash a fire to play
til there was nothing left save dust of bone
then a given signal, with a gun
another cadge with laughter in his face
stept from the crowd and knelt in the same place.

So neat the action and so humorous
the staged performance from the Golden Band
that bland above the racket and the fuss
to wellground Dutchman with the jewelled hand
who sold the Music, Tanks, and owned the land
the show was set on. I crept to the door
and caught and caught until my eyes were sore.

Month	Poems	Lines
May	23.	328.
June	21	275.
July	21.	321.
Aug.	—	—
Sept	26.	462.
Oct.	24	464.
Nov.	23	279
Dec	17	227

