



Nov 18.

Sonnets, Lyrics & Epigrams.

Dedication

I have a certain skill in phrase
can trace & space the stride of mood
and from the tumult of my days
beget my own beatitude

For tho' the years have stripp'd my mind
of painted saint & murmured creed
the gay unfefferd senses find
the ritual that all men need

not in the hallowed bread or wine
the blessed relic or the bell
but in the shaping of a line
that mystery makes a miracle

To the Neglected Memory of
John Fisher Murray

I was thinking of Ireland and those who
were fated in her story
victors in Emain Macha defeated undaunted
in exile

dead in their youth unfulfilled old among alien
faces

named in a pennyballad or quoted in
annual oration

Then I remembered the others not famous for
death or disaster

legends no longer of glory made bright by
the contrast of shadow

unremarkable men who stood for an
instant transfigured

Then into history vanish, leaving only
a footnote

1941

Saps in the sticks again
and birdsong growing clear
but the fine drifting rain
retards the strippling year

as the reluctant spring
feared what might yet befall
before the swallow's wing
shadow the sunlit wall

1941

Breastplate

Take from the mind its little bitterness
 and the vexations which inhabit it
 Release the deep capacity to bless
 the sense of somehow being infinite

The dangers round our days are like the rain
 that falls on good & evil equally
 Only the fool the privately insane
 wears the assurance of his victory

Mode

As women change their jancies
 for ^{forms} hats in Jun
 the students read the poets
 that fashion hits upon.
 Now Marvell's prouet ledges
 have replaced the crags of Donegal
 and in ten years time the talkers
 will discover - Tennyson

In easy days I joined my voice with them
 who prophesied a new Jerusalem
 nor dream'd the outcome of the years shd. be
 a far more terrible Gettsemane

1941

We dream of peace & curse our luck
 That meets us in a spawn of wars
 yet who dare use our little clock
 as measure for the marching stars

1941

Grey & white

Grey sea grey sky
 two things are bright
 the gull-white foam
 the gull foam-white

1940

Ocean

I sit here gazing at the tranquil bay
 as slow waves curl & crumple on the shore
 a gripe for all the things I cannot say
 they have been said so many times before

1940

Cushendun

And where the valley opens to the sea
with whitewash't rock & weed-brown estuary
where grey gulls face the wind along the sand
a tall man mends his net with nimble hand

1940

Epigram from Voltaire

That lachrymatory adept
old Jeremiah wept & wept
foreseeing with prophetic eye
whom he would be translated by

1940

. From Voltaire

Epitaph

The world has lost Penelope
who pleasure lov'd & art & truth.
The gods who gave so lavishly
forgot to add eternal youth.

Epigram (Jean Fréron)

The other day by chance I saw
a rattlesnake bite Evelyn Waugh,
a wonder'd long what might betide
until the snake curled up & died

1940

To Any Dweller in Harrybrook Street.

And do you know a man was born
in your steep street of brick & slate
who made his life a simple chart
that he might keep inviolate
the clean precision of his sight
for curve of hill & field & tree
that he might set their colors down
with delicate economy?

All to tell chimneys leered him in
a gantry held the stay with bars
he came to his best years between
two pitiful disasters wars
and tho' the hearts of men were torn
he held his patient way alone
a while earth shudders with despair
matchless mass with mass a tone with tone

A scholar's verse absurd & cool
for fancy frost by Marvell pen'd
The stanza reaches easy end
the turn is deft the rimes are full

No more than this for all my care?
The measuring of style with style
The patience of the wrist & file
The crumpled paper's way despair

But never once to scan the page
with ragged cry of love or pain
or line a man might mouth again
to be a scabbard for his rage

For Colin Middleton

This quiet witty tense abstracted man
crusts art's full orbit in a single span
knowing the heart's worst anguish as he sought
to find the shape exactly to his thought.
And yet when all his agony is done
men will be proud to speak of Middleton

September before war

1939

On this day of crisis.
when men march
as the avalanche waits for the shout
I try to make better English
of Wang's translation of verses
about the evening moon on the east lake
by a Ming poet
painted on a small bowl

For a Certain Sculptor

A shameless waster or a lying bore
forgiven for some quality of charm
he imitates the style of Henry Moore
and never seems to come to any harm.

For a Certain Painter

He studied pigments bases balsams oils
with tedious resolution warped & slow
Yet what less he to show for all his toils
but water colors made ten years ago?

1939

1939

For a Refugee

A dapper little snob he nearly died
 in the black savage horror of Dachau.
 He shows his Rembrandt etchings off with pride
 insisting Art for art's sake even now

Years in Retrospect

The poet has made his will
 he chose the losing side
 Inspite of his bony skill
 his stiff cro magnon pride
 has left but painted work
 on the wall of the dripping case
 and who shall decipher the mark
 of hate or the symbol of love?

1939

Autumn takes earth open
 The day breaks late a cold
 My friends are older men
 and least, you have grown old

1932

The Angle

The fish flapp'd on my shoes
 turned up a chilling eye
 its back a silver bruise
 mouth oozing bloodily

So while I cut more bait
 and wrist my dripping rod
 I must on chance a fate
 & somehow pitied God

1932

Beech

The chestnut calls for witty speech
 The fir remembers Heine's psalm
 'tis April but the copper beech
 Keeps autumn in the epigram

1932

Danaë

Already hawthorn broods upon
 what was a black & naked tree
 so once beneath it's overwhelming swoon
 dark Leda struggled to be free

Yet at the rape I shew no shame
 will not intrude deride or scold
 rather I'll see that other dame
 laburnum wood in shower of gold

1932

No men may clamor Why delay?
 We need this vision'd state today "
 be careful not to offer them
 a jerry built Jerusalem

1931

If there's a god as people say
 I thank him for a happy day
 and pray that he all men will bless
 with equal measured happiness

1928

R. P. M

This doctor poet falter glad to live
 What clumsy quahain cords his image catch
 The ripe curly lips the drawld affirmative
 The surreptitious glances at his watch?

M. J. McC

This frogvoiced woman has a masculine
 grasp of affairs. If one was thought of her
 she might have made a name in Westminster
 Who sippis now to doteage on cheap wine.

R. T

✓

Horseboy, her cook's assistant, went to sea
 endur'd a year now quietly at home
 Companions age & does embroidery
 in an old house where letters never come

1939

Epigrams by Ponce Denis

Econchard Lebrun 1729-1807

Sur une Dame Poète

This beautiful poet has two little whins
 she makes up her face but not her own rimes.

Dialogue entre un Louvre poète
 et l'auteur

I have just been robbed!

I share your grief.

My manuscripts!!

I pity the thief.

Minor Poet's Dilemma

Caught at my prime in pitiful disaster
 my world's walls gape astilt about to fall
 Where must I turn for comfortable master
 To break the hush of terrors' interval?

Say, Edward Thomas who when earth was bursting
 Hurrying of mole & hawthorn deathward went
 to cover Lands have at eighty making
 immortal quatrains of pure sentiment?

1940

I cross a labored plot of ground
 where cunning men with spade & grain
 Thro weary years of skill have found
 The comfort of recurring shape

I break the soils of my slow mind
 with tools that some old craftsman wrought
 yet when the yield is cut I find
 a harvest alien to my thought

1938

25

Epitaph for an Ornithologist

Put me where crows can pick my eyes a feast
after rain has wash't the bleacht bone clean
let bits of junches find my skull a nest
& Hatch their hungry family therein

let me make verse a man might stop to say
breasting a hill & gazing on a bay
or a tired mother to a drowsy child
his small impatient anger reconciled

Epitaph for a Seafarer

Back to the earth but not to be awhile
the rock I loved: mere silt of blowing dust
on some cliff face let wind with gritty file
scour me the only epitaph I trust.

Grant too that lines I made come into mind
when a hoarse rebel stammers to his kind
in smoky loft or in a windy place
he dreams a torches brightening each face

Let not my words break insolent & crude
by lying fashion praise not understood
in esoteric phrases void of wit
a crossword puzzle on a way to knit

Note on Irish Agriculture

The little fields are our defence
against an age of competence.

1934

Stone and Wood

Stone builds its Wall of China towers its Rome
but touch of wood is friendly sign of home
cradles at birth & when we come to die
staves off clay's traffic & the charge of sky

1933

The Mould

I who have known your body's excellence
by sight by touch by every other sense
have sought a bribe in constant fault to find
a snare of words to net your wayward mind.

My happiest days before you came were spent
with open books & poets eloquent
& when the anxious thought made most of time
devoted to the discipline of wine
my answer was By gentle martyrdom
the spirit gathers strength. The use will come.
So now I know the use my wit foretold
& how the passion in the steady mould

1933

The Crucified

Now God is in the rock & thorn
 but if I seek him there he flies
 and is perpetually reborn
 in skylarks' song & rabbits' eyes

But these are shy at my approach
 scale out of sight, take earth to hide.
 The only god that I can touch
 is Christ whom I have crucified.

1933

Refusal

I cannot such the craft that I have learned
 the masters follow quiet candles burn
 make melody of Marx & pylon pride
 for tractor will not turn aside
 nor let the lark go by without a song
 because the city squares are shrill with wrong.

Let those who will pen stiff steelgutted verse
 make amperc lyrics & adjust their gears
 with oily fist & greasy overall
 the sea a cliff a gannets' call
 still seem to me more worth
 my brief attention on this cooling earth

1933.

These are my hills & I am known
 To every tossing wisp of air
 To every gull adversely blown
 & rocking tree budthick or bare
 These are my hills & I am known
 As comrade to each stream & stone

These are my hills. I ask no rent
 Of stubborn clod or naked tree
 I only go the way he went
 Who once was wise & kind to me
 These were his hills. I make them mine
 By magic of his rod a sign.

Let peace be on me with a soothing hand
 here at the high noon & the prime of day
 Let us but creature cry across the land
 But kestrel dreaming pass above his prey

Let not my drowsy fancy move beyond
 The sparrow in the way spelling rain
 The meadow sweet unstirred above the pond
 The glittering apples in the sunlit lane

Be still unresting murmur of the sea
 or far unbridling as the streamlet flows
 I must not break from my still reverie
 until some blundering bee shall rock this rose

Coronach

Pipes that cries thro the dreams of my boyhood
 out of the bindings with golden letters
 calling the broadswords over the border
 summoning clarsmen to ride or to war
 Where is the music now crying & crying
 over the lochs & glens in the twilight
 as the horn front of the dead bracken quivers
 Pitlochry of Donal, Lochaber no more.

I turned my touch to Campion
 & fingers thro his Book of Ayres
 the griefs of his orphelin
 his madrigals' remote despairs
 move not at all or scarce less move
 my eager heart it was so possest
 by such complexities of love
 as tremble in your gentle breast

35

Caesar and Solomon
imperial & wise
both are now gone
with their sonorous lies
but Helen Dido burning
Naevius the tall Irish green
gaze in unbladdered eyes
between and between
a few red heads turning & turning

I stalked & reprobated planned
I praised where it was due
I tried to understand
the scrambled modern crew
til with the years I grew
- a stranger in the land

and now I turn within
& find in my own heart
the peace I longed to win
that armors me apart,
making my private art
my lonely discipline

I cannot make a song tonight
 The words are numb my wits are dull
 I strike a cancel what I write
 and yet my days are no less full
 of thought affection and delight
 Then when of old my singing heart
 achieves the ecstasy of art.

And if I make another song
 with rhythm to stanch the flow of time
 reverberant as a beaten gong
 and rich as an forgotten wine
 To whom then should the grace belong
 save unto her whose gestures give
 mute evidence whereby men live?

Since yesterday
 The sun returns with power
 plays down his molten vapor here by here
 scorching the dry face plucking from the bones
 all supple strength as in a tideless bay
 weed heavy water flops against hot stones

Sky Lark

The rimes begin to flow
 mind insulated long
 under constricting snow.
 of pitiless event
 Junds thaw now eloquent
 as any summer song
 the ice but grinds a break
 and gall berp echo wakes.

Today at noon oppress'd
 by the cold fate of men
 between two showers I pass
 oblivious of the sun
 at the clear light mist sky
 above the trodden lane
 of stones and rutted clay
 to where the stream runs brown

Then sudden on my thought
 troubled a vague with dread
 intended distant note
 of long forgotten bird:
 a high & climbing lark
 took song up as he rose
 as he tried to make
 tune of uncertain skies

Epithalamium

O who will share with me
 The traffic of my heart
 The stripping of the tree
 The frost that splits apart
 The winds that rage the boughs
 The snow that breaks the branch
 dry seasons' mourns
 night's sable avalanche
 cold dawn the sun at noon
 by cloud unreckon'd blurd
 rain at the harvest moon
 a lift of larks unheard?

Yet for her comfort there
 shall sometimes fall a root
 the high stars of the air
 upon her rainhill breast

What have I lost for love
 what merely laid aside?
 And that were loss enough
 if loving I had died
 And since I daily die
 it is a certain loss.
 Not twice shall you or I
 the selfsame water cross.
 Some moments I had spent
 in learning sky & earth
 twelve seasons' discontent
 maybe a death or birth -
 But these are gone. Whether
 complaining that the stream
 made never stay or trace
 to mirror the old dream?

Arts' Dipped Riddle

The time be blocked in colored squares
and space - a greasy fingerprint
perpetually rat ridelled stairs
stir under me with shrill cracks' tint

So I know well the sick with space
and dizzy on the ropeswing void
a blindman heard men praise a face
and beauty's endlessly betrayed.

Hoot

Set the tall white candles burning
^{like}
bring fine linen from the closet
let the table gleam with silver
when Lord Love shall be thy guest.

Bat the door push to in silence
draw the gusty curtains thin
speak no word above a whisper
when Queen Snow would come in . him

Take no thought of lighted window
lay no table sweep no floor
when that old blind beggar fortune
taps the pavement to thy door

Values

There is no wind to shake the trees
 yet leaves break off a tumble down
 and reach the earth by light degrees
 losmolder there is red a brown

They gyver round about my head
 a clutch at little twigs a cling
 they fall & hisp beneath my head
 their green conspiracy of spring

When on the banks of winter trees strip bare
 yet dread the plunge a huddle shivering
 I judge each gesture with a critic's care
 nor prophesy a subterranean spring

Each season is enough. Tomorrow's thought
 will shelter today's impelled retinue
 A glint of sun on streaming branches caught
 is now a ever work just that to you.

Providence

White roses shatter
overblown
at the touch of a
little wind unknown

Yet the same wind
passes and only stirs
the tall dark green
perpetual ferns

New Moon

I turned my penny in my pocket
when I saw the thin moon rise
with me foreside hearth a comfort
sunny mornings starry skies

stood with open mouth & pondered
til the sky was left behind
for thought cheating me expanded
took in all of humankind

Practical Mysticism

Gaze at a fire til it grow cold a jar;
 look at the moon til she rush hot & near
 Then suddenly space widens & you are
 naked & lonely on a tumbling star
 your throat sore bruised by thin hands of fear

Look at a tree climb each bent twig in thought
 deep mole-like with the twistings of each root
 Then suddenly the earth & stars are caught
 in a live ^{net} & in one pattern wrought
 till god & you are one with seed & fruit

The living done these things go back to men
 live quietly the sequence of your days
 speak not of this a whisper only when
 the pulse known folk who will not come open
 demand your comfort in their secret ways?

Young girls alone are lovely
 thin saplings in the wind
 the grace of each young body
 brings spring into my mind

Their faces as little bodies
 heal up the hurt of time
 til old immortal ladies
 walk forth again in mine

Nettles of Offence

One has a fair body
and one a lovely face
and I love each because of this
because of their high grace
Each in her love for me
pluck nettles of offence
while one lies robed in flame one is
shod with impudence .

Pour Hélène : P. Ronsard

When you are very old by candle glow
spinning beside the fire with wearied brain
that rings & sings to many a memory strain
remember how I praised you long ago .
And then your servant drowsily & slow
who dozes at her work will wake again
at my forgotten name & that refrain
wherein it for you I wrought Time's overthrow .

I shall be deep in clay a misty mirth
neath myrtle shadows taking my repose
while you that couch beside the flickering grate
will cry against your scorn for my young fault
Gather today life's eve fading rose
Believe me Love tomorrow is too late .

We have stood too long at corners shouting Come
to the dull hungry thousands shuffling by.

The count is over. Let us then go home.
The people do not want us. let them die.

Let us go home. Are there not pleasant joys
in comfortable places love and song.
and we may lose the still for such desires
at windy corners if we stand too long.

Let us go home. For never in our days
shall we behold the hope we battled for
There will be other men and wiser ways
to win the final battle of this war

Let us go home. And if at any time
men press for onset let them read this rime

What troubled fancy of what tortured brain
is mottled in the fabric of the sky?
Who dreamt of trees a night then hurriedly
in the cold drizzle of primeval rain?
When rocks bore crystals who endured the pain?
When coral blossomed who was standing by?
And what great ^{starry} heart lake was jarrow dry
to flood the raw floor of the moonlit main?

The hill & sea are murmurous of life
Their muffled voices each interpreter
We feel but cannot say how sways its strife
nor can we tell when times vast bodies stir
if one is victor shouting from the field
or a spent warrior moaning on his shield

Pathetic Fallacy

I who to save the bruising of my mind
 have tempered for my use a bitter tongue
 and wear a cynic visor, now I find
 men grab their hills & keep them ^{steamy} bows
 when I approach.

So each encounter is
 a nervous scrutiny - a lighted lamp
 to mark my features after; enemies
 upon each bridge: my path an armed camp

Should I have more wisely had I gone
 timidly thro' the streets unarmed afraid
 and shrinking from the threatened fist or stone?
 Wond my bare mind perpetually betrayed
 have dwindled in its ardor a torrid cold
 as now to junc's leaf's or sunset's gold?

I have known men who carried to the end
 as shining moment in their dusty years
 a sea spread out just round a white road's bend
 or concreate crying thro' the moon's light spears

a tree that toppt the window on a field
 rich with red nettle & te flowering horn
 a flight of pigeons when the church bells peal'd
 a field of clover on a field of corn.

Am I then foolish that I put in verse
 (Even that's demodes) these that I have known
 because the tedious fashion of the time
 rates steel & concrete over leaf & bone
 and points for praise in sunny countryside
 to hangin's shadow or a pylons stride

Walk slowly in the sunlight while you can
draw down the narrowing streams of life about
for surely what gives vigor to a flower
must be of nurture to the heart of man.

Walk slowly: do not break the pulsing plan
with jerks of thought. We growt unsheathed here
from spring's green offer to warm autumn's down
haste in a ripening rays un hurried plan

Too soon the song will sound. The whining clocks
shake tower and temper over all the land:
and rancous voices frighten the slow flocks
or students, with glove insulated hand
score the green sunlit fields at flash command
with screeching steel or roar of blasted rocks.

31/7

Mon 2.30

10/1k sun 2.30

