

POEMS

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1929-30

920

POEMS

[over 5,000 lines]

by

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December 1928 - December 1930.

Μνάσασθαί τινά φάμι καὶ ὕστερον ἄμμεων.
(Sappho)

Prelude and Promise

2
22nd December '28

I thought in wordy elegance
to match the masters of old song;
but broiderd trappings of Romance
tangle my tread and are too long.

I therefore seek the naked phrase
the ribbed word, thought's skeleton.
Thus after many tedious days
my task is only half begun.

Lyric (Theobald)

But no thy heart's not mine
tis thine alone ...
Nor is mine thine
When all is said and done.

You till the end of Time
are ever you:
a simple rhyme
forgotten tho' tis true.

I never knew why it is,
The facts remain:
Come, love, one kiss
And I am you again

22nd Dec

Faith! Am I faithless after all
that you should dub me infidel
since neither Pope nor Cardinal
can threaten me with dread of Hell,

When in the shoddy host I see
the splendid heirs of time's new dawn,
instead of mean streets' beggary
a greater joy than Babylon.

Battles

The squares that stood at Waterloo,
the charge that took the guns ...
we love their memory ... yet 'tis true
we have lost battles more than once!

Remember then this Waterloo
and Balaklava, boy!
But do not as the Gentiles do
forget Majuba, Fontenoy!

22nd Dec 4

Trees

The stars in heaven's tapestry
shook like loose leaves in autumn wind
when that ape dropt from his high tree
and found the earth more to his mind

Thro' countless ages, ungod the plan:
again stars shook like lights at sea
when that surprising brave young man
went back at last to his stark tree.

26th

Legionary's Songs I

Grain galleys slow from Carthage far,
triremes from purple Tyre,
low brown-sailed fishing vessels are
gone in the sunset's fire;

A fighting barge with banneret,
oars flashing in the foam,
but never comes the troopship yet
to carry us to Rome

Barricade

God knows for me the barricade
seems a brave lovely way to die.
But Christ these people are afraid.
They will not even raise a cry!

They stand with shoulders running blood
beneath the lash of circumstance
... firm-footed in eternal mud
like Atlas frozen in a trance.

A hurt to me is quick repaid
I flame on instant, blow for blow:
had they been such the barricade
had spanned the mean streets long ago

26th December

4 Legionary's Songs II

I marched away with Caesar,
I left my love at home
I marched away with Caesar
to conquer Gaul for Rome.

Today the legions gather,
the battle is arrayed.
Tomorrow I and Caesar
will draw the shining blade.

Then, sweetheart, we will sheath it,
the victory is for Rome:
and I shall come with Caesar
lootladen laughing home.

29th December 1928.

III

My curse I lay on Egypt
and the low banks of the Nile,
the camels and the pyramids,
the stork, the crocodile,
and that beast in the desert
with the woman's face and smile.

For I served, a lad, with Pompey,
saw the eastern monarchs fall
and I trudged the roads with Caesar
when we fought and mastered Gaul -
an Antony commanded me
to sentinel his hall

But tho' I loved my masters
his Egypt stung the Thrace:
and Caesar died distracted
and she murdered Antony...
while great Pompey fell before her
by the Nile's dark estuary.

December 29th.

The River

I never see the river when the barges slip and glide
across the shining mudbank at the ebbing of the tide
but I think I hear the great seas crash against a steelship's side.
I never cross the trembling bridge when workers homeward flow
and lights far down the empty wharves more seaward swinging slow
but the heart within me hurries to the banks where whalers go.
I never in the morning, when the river's streaked with gold,
walk slowly up the towpath as the water ripples cold
but I feel the bitter pity boys grow up and men grow old.

Conventions 2nd January 1929

The shining Greeks were chiseled white stone, Tristan and Arthur dented tin,
Isoude and Jennifer were webs of tapestry, timeworn and thin.....

O Rome was brass and Egypt sand, the Argo but a weedgreen log....
The wind's more living and the mist that trails its shroud across the bog.

Christmas 2nd January.

I like to think of Bethlehem
a snowy tinsel calendar
when midnight voices sang to them,
and kings came bidden by a star.

That Christmas day broke dark with rain
and cold wind gusts blew signboards down
who knows? If Christ should come again
it would be so in this bleak town.

2nd January 1929

I

There might be time to weave and ravel lays
 and starga love in tapestried Romance.
 There should be time to tramp the roads of France
 and Flanders in the yellow harvest days.
 And time indeed before great things to praise
 old beauty with an honorable glance.
 ... O now you can but do these things by chance
 by lucky birth or devious crooked ways.

We must line in the rain to get our bread,
 or rise up early in the streaky light
 to hurry off to factory, shop or mill.
 And when your finish ... time to go to bed
 so sudden comes the cold and gloomy night
 where you may sleep and even dream until

when I am old my heart will open wide
 and take all in for love and sympathy -
 I'll understand the goodness that must be
 even in the Jews that saw Christ crucified...
 exoneration... pity side by side ...

I'll sit and hear rich misers talk to me ...
 And business men and preachers I will see
 to be more human since my young ^{late} died

That's for the future... but for this hard now,
 no sympathy, no tolerance for wrong,
 no splendid breadth of spirit and of mind;
 For beggars shuffle snuffing thro' the snow
 and horse-drover hawkers by the kerb are lined
 For these my pity spreads storings in song

4th January

fog

Frost is a lovely thing. But give me fog
 when men grow bigger than themselves and stride
 like giants down immaterial woven streets
 and lamps are stars ^{strays from the galaxy} (in close proximity)
 and the sharp noises of the ^{traffic streets} (trafficking)
 are dulled into a roar on hidden coasts.

Manhood means loss of glamor, of romance:
 (behind no corner peers adventure's head.)
 no dragons sleep in caves behind ^{the town} (the hill,)
 and tall old houses are inhabited
 by ordinary folk that ^{buy} (eat) and ^{sell} (drink)
 But with the fog ... the other side the street
 becomes remote, mysterious afar ...
 and every crossing is Columbia.
 and every corner is Tibet ... Cathay ..

And when it lifts the old familiar things
 look kind and lovely like a mother's face,
 and deep relief strokes the bewildered mind,
 and joy springs back a fountain to the heart.

9 ✓ Two Sonnets

January

For certain subscribers to the miners fund

III

O you are kind & lavish with your pence.
You answer these appeals most handsomely:
and for awhile are happy to agree
in this support to broadcast eloquence.
The season's talk of brotherhood, good sense,
gladdens your hearts as you sit down to tea
or gobble turkey... pudding... as for me
God knows I hate your very insolence.

Is it today our shoes begin to leak?
Is it tonight our grates are bare & cold?
Is it just now? or only just this week?
No curse you! we have known these things of old.
This charity shall not wipe out your wrong
when dawn breaks Larkfield with the worker's song

To a Certain Newspaper Magnate

IV

You blaid at us from columns full of hate
and shattered lies, imaginings obscene,
about us in your papers, nosing keen
you swift rebellion, overthrow of state
in the drab thronging at the workhouse gate
of our grey saint battalions ragged, lean
but yesterday... O surely you had been
no fit apostle this goodwill to prate.

Our pennies built your fortunes, made your name,
and gave you yachts & villas & cigars
O noble Lord that plays the liberal game
and scatters largesse numerous as the stars.
Does not your petty soul for very shame
shrink from the dread of white-hot prison bars?

17th Jan.

10

Cushenmourne

When I went along the poplar road to sunsick Srinagar
my heart on Karakorum, but my mind in the bazaar,
old Cushenmourne of my fathers seem'd mean and very far.

But sitting by the turf fire and musing quiet alone
till the clay pipe in my hands dies out and turns as cold as stone
'tis little I value the Indies being back among my own

16th Jan Election aftermath

The torchlights flaid, the brassband blaid, we bore the victor home
along the street our thudding feet sounded like rough surf foam.

The old at last lost in the past: the new day breaks out clear.
The worker's friend has gain'd his end: there is no more to fear.

A year ago... the motto tread slow... still workless in the street
I turn away and curse today ~~we won that weak~~ defeat
that victory proved

I Lyric's

O merry maid I prithee smile
cast forth thy hoarded store of pearls
that I remember for a while
the faces of long vanished girls

II 18th

A white linen bed and bacon and bread
when Johnny comes home from the war
and flags in the street, a new son to meet
when Johnny comes home from the war.

A postman now! a letter I own
from Johnny that out in the war
and what does it say ... O some other day
your daddy'll come home from the war

IV 22nd Jan.

Late is the even for maids afield maids afield and dangerous their journeys.
Pray that your heart be a golden shield when fays fly forth for their toonays.
Else they will take you, steal you away steal you away, where thou shalt be ever a stranger
O maidens del' fair delight in the day but shun the late midnight's dark danger.

18th January

O merry maid I pray we kiss
tho' I am old and rich and grey
that I recall once what I miss
of those dead joys of yesterday

III 22nd Jan

The lark is up, the roses' cup
is brimmed with the dew of heaven
Oe thy bright eyes dear maiden rise
for the sun's been up since seven

Near from the street the busy feet
of milkmaids to their dairies!
And shalt thou stay till lubberday
hath frightened all the fairies?

(16th Jan)

Frosty Age

The cold today was more intense
for stony frost i' the shade lay white
and icicles along the fence
shone silvershined in the light.

The grass grew razor edged and keen,
dusted with opal, pearl, and grey;
its fresh warm artistries of green
were strangely covered, hid away.

The trees put forth a foolish look
ashamed to be so caught and bound:
no breath the slightest fibre shook.
The air was frozen as the ground.

So thought I age will seize on me,
will petrify and pinion,
and I shall seem a foolish tree
caught in the frost one winter dawn.

Places (16th Jan)

O one may make a ballad here
of Dublin and the shade through'd street...
the lords and ladies once so fair...
and shatter'd Connolly's near defeat.

And one may make a lyric light
of Belfast and the teeming slips,
the glowing windows in the night,
the swinging lamps of seabound ships.

But I shall shun these famous places
where dull traffics growl and roar
to sing of dear longloved faces -
Castledawson, money more.

For sin larkes in the Liffey's slime,
and wry slinks by the Lagan's shore,
but joy shall fill you any time
in Castledawson money more

A morning moment (17-18th Jan)

Frost on the earth, and in the clefts of trees
 elbows of snow that drifted from the west:
 slow frail smoke from a dozen cottages
 that snugly hug the valley's curve and crest:
 grey shadowy lines that rise from hoarstiff grass
 stare frozenly upon me as I pass

Vengeance (Jan 1912)

He smote him with his glove and rode away; the ostlers jeered, nudged, and laught aloud
 but no word did the whitefact horseman say... he turned with thoughtful eyes and left the crowd.

At Marston moor they met, these two again, 'mid din of battle and dull cannonade
 high tumult and the shouting of the men... and one was hatless, with a broken blade
 and useless spurs for his grey horse was dead shot under him in thickest of the fight.
 The white fact man rode up to him and said "O Cavalier has thou forgot that night,
 the glove, the insult, and the deadly lie?" The cavalier looked down and turned away
 and spoke no word. Then soldier so here I... then take this horse Cromwell has won the day

29th

Trees creak their spars
 in gusty sleet:
 under bright stars
 weak new lambs bleat.

The year's young cry
 is faint and thin....
 right frostily
 cloth spring begin.

30th.

O Give me the wind and the rain
 dew and the heat o' the sun
 and surely I shall not complain
 when my breathing space is done.

Then when I sleep in the grave
 may brambles and briars overgrow
 This only one boon shall I crave
 in winter a mantle of snow

Irishman

30th

Cleopatra dead and famous,
 wanton Helen bone of Greece,
 rise up never now to shame us
 in our pitiable peace.

Wars we know and battle glories
 wag'd for colonies and spoil...
 Troy and Pompey are dull stories
 to the lords that fight for oil.

30th

Time blows sand in Pompey's teeth
 bleaches Caesar's scattered bones
 for great nations sleep beneath
 shattered walls and broken stones

When the rain and frost and snow
 work their will on body and brain
 what shall later poets know
 that outlasts the wind and rain?

Wishman
30th

noon in an English County
we scatter the grazing flocks.
God bless the redcoat riders
God help the hunted fox.

Moonlight in Monte Carlo
Daybreak on Matterhorn ...
God bless the English tourists,
God help the gutterborn

30th

I stood on hills against the sky:
the stars came out: the moon sank down
they glittered thick and frostily
above the little smoky town.

O meeting place of God and man
O moon I sang, O Sky, O Night
yet hurriedly I turned and ran
to greet one little window's light!

30th

Clasp hands and kiss, yet ever know
time rusts away and thou shalt go ...
So shalt thou true proportion give
to every hour wherein men live.

Thy chastest spirit must be taught
to shun the love that brings to naught
an edifice of weary years
by thoughtless embrace, bitter tears.

When this is so then there will be
no pity spent on Antony.

30th

Narcissus narcissus
in the pool
look and behold how
beautiful

may love not see
thy lovely eyes
enchant me deeper
by their lies

30th

O see the white moon founder in the tide
a chill wind stirs within the leafless boughs.
There was a faint moon when the red day died
but no wind shook the crow's high windy house.

When our love dies, as mortal it must die,
let no breath blow upon our burning eyes.
For there was no wind when our hearts were high
save one that bore us blossoms and birdscories.

30th

"Helen" may summon up the heroes old,
Hector and Paris and the tumbling seas
yet skills not to empicture Midas' gold,
nor Plato and the poisoned Socrates.

But Christ thy name strikes deeper chords of song
in my strung mind than these words of romance.
One syllable hounds up Lince's bitter wrong,
the torches, Judas, and the Roman lance.

30th 16

O to die unsatisfied
bitterhearted, discontent,
so to stagger to Christ's side
in the ragged regiment ...

Let attained desire be sweet,
sweet it is but for a day ...
but the nail-torn hands and feet
burn and bleed and ache always

30th

The song to the Sengier
the sword to the sheath
let the living not linger
anigh to grim death.

Lince's short for the living.
'Tis long since the dawn
yet the battle and striving
will never be done

30~~th~~

I left the country when a boy
 where corn grows, skylark sings ...
 It seems the final end to joy
 but we get used to things

The city's wrongs sting me to fight
 'genst millionaires and kings
 I thought I'd never leave the light
 but we get used to things

17th - 18th Feb.

Hardbuffeted vanguard of Spring
 so shattered by the bitter frost
 give over your green skirmishing
 and count this reconnoitre lost.

You can afford to bide your time
 success is certain ... even I
 forget awhile satiric rime
 and count the buds against the sky.

31st

O moon of carved ivory
 thy stolen light is faint and cold:
 the harvest moon in Arcady
 is passionate with love, and gold

O could we turn to Arcady,
 and leave the hurried strife for gold,
 to see the moon caught in a tree,
 hear lovers laughing in the wood.

May mock me not with legends old
 but lend thy aid and thou shalt see
 re-glimmering the age of gold
 when all the earth is Arcady

Jan 16

Ancient Lovers

The lips of shrunken dusty ladies are
 shriveld and do not bud a burst with love
 or bloom with lust to ache against your mouth
 as once they did when you were young and fair.

The slender hands that petal-pale put out
 to drift like blossoms on the azure lake
 are knuckled now and knotty and their rings
 make ridgy gold carbuncles ... scaly sores ...

Their breasts that heaved and swung within the dance,
 and glob'd apart to rest a lover's face,
 are hanging sapless, dry, coarse wither'd skin,
 like bats' wings or spendthrift's money bags.

Their loveliness of ankle, foot, and knee,
 that was like spring among the silver birches,
 is gone, and what's left shrinks and shakes behind
 moth-eaten tapestries of their old loves.

Sonnet V

I saw a man die for his native place
 with gladness in his eyes with joy not dread.
 The lovely glen had been inhabited
 since time dawn'd by grey fathers of his race.
 Our aeroplanes pass'd over, and no trace
 was left erect of household or of shed.
 We buried him and tribesmen like him dead
 because of this rare spiritual grace.

To some folk politics are but the noise
 far down the street of useless shooting men
 who seek advancement... entrance to the den
 of thieves. To others 'tis a game of boys
 who play in blindness with their foolish toys
 Some seek to alter time by stroke of pen:
 but who can buy us Eden back again
 or rear new Rome, or Carthage, or Troy.

He was an Afghan, bandit, menace to
 etcetera - you read the daily press
 and yet God knows I praise him heartily
 For I would never have the heart to do
 such flaming deeds for native grass and sky
 tho' it surpasses his in loveliness.

But I being young are with the young in this
 tho' time a age may turn my heart away
 I love to hear the catcalls and the hiss,
 the hoots, applause, the crowd's enraged sway.
 And sometimes when my weekly tasks are
 done

I walk among the hills with dog and gun

Lyric on a Rainy Night
 O the sleet and rain blow over
 and the wind moans in the firs:
 tho' the sheep are under cover
 yet the old dog blinks and stirs:
 for a night like this his master
 took his lantern, disappeared;
 memory still of that disaster
 shakes tears down the grandsire's beard.

Dido, Helen, both knew Troy,
 Troy in flames and Troy a tale.
 Each lov'd once a Trojan boy
 yet their love was no avail.

Dido on the flaming pyre
 won more by her Spartan end
 for Prince Paris's desire
 liv'd to call the Greek her friend.

Song o' the Northland.
 D'ya never meet Eskimo Joe?

I never go thru the snow
 without a thought for Eskimo.
 He bring me in, frozen, nigh dead,
 like a wooden log, on a broken sled...
 He shot ten wolves and built three fires
 an' tied me on with harness wires...
 At Simpson's Post he knock'd the door
 carried me in, and left once more
 to bring back Jack from the trapper's hut...
 never seen after the big door shut...
 never a trace, an' never a sign
 to mark the grave o' Pal o' mine...

But the Big North holds no better dead
 than the man that dragg'd the broken sled...
 Whenever ya go thru the snow
 give a thought for Eskimo Joe.

Sonnet in a new form

Consolation VIII

Deirdre is dead: there is no more to say...
 I will not keen for her in a lone place.
 No. I will board a ship in Dublin bay
 and sail across the seas to find a face
 that is as lovely, one with subtler grace
 in voice or action, with a kinder way
 of loving men. Why is it these fair dames,
 Deirdre and Helen, Isis, Ashtaroth...
 were cruel in their love, and burnt with flames
 of passion the brave hearts of Greek and Goth?
 O surely somewhere in the teeming earth
 there lives a woman with a glowing mind,
 with lovely looks, dear artistry, deep mirth,
 with fairer face than Deirdre, heart more kind.

Epigram on "Diplomacy"

Feb 25th.

Proud Britain sends her high ambassador
 to gossip with the President - and more
 to hold receptions - treat to hearty dinners
 porkmerchants, Jews, republicans & sinners.

Query and mastery

Why is it I in delicate
 and subtil words so full of art
 say less than calves that thru the gate
 nuzzle the red wheels of a cart?

Yet I can open wide the gate,
 and keep the calves off till it shuts,
 and drive the cart at any rate
 with heavy jolts along the ruts.

7th Feb

Peccavi

A sparrow on the topmost twig
 aswaying in the frosty dawn
 preens out his feathers and looks big
 and brags against oblivion.

A little poet clears his throat
 and reads his verse in drawing rooms
 hoping to hear a trumpet note
 recall him from the Styx' deep glooms

Sonnet on Italian Liberty

Awake Maggino! Garibaldi rise!

They need you in your azure native land..

A brutal Tyrant holds the sole command..

Do you not hear the angry bitter cries

from broken men that gaze on barren skies

and find no hope, no vision that you planned.

A blight is on the place: a bony hand

of cancer, foul with coarse obscenities, and latent lamps glow gold in dawn's

spread over every school and mill and home,

and freedom is a clean forgotten thing,

and virtue wanders lone and desolate.

Nay rise not, brothers, lest your rising bring

a sudden end to tyranny and Rome!

for with Rome gone what's left for men to hate?

Take the hint & stretch my limbs in verse

to be prepared for Spring's first daffodil!

Sonnet on February

I never heard the birds until today -

a sparrow heavy bush, a singing tree,

a sunny morning full of melody

and crocuses that stab the frozen clay.

These seemed to throng the landscape. Far away

the hills were greener than they used to be

when mist drew trailing veils in front of me,

These birds, that were my prisoners & worse,

have now forsaken my crumb windowsill

and here about the sky blithe songs release

to perfect their quick phrasing, slur & trill;

I take the hint & stretch my limbs in verse

to be prepared for Spring's first daffodil!

23 / 18th Feb.

Sonnet

for The Progressive Bookshop,
17 Union Street, Belfast.

This is the mermaid Tavern of Belfast.

The young men come to argue, talk, and show
brave lyrics to their friends. They seek to know
how long the dark conspiracy will last
that holds men chained to wheels imbedded fast
in old Tradition's bog: they speak of blow
and counter blow ... of God ... his beard of snow
and how his cold dominion is past.

Plays in their heads, and visions in their hearts
and logic on their tongues and ready wit ...
You's Jonson with his windy love of arts,
you gentle Shakesper with his infinite

and quiet patience ... Here he goes again
young Marlowe dragging like his Tamburlaine.

19th

A Study of Pale Pinkism.

I never look at beggars in the street
for somehow it is wrong to look well fed
when strolling there with patent leather feet
assured of supper, cigarettes and bed.

Tomorrow I will go to them and say
that they can change this by a thoughtful vote
- And I will bring with me and give away
my last but one New Bondstreet overcoat.

Query.

The garret-poisoned Chatterton,
the coughing Keats, that drowning man
steel minded Scot John Davidson,
what is your place in heaven's plan?

Nay hold your peace who for this rime
put back the volumes on the shelf ...
you cannot even any time
tell what you're here for now yourself.

24

Lyric Recollection.

I stand beside the kerb and dream
in London streets of Skernaghlan,
the startled seagulls wheel and scream,
dark kine rise up at sight of man.

The wind runs thru the hills salt grass
and moans about the Rocking Stone ...
a clanging roar - fire-engines pass
and I in London stand alone

25th Jan. 22nd Feb.

my singing heart is cold as stone
the words jolt from me like blunt prose
for winter and its legends gone
but no spring hints a single rose.

A fallow time in earth and song:
yet spring is busy underground.
and crocuses will thrust their strong
bright blades thro' each frost splintered
mound.

19th February.

25 XI

Faint lamplight splutters.... entries dark as hell &
spew out their filthy harlots on the street.
While gibbering obscene and fetid smells
runs with the cancer'd wind on scabby feet.

Garbage throu' up its reek and sucks beneath
the shoddy boots of ragged passers by ...
A crooked man with cutty in his teeth
adjusts a bandage o'er his ulcerous eye.

Thin shivering children sit on windowsills
too sad to play.

O Christ give me a drum
and I will beat the children to the hills
leaving a fuse to smolder in the slum.

Then we will look back, see a flare flame high,
and hear the town blow up without a sigh.

22nd

XII

26

O Spring will come with swallows to my heart;
blithe birds will throng the thickets of my mind.
Then I will move among the feather'd kind
and in their merry music take my part.

I'll watch the trout in shallows glint and dart;
high heavy walls of hawthorn I will find
that by their fragrance make the old men blind
with heavy thoughts of age's ceaseless smart.

The swallows in my heart will make me glad,
but in my mind the trees, bare, desolate,
unbirded are for memories of you.

For in the Spring you left me. I was sad;
the hawthorn trailed in perfume o'er the gate —
O hawthorn blossom sweet with woe anew.

27) 20th Feb.

XIII

Sex clings about our days and nights indeed.
 Tho' thought and action runs its ebb and flow.
 Down any path of intellect you go
 your view is blinded, it retards your speed
 by its insistent elemental need
 that bids you stop and recognise and know.
 The very plants that in the garden grow
 are pruned with copulation's seed.

A young man sought to sunder this from him.
 He planned a time of ^{tense athletic} marble-bidly strife
 to throw his years, acquit him of its loss.

One sunset so! they nailed him limb by limb
 to that negation of his careful life,
 the phallic emblem of the upright cross.

22nd Feb.

Dusty Roads.

William

"I heard a lark, I heard a thrush,
 I heard a starling on a bush"

I asked him where he had been born :
 he said among the springing corn.
 I asked him what his age might be :
 he said just half that old oak tree.
 I asked him how he earned his meat :
 he said there's turnips, apples, beet,
 and water running, running still,
 from tip to toe every hill
 I asked him where he travelled to :
 he said perhaps the westwind knew...
 I asked him if he'd take me there
 He said you'd be content to share
 the hedge's shelter from the rain,
 the berries in the rutted lane,
 the haystacks in the ghostly moon,
 the dusty highway in the noon,
 the smoky fire, the stars at night,
 the fir trees' moan, the dawn's grey light,

the stolen fowl, the begged-for eggs,
 the steep hills and the weary legs,
 the workhouse ward, the nightly bath,
 the cinders on the prison path,
 the policeman's fist, the steely sleet,
 the newsboys crying in the street?

As I was making up my mind
 he vanished quicker than the wind.
 But in the morning air so still
 I heard him singing down the hill...

"I heard a lark, I heard a thrush,
 I heard a starling on a bush..."

29) Slumstreet Spring

No Spring comes ever to this street
 ... only an old man here once heard
 the snowdropt lambs cry weak and bleat
 beneath cold stars.... The only bird
 these little children ever see
 is a lame hugin owned by one
 who bred great racers once when he
 had a good job, was early done.

But blossoms..... here the conscience makes -
 rants wallflowers and geraniums grow
 in every little window box
 that lines the redbrick houses' row.

23 rd Feb.

I will go out among the hills one day
 when twilight still the morning city shrouds
 where I will tally up and take away
 the quiet conversation of the clouds

Feb. 2nd

B. B. C

The Ex. officer

The Christmas bells across the snow
 swung pictures far within my mind
 I listened to the radio
 and half forgot that I was blind....

The Ex. Private.

The drums banged loud, the fiddles cried
 the saxophones discuss the dance...
 I touched the crutches by my side
 and wept awhile for dead romance....

Both.

But there is comfort, rich increase,
 and life holds much for us to know
 and to the troubled spirit peace
 comes swiftly on the radio

But can clouds tell us more than human ^{wisdom?}
 They must, for you dare not deny that they
 have no entanglement of tubes and larynx
 to twist their words and muddle what they say.

Drama : Sonnet XIV

Halfnaked harlots posture on the stage;
 a syphilitic morn lips a song:
 mechanic men beat music on a fong:
 while two hermaphrodites assume a rage
 and spatter dull obscenities to gauge
 aught as ever worth o' these that throng
 to see the barelimbs and applaud the wrong
 the Theatre inflicts upon our age.

O Shakespeare thou art dead. Is it not well?
 for where's the place that we again may hear
 the airy innocence of Ariel,
 the stormshook temples of the crazy Lear?
 the rage of Brutus? horror of Macbeth?
 no story hast thou O Grave. No Victory, Death!

25th
31

Sonnet 16

Things narrow from the vision of the Greeks
and we have none of Plato's depth since then:
small scholars with an ignorance of men
profound in tones th' absurdities they speak
after their host when they have grown less meek.

Do thou of Hellas number only ten —
go scan the Present for their equals. When
are any found that are not cold and weak?

No Sappho have we, Homer is alone.
What marblecutter matches Phidias?
An Epstein! God be merciful to stone
and let us build our cottages of grass.

Thank Heaven our best playwright when he please
can overtop their Aristophanes.

25th.

32

Blunt taxis like porpoises in the rain;
a steady drizzle from an unseen sky;
the roads like shining stream of oily water,
taut wires that hum and glitter thro' the night:

a kowdry millgirl stoit beneath a lamp
to give her lover a ranksmaid farewell:
while in a doorway further in the shade
a harlot plied her trade with drunken men:
a late shopkeeper creakt his shutters up,
weary with coughing in a draughty store:
a crooked woman with a dripping shawl
begg'd a few pence to buy a bite o' bread,
The lad beside me talkt of Lenin's books,
went on and said he thought perhaps one day
the barnsides woud span these very streets

I saw the harlot tend a wounded man;
the crooked woman handed me a gun;
the millgirl stood and threw a handgrenade;
the coughing shopman fell before my ^{a volley} shot:
the lad beside me planted his red flag

in the field cobbles of the dugout street ...
 A bell rang ... and I shook his grimy hand,
 buttoned my coat, and ^{ran to catch a train} boarded a tramcar,
 and I was not unhappy ... till next day

27th Feb.

For One Keeping a dead Son.

What call have you to be crying against the dark
 after the lovely lad that's lately dead and gone?
 The clouds above are merry, and a happy lark
 in the white of the air is welcoming the dawn.

The taint of your grief is in the rust of the trees,
 the salt of your tears makes bitter the morning air ...
 And I have never the heart to delight in these
 when you bend down in your corner, broken with care.

God knows 'tis a pitiful thing that a man should die
 and him not old and weary of life and breath
 So I cannot harden my heart when mothers cry
 alone in a corner against the shadows of death.

27th Feb.

One who would wed.

From the Brae to the Bridge you will never find a trace
 of a young man or a young woman that court and make love.
 A curse is on this lowland and a blight is on this place
 because of offence to the little folk or the good God above.

The young men walk apart and talk in whistlers alone.

The young girls help their mothers to darn the old men's socks:
 but everyheart in the place is as heavy as stone
 and I might as well look for love in a cairn of cold rocks.

But if the good God made the little apples for us
 and the stars in the dark and the stars in the early light
 surely He made the life of a little house
 and noisy children, a wife, and a high turf fire at night.

Yesterday's thaw had frozen white and hard
 under the cold touch of a dark east wind
 and already I heard the shouts of a driver
 urging his horse rise up from her broken knees,
 for the road before my house was steep and narrow
 and difficult going even with a little frost.

But the time I was ready to catch the townbound tram
 a man was throwing sand and salt from a sack
 over the steellard glaze and into the ruts,
 giving desperate horses a firm underfoot.

So I thought that I might take a similar place
 in the world of men and throw sand on their roads
 that they might not slip again as always before —

but their destination never gave me a thought.

A Rime for a Posy

O Ladye faire thys token take
 For Beauties sake and Friendshipes sake.

O Cavalier I am thy friend
 But Beautie! Nay sire make an Ende.

O Ladye kinde, Friendshipes ys faire
 Soe for Beautie thys doe weare.

1st march

Mullagh dubh

God knows I long for mullagh dubh when the sun strikes the hay
 and fills the lane with a fragrance that never leaves my heart ...
 I call to mind the litte brown arms, the reapers' swing and sway,
 the rest beneath the hedge's shade, the jolt home in the cart.

Tho' summer's hay, and winter's frost, Spring's Hawthorn some now
 for well I mind the snowy trees, the sick scent on the air ...
 I'm sure God sniffs in Heaven of a blossom dusted bough
 and leans with wonder from his Throne lest Eden still be there.

37) 1st March

I.O.M.

That time I spent a week at Peel
I tramped the wistful country round,
for seven days the sea like still
lay shining in a peace profound.

I read my Wordsworth ... talked too much
to silly people that were dense,
to conquire up the lyric touch
and win again the earth's innocence.

But looking back there are few things
that last and quite belong to me;
down Bannule side brook babbling,
in Foxdale a laburnum tree.

1st March

Cushenmore.

Cushenmore is blown and lonely
by the hoarse Atlantic spray
but I'd give my heart if only
I could go there for one day,

go to see the white gulls flying
glitter in the seawashed sun,
go to hear the westwind crying
hear the little rivers run -

go to give an hour for gazing
at the high old hills behind ...
God it's little use in praising
what is only in the mind ...

For the men are dark and cruel,
and the women lie and scold ...
Cushenmore was once a jewel
that was in the age of gold.

1st March

Ballinderry

1

I've never been to Ballinderry ...
never been to Aghalee
where the larks are high and merry
when the blossom's on the tree,
for my feet are ever treading
on the bleak hard Belfast stones
where the sickly city, spreading
builds its walls on dead men's bones.

2

But I heard of Ballinderry,
dreamed as well of Aghalee,
thought of them as far as Kerry,
dreamed they were beyond the sea
till today as I was walking
thru a crashing city street
hearing all the people talking
watching all the passing feet.

38

3

came a bus from Ballinderry,
sidebill mentioned Aghalee -
now you know why I am merry
for tomorrow I will see
in those places spring come over
greening every hill and hill
while the sun, triumphant lover,
spills his wealth of daffodil.

Merul 4th March.

It's unshatterable basis of my faith
is that my faith's a dream ... therefore secure
from the assault and cannority of time ...
I charge ye go & build your faith above
the swirl and eddy in the face of things
For when the time comes that the people rise
and we go down to dust in blank defeat
I shall escape into my tower o' cloud
and there unharmed gaze upon the world.

Elegy on a Music Teacher Lately Deceased.

The notes have died. Thy music room is still: no children chatter at the curtained door
 The air is faintly odorous with old dark polished wood and crumbling paper leaves....
 Dust lies upon the paper flowers that fill the mantelpiece's antique vases four
 The grate is black and cold: the only sound the sigh that silence leaves.

For thou art dead. No more the violin shall scrape to the commendment of thy foot:
 the black piano with its metronome a sepulchre of music left unmade,
 shall never answer to the narrow thin fingers of ivory that now are mute.
 For thou hast left thy home to travel to the land of night and shade.

No triumph more than this small silver cup, ^{with a just triumphful} no vasty scaling of its crags of fame
 no clash of character with famous men, no flaming deed to blaze oblivion.
 To see thy music room ~~was~~ tidied up; to greet a pupil's mother by her name
 O woudest thou live a gen' this futile life beneath another sun?

Life circled thee: thou knewest not what it meant. Thy days were brimmed with quiet harmless things
 So no it seems a pitiable thought that Fate had only this in store for thee....
 Thy eyes were kind: thy heart was innocent: it was not pride that bade thee wear those rings
 Surely the God besought by thee so long and served so ardently.

could have done better. yet I cannot say, for much is misty I desire to know
 and I have taken up, for childhood's sake, and early kindness, and a wish to find
 what wisdom I can win me from thy way, the weaving of this elegy I owe.
 I cannot bid thee wake - an immortality were most unkind.

4th march.

The Spring returns to us:
 the singing birds release
 their lays melodious
 but thou art dead O Pearce.

The blossoms, daffodils
 blow in the fresh wind free
 along the glens and hills:
 thou art dead, Connolly.

4th march.

motif.

The prose of life may run within the bones
 but poetry's the blush on beauty's cheek,
 the wind that winks the hair....

4th march.

Everyman 31-III-1932

a warm spring day - the third of march:
 light grey dawn on the Kassel d larch:
 buds skewing on the scraggy trees:
 and clouds in splendid voyages,
 across a vacant sea of blue.

The grass is bright with breaking thro
 the cleansing moisture of the earth.

But like a gesture of deep mirth
 in small bedraggled garden near
 mall, shabby, sooty, faded, and mean,
 Here stands the spring caught evergreen.

41
4th March

The Feet of the Young Men

I love the keen bright faces of young men,
their hearty handgrips, and their noisy talk
I seem to move among their fathers when
we thought out life in one short morning walk.

But they are dead, their fathers, so that I
am left alone to carry on the tale
of how in summer when the wind was high
we thought life less worth than a bellied sail.

But these young men are not the same to me:
there is a sadness in their very talk
for much has happened since beside the sea
we thought out life in one short morning walk.

The Sword Between.

12th March

The flesh beneath her gown was white
unsullied snow... So quietly
I lay beside her this the night
and felt her knee against my knee.

Her head was on my shoulder laid,
cheek pressed to cheek: her hair still blows
across my mind... Yet gentle maid
as she came to me so she rose

The Negro.

He stood beside the open door
and looked in silence at the sky.
The newspring sunlight flooded over
his negro features timidly.

I daid not speak because I know
he saw tall palm tops in the sun,
and smoke that curled and eddied blue,
and moving figures one by one...

Next day in talk I learnt that he
had first seen light in Liverpool:
his father was an ashantee,
his mother had been beautiful.

42
4th March

Travel Log

one summer holiday I went
to visit Ostend, Brussels, Ghent...
I saw the sailors at the quay,
the high hotels, the sandy sea.
I saw the Bourse, Hotel de Ville
the chefs, the waiters' anxious skill.
A carnival in Ghent, and bells
that rang and jangled miracles,
dogs pulling milk^{carts}, loud sabots
and all the little things that go
to make a picture in a book
or advertise the Tours of Cook.

But after that brimstone time I spent
in visiting Ostend and Ghent
the only things that I can find
to blossom still within my mind:
a swan afloat on a canal
in Bruges, beneath an ivied wall:
a curillon from Bruges' bells
where the ancient stillness dwells:
a slow gaze round the countryside

that opened from the towerstop wide...
and an old nun that needed lace
with an old ivory carved face...
The winding mouse from one high hill
lying lizardlike and still.
And somewhere out near Waterloo
a sunburnt haystackbuilding crew.

19th March

New-Georgian Rhapsody

The fields are green,
and green the trees;
the sky is blue,
cows red and white.

But daffodils
are green and gold
and last year's leaves
are red and gold.

So here I see
no blue or white
save in the sky
or on a cow

43
5th March

The Ancient Wrong

The little birds are clamorous
and eloquent of chatter'd song
but I sat darkly in my house
and hooded on an ancient wrong.

The wind ran laughing thro' the trees
to send the fleecy clouds along
but with my elbows on my knees
I hooded on an ancient wrong.

They called me to the open lands
where nights are starry, days are long
but white face binned in my hands
I hooded on the ancient wrong.

If I could sing as birds do sing
as wind in trees, deep-throated strong,
then it would be a foolish thing
to hood upon an ancient wrong.

5th March

Old Year Goes

I mark the tracks of rabbits in the snow,
a tinkling jet of water chatter'd harsh,
the dark sky blue with little silver stars
and here and there a maddy glow of light
that shew'd me Aldebaran and old Mars ...

A low mist lay upon the frozen marsh
that stretcht its grey length far into the night ...

The village lights blink, blur, wink out and go.

A ^{skew} screech of geese hawks high across the sky,
dogs bark afar, stones fall into the snow,
the old year yawns and turns ago in bed,

the new year comes and very quietly
draws the slow curtains ... and the old year is dead.

In the far city hooders, sirens cry,
a band flares thro' the night the calendar ...
but there's no change in either snow or star

5th March

Soliloquy.

Here is the simple lyric song
of how I met the ancient wrong:
I sallied forth with no defence
save armory of innocence
my only weapon was the sword
of the unutterable word
but in encounter on the field
I lost my estimable shield.
My sword was broken in the blade
but still undaunted, unafraid
I hurried down for many days
the incommunicable ways
till rising thro' a tall cliff's spars
I brusht my forehead on the stars
and saw I knew not where nor whence
the shadow of my innocence -
So it was Christ upon his tree,
the ancient wrong's last victory.

(But every word in this dull song
is laden with the ancient wrong)

13th March

44

Stop any man in any street
and you will hear some dream's defeat.
His accent will grow harsh and strong
because he feels the ancient wrong.
But in your eyes twere best to see
the flame of Splendid mystery

13th

I saw him in the crowded street
a glory deep within his eyes:
the sidewalk shining at his feet
was hewn from golden galaxies.

For all his tatters I could see
amid the dull unseeing throng
heart lit by Splendid mystery,
mind blinded by the ancient wrong.

12th March

Divers Lyrics

1

I used to take my horses
to Ballinasloe
It broke my heart to sell them
but they had to go.

If you've ridden wi' horses
over hill and plain
and watcht the old mares foaling
and mastering pain

you feel it hard to leave them
but they have to go...

Thank God I don't sell horses now
in Ballinasloe

2

O ch the girls that I knew then
were laughy and sweet
there was love in their faces
and pride in their feet.

But the factory was opened:
they work night and day
and are broken and weary
and wearing away

3

Rose Campion, Rose, Heartease
and Love in Idleness
and Love lies bleeding; these
are Loveliness

But lilies, lords and ladies
and Traveller's jogs
bring back the fair bodies
of Carthage and Troy.

Little Tales of the Dark Ages.

1

Northman
Dmas 29

His fingers tangled in his beard,
the old king brooded on his throne;
the little hunchback smirked & leered
and mumbled in a monotone.

The king stood up and clapt his hands:
a slave in satin shuffled in
Ere dark they cried throughout his lands
"The King has thought of a new sin"

2

The robber lay upon the grass
with ivy on his hands and face
The merchants tho they feared to pass
rode quickly on in breathless chase.

For they saw feet stick stiffly down
the undergrowth & deemed it was
perhaps some merchantmen they knew
and robbers lurket deep in the grass

3

Northman

The weary novice thumbed his beads
yawnd gently, blew his candle out
"No doubt the Sacred Icon bleeds
no doubt "he sed agen" no doubt..."

"But then I saw the Priest come out
rubbing a dark stain from his hands...
And there before the shrine devout
a worshipper, still praying, stands..."

4

The Princess in the ivied tower
wept bitterly when they came in...
He struggled with a young man's power...
They clave his helm as it were tin
Their chainshod feet made clangy din.

Today the Princess learns to see
them bear the young man thro the close...
with banners black unburniedly...
One stoit to pluck a bloodred rose
and held it to the deadman's nose

5

The King, with hawk on finger, sat
upon his palfrey in the wood:
he wore no crown, but in his hat
was stuck a feather red as blood.

A peasant girl with empty pail
was singing far among the trees...
The King looked blithely thro' the dale
and gript his mount with stronger knees.

An old man in the beater's ring
gazed sadly at the King and thought
how once he heard his daughter sing
before her body had been bought

6

The Queen lay on her silken bed
the crimson curtains hiding her ...
Before the tenth hour had been sped
the knight beside her did not stir
and at the twelfth hour he was dead.

Then mourn'd the Queen "my love is gone:
The lovely knight no more shall lie
and hold me in his arms till dawn
is startled by the cock's first cry.
my bed shall be as cold as stone

7

The old magician who had made
stars blink, and hands invisible
steal thro' the air... forsook his trade
and liv'd a hermit in a cell
where birds sang in the trees above the well

One night a shadow'd woman came
and speaking quietly at last
told how a youngman's passion's flame
had overcome her... nine moons herst...
"I am the Queen... sell me what skill thou hast"

1

A bush of buds and robins
grey sparrows in the dust —
they hear the spring's young bugle
beneath the frozen crust.

And I am glad they are so
attentive to the Spring
now, I have little time enough
for reconnoitring.

3

The moon above the sea
a sky of darkest blue
and stars ~~that~~ within a tree
and stars that twinkle thro'.

And you so fond of me
and I so fond of you
O stars within a tree
and stars that twinkle thro'

2

I climbed a little tree
and saw the moon at hand
a silver streaky sea,
an inky shadow'd land.

But up above my head
a company of stars
silver and gold and red
I think they call one Mars

19th march

When sun sets on my labors
and stars rise in the trees
I go to see my neighbors
in distant cottages.

Till twelve I hear their chatter
of times and people gone
yet 'tis a weary matter
to woo oblivion.

Alabaster

Her limbs were carven ivory
her lips too full and sensuous ...
God knows she shook the heart of me
with her strong passions' overplus.

She spent her vigor by my side,
she spilt her love about my feet!
Her long hair wip'd till they were dried
O God the odor still is sweet.

I could not chide her when he said,
that Judas fool, rough words and hard ...
In two hours' time I wuld be dead
yet still I smell the spikenard.

Her breasts are rounded, firm and small
her flesh is whiter than a swan ...
I saw her by the waterfall
between slim trees before the dawn
I ran to catch her, kiss her white
and swaying body soft and cool, ...
The sun plung'd golden into sight ...
with scarce a splash she won the pool.
But I shall find her ere the night.
Beside the pool I stand and call ...
for her slim body's soft and white,
her young breasts rounded, firm & small

1915

Inevitability of Naturalness
Love should be like the air we breathe,
our passions even as our lungs -
For to our souls and bodies death
is like a silence after song.

'Tis only when our throats are stop'd
that we begin to think of breath ...
The Love that's analys'd has slept
from skyey heights to bogs beneath.

Seductions

I

We lay beneath a stack's cool shade
and watcht the shadow move ...
And I was but a simple maid
and stranger yet to love.

He read and spoke the sun went down,
and dew made sweet the hay ...
And tho' my neck and arms were brown
my breast was white as whey ...

The moon came up behind the trees
and cast a deeper shade ...
He rose and left me on my knees,
no more a simple maid.

1915 March

September 1921

One thing that I remember
of nineteen twenty one
the harvest in September,
ripe apples in the sun:

II

My story's simple, little friend
he saw me first beneath a tree
that hugs the wall at garden's end
and I was singing happily ...

In one short summer he was gone
to die for us across the sea ...
I stood in that sunmisty dawn
and kiss'd him neath the same old tree ...

That was but ~~two~~ score years ago
Nay more for you are twenty-three -
The orchard was a blossom's snow
when you were got beneath that tree.

Sweet hay, a girl reclining
in slumber thereupon ...
- a brassy red sun shining
and rumpfelds in the sun.

31
19th March 1929

In Memoriam Eastweek 1916

A woman gave a nation endless fame,
immortalised a city and its prince:
a crafty seaman beat about the world,
was shipwrecked, and enchanted, castaway,
braved dangers on the fringes of the earth:
an old man drunk a poisoned cup of pain
and gestic died while young men stood around
not realising that he died for them:

These three are Greece: there is no more to say ...

But what of Erin, has she not her names
that put a spell upon the hearts of lovers?
The names she has are not of lovely queens,
tho' there were queens as fair as Helen of Troy,
her names were names of simple poet hearts,
of quiet men with visions in their heads
and wonder in their eyes O think of them,
the lonely watchers by the midnight fire
from bold Cuchulain striving with the sea
to those more recent lads whose fame is now
almost forgotten by the shouting town

52
When Easter comes it is my pious task
to call them to minds and hearts of men
lest we forget the vision that they had
and go about the streets unthinkingly
O chloe I will lament because of them
Come let us carve together Gall and Gael
for they were brave and lovely and are dead .
The men that shot them through the stairs of Powers
and have their guns well mounted lest again
young men grow overimpatient, raise their hands
and voices to accuse the pitiless stars.
And what the quiet young men died to bring
has not been brought ... And it is thirteen years
since Connolly and his Brigade marched out
Now Connolly is dead and Plunkett, Pearse,
Macdonagh, Casement, Collins, Griffiths, Ash
and Danell Figgis But let us praise
these names of men who by their flaming deaths
wiped out adulteries of heart and hand
and are among the shining ones on high
When Easter comes it is my pious task
to call them to the minds and dreams of men

19th March.

Sonnet 16

Is there no hope of Helen coming now
to scorch the hearts of men with sudden flames?

No: we will sit and think of her white brow
and murmur slowly hesitant her name.

And round the fire when we have traced her face
and fair white body and her flashing hair
we one by one ~~look~~ each in his flickering place
will nod and fall asleep and dream her there

It is enough that we can sit and think
for if she came a tempest wind would blow
about the earth and scud us to the brink
of space and threaten us with overthrow.

Earth's old, her columns shaken; 'tis enough
in this half ruined temple her name to love.

20th

Let the wind of Heaven blow
about thy spirit's street
and it shall scum the corners
and leave them clean and sweet
as morning air on ~~the~~ mountains
or dew upon the wheat.

20th

O new bud and newer blossom
fresher wind and burnished tree
yet no echo in thy bosom
follows Spring's old mystery.

There is spring each ^{year} returning
making hill and valley new
O the heart of man is yearning
for a Spring within him too

54

20th

In the morning birds were busy
showering the dark with song ...
Larks rose up and in the dizzy
heights spraid out their passion strong

Then the wind by day overtaken
woke and muttered, woke and flew
till the budding trees were shaken
high against a sky of blue.

My head is craz'd with lust.
Lust burns within my bones —
I woud my flesh were dust
under the granite stones.

Lust scores across the skies;
besmirches the white snow
and lust before my eyes
goes ever where I go.

Sonnet 17.

Death never can be justified on earth
 it always leaves a pitiable flaw
 upon the face of time There is no law
 more cruel than this sentence put on birth
 That one who builds a shrine about the hearth
 of some dark simple home shrouded, bleeding raw,
 be dragged away in that harsh creature's claw
 makes life mean but a thing of nothing worth.

And that the strong young men who came to skew
 mankind the clearest, sweetest way to live
 should be tied up and nailed against a cross
 is sure the strangest strand of narrative
 to shan the dusty age's misty fosse
 with its crackblast and raucous trumpet blow.

I went today behind the hills with haversack and gun
 and my two dogs, gruff, shaggy, black, to give them room to run.
 Beside a cairn of hard grey rocks among the whin's new gold ...
 I saw a scut bob into light ... I shot. The rabbit rolled
 over and over then lay still ... The dogs, in tongue-loose chase
 tore straight to where the rabbit lay ... The blood upon its face
 dabbled the white fur with its stain ... its eyes had lost their light ...
 When I take dogs ages to run it will be late at night ...

17th March

Defeat

What's good for sore throats, doctor? mine is skinn'd
 and raw inside from talking in the wind
 and gritty fog for these three noisy weeks.
 God help the agitator chap who speaks
 day in day out! at factory gates, in parks,
 at lamplit corners mid the rowdy larks
 of barefoot urchins round his creaking chair.
 Yes, beaten doctor ... tho not beaten fair -
 One never is then! Is one? What I mean
 is that they smasht my poll by their machine
 of personation, cheating, stealing votes,

25th March

A Poem is an attitude of mind.

The trapeze that it's swingy or's call the form —
The metre is the speed the muscles move.
Someday I'll write a poem that will show
not sinews writhing, muscles bunching up
but a live posture of a soul at peace
with no more motion than a week-old corpse
but bursting with capacity for life ...

The gesture of a man against the sky
but not as Christ was nailed against the sky.
There will be no blood on the shining brow
no nail-tear on the hands, no spear-thrust side
no anguish on the temples or the lips
but calm serenity like mountain peaks
high, passionless in the clear morning air

2515

Sonnet 18

O who is this comes singing from the South
with lutes and psalteries in thin brown hands.
The fairest one with honey canate mouth
and long hair gleaming blackly in broad bands.

Here is live flesh, warm breath and biting teeth
eyes flashing passion, breasts that heave and swing
O god to be like this, sword lacking sheath,
to glitter in the air, to cleave and cling.

But I am passionless, am cold and mute
correct and proper, lust is too antique ...
Yet once I shall lift up a singing lute
and give my soul the gesture of thy neck.

Then I shall blaze across a continent
by very passion rendered innocent.

25th March

57
A Poem is an attitude of mind.
The trapeze that it's swaying on's called the form —
The metre is the speed the muscles move.
Someday I'll write a poem that will show
not sinews writhing, muscles bunching up
but a live posture of a soul at peace
with no more motion than a week-old corpse
but bursting with capacity for life ...

The gesture of a man against the sky
but not as Christ was nailed against the sky.
There will be no blood on the shining brow
no nail-tear on the hands, no spear-thrust side
no anguish on the temples or the lips
but calm serenity like mountain peaks
high, hairless in the clear morning air

25th

28
Sonnet 18

O Who is this comes singing from the South
with lutes and psalteries in thin brown hands.
The fairest one with honey-canate mouth
and long hair gleaming blackly in broad bands.

Here is live flesh, warm breath and biting teeth
eyes flashing passion, breasts that heave and swing
O God be like this, sword lacking sheath,
to glitter in the air, to cleave and cling.

But I am hairless, am cold and mute
correct and proper, but is too antique ...
Yet once I shall lift up a singing lute
and give my soul the gesture of the G. neck.

Then I shall blaze across a continent
by very passion rendered innocent.

59
And tampering with papers ... Husky throats
are useless when one needs to rally men.
The count at night revealed that we were ten
poor flimsy votes behind the other crowd ...

Of course, thanking the officers "I'm proud"
I said "to have so clean a fight, close end.
I trust that we shall meet again my friend"
He's not my friend you know ... A crooked fool
just wise enough to make himself a tool
for wiser men ... However I must not

give over my cold rectitude of thought
in this unseemly gossip lest you think
that I am angry, jealous or'd a drink
too many. Now's the time when I'd like to
sit down and moralise what I've been thro'.

Lulls after fighting should be so employed —

And I must say that truly I enjoyed
the struggle, and the shouting, raucous bands
stump speeches, loud applause and shaken hands
But there's still something better in't than those
a shining truth the heart within you knows —
It's only light that can afford defeat.

I thought so when the crowd along the street
shouldered him high with torches from the booth
but one thing can endure defeat? That's Truth —

Sonnet 19

60
26th March

Life is too mean a thing for poets now.

That's why we all drift back to dusty Troy
.. There is more glamor in tall Helen's brow
than in the shoddy loves we now enjoy.

No man stands up to fling against the sky
a flaming challenge that his lady's face
is far more real than reality,
is far more beautiful than starry space.

Ah God our very sins are mean and sleek
we pry and peek and are adulterers
like lewd old men that read translated Greek
to lick lips at the incest in the verse.

Our literatures but what a school boy scrawls
with bawdy smigger on green urinals.

march

She treads the streets with pride
with pride in step and air
a young man by her side
and she is very fair.

She treads the streets with pride
with pride in step and air...
woud God that I had died
ere I had seen him there.

The sullen I" shode out today
because a wrong lay in my heart
I had fire rotting stacks of hay
a farmer harot me in a cart...
At last I came upon a field
the soil was ridgy rich and brown
and pregnant with a summer's yield
to stuff the bellies of a town
I stood amoment: birds above
frightend by me flew screaming round.
The sky cried out: you have less love
less charity than this low ground

I for the next ten thousand days
shall wander thro the busy ways
shall gather knowledge, love and truth
from careful looking round about
and only spend my thoughtless youth
and only wear away my doubt.

Then after thirty years I'll find
untrodden pastures of the mind
where there has been no ancient wrong
no need for splendid mystery
for all the birds will be in song
and blossom hang from every tree.

The wind from stellar space is cold
her axis turns the earth to dawn
The shining lake is ruffled gold
and peacocks screech across the lawn.
The hungry tramp lifts up his head
shakes out the straws from coat and hat
and leaves his mildew'd musty bed
to little creeping mouse or rat

The Great Black God: the Harlots' God

A harlot that traffit in the town
and slept with seamen yellow and brown
met a blackman, left her carouse
and set up with him in a house.
He lovd her, thought her body fair
dream'd of her snowwhite flesh, gold hair
brought her jewel and precious stones
heeding the slightest of her tones.
Then baby died a little white boy
with thick lips and a face like a toy.

A street gaw stubbed her niggerman
for he belong'd to a rival clan
He lay in his blood on the moonlit street
and heard the scurrying hurry of feet
Stark in the morning they laid him on a slab
to be identified by a drab.

From a bridge where the lamps splash gold
she leapt to the water's rippled cold.
Froht up roughly with bulging eyes

rattle her breasts and rotting thighs.
They laid her stiff in another slab
and jolted on the carcass of a drab.

So much for life: when her heart broke
flesh and its fetters flew from her like smoke.
Shivering chill on the brink of space
she clutched the stars in a frail embrace:
and not a meter hindered her
for the wonder of her face
the life of sin and its leprous sore
stained not the soul of the negro's whore.

At heaven's gate she knelt and sang
but the chanting cherubs louder sang.
Still Peter heard and opened the door
admitting the lonely little whore.
The Jasper sheet, the ruby road
dulled beneath her as she strode
past the Palace of the Holy Ghost
thawed the thronging angelic host.
Till at the great white Throne on high
she knelt and prayed with a bitter cry

She turned to Peter dreaming and a nod
and shouted "old fellow bring out your god"
Fear struck her heart as she went away
with bitter cries she started to pray.
Old withered men with beards long and white
hurried from her brain, vanished in the night.
Pale young men with weary faces and kind
slits thro' the thickets of her mind.
For she remembered her nights of sin
and the grey old men that hurried in
and the tired young men with the burning cheeks
that loved her and lived with her for weeks.
An angel blew a brassy blast ...
Two seraphim stalked proudly past.
The trumpet full of overtones
jerked and shattered on the hard bright stones.
Peter shuffled over to her side
The Temple hostern opened wide
and God came forth with a bow and a nod
a huge thick muscular negro god
flat nose, short hair thick blubber lips
knobby biceps and athletic hips
a loin cloth girt with a golden pin

65
and a tilled crown like gilded tin.

The angel lowered his trumpet and bent
his knees with the stony regiment.

The dead-eyed harlot wept to see
a god in heaven as black as he.

April's Poems

7th

I will live in unshaken towers
with old invulnerable Kings:
and rose cheeked princesses in bowers
will listen to my lute playings.

1st April
Forgotten O Troy are thy glories
none dreams of thy laureless dead
our singers recall but the stories
long told of cold Helen's dear head.

But the lovers who lived in thy city,
the hearts that beat high in thy gate
no more are a theme for man's pity
than Helens that once was in spate.

Lyrics 15th April

If you have a doubt of me
hear the curlew's call
see the grass grow out of me
watch the maggots crawl.

Let it never daunt you then
that I lived and died:
I shall never daunt you then
or mutter by your side.

O frost nipt clay dry stubble
O razor ragged sedge
winds may bend the willows double
but dust lies along the hedge

Rain there was to fill the clover,
there was sun to rip the corn
but the harvest time is over
and the fields are bleak and lorn

66
O I will take a bus again
and go to Ballinacorney
when the wuthorn drifts the foamy lane
and blossoms snow the cherry.

For it was early spring I came
to toil in dust choked city...
and now the hills are all aflame
with gore! It is mine's the pity.

Now the best of him is dust
and the lesser part is clay
tho his brain was blind with dust
driving him a flaming way.

And the best of her lies here
turned to grass roots, turned to mold
Thus our little strivings here
are a simple sentence told.

O I have been agen
to the glen
when trees are green agen
blowing men ...

turn up the road agen
with sharp shawl.
when this tale's told agen
whod be there?

I saw a cripple stop
before a sports gear shop.
what was he gazing at?
a racquet or a bat?
He stood so very still.
I saw a wonder fill
his redrimmed eager eyes.
Perhaps of victories
he won before he got
knocked down or maimed shot.
But he, I said thank god,
admired a fishing rod.

I rose before the clock
whirled up and cleared its throat
far down the hill a cock
flung up its warning note.

and from ten dreaming farms
came answers jet and spurt
just as I pushed my arms
thro the damp sleeves of my shirt

Each poet thinks his lady beautiful.
Yet she is heedless whom I love so well:
her eyes are bright, her lips are soft and cool
but in the kissing of them there is hell.

For when we meet I dream and gaze and think
her soul to be an unscal'd precipice -
but after kissing so I seem to shrink
into a scared man over an abyss.

17th April

Epitaphs
I
Here there lies the Poet Horn
trampled by oblivion.
no one knows where he was born
none can say where he is gone.

II
Beneath this stone the poet Horn
awaits the Revolution morn.

X
III
'neath this stone the Poet Horn
lies with all his lyrics dumb
when the poppies choke the corn
singing he will rise and come.

Are the earth's foundations broken?
Is the journey work of stars
but a byword and a token
that the hand which made them mars?

Is the seedling of disaster
deep within creation's root?
Then is god a crazy master
serenading on a flute.

Is the truth, they deem, is bastard,
foundling crying in the street
yet I know it is not masted
by a thirty year defeat.

For the orphan shall inherit,
when the tumult's done, his crown
and the banners of the spirit
shall fly free in every town.

69
Sonnet 20 17th April

Death of Ramesses: Chamberlain speaks:
He's cold where my hand touches! Pharaoh's dead!
Run not to noise the tidings thro' the town.
This is Seti's darkest hour... the kingly head
lies on its linen pillow left of crown.

It was not thus we saw him ride in state
with high plumes nodding in his jewell'd ear
to meet the high priests at the painted gate
and be annouced servant of a star.

Yet he was proud. And now his hands are cold
his eyes that flash'd their oracles are blind —
Here slaves throw in these heavy rings of gold
and bring what beads your searching hands may find.

Pride must be humbled... and deep shame it were
to bury these fair gems in sepulchre.

70
16 or 17th April. Home Shanty man

It's good to taste the tangy air and feel your temples cool
upon the high decks of a ship when sails are bellied full.
It's good to feedst your eyes upon the palm trees and the way
the white town and the minarets, the shipping in the bay.
It's good to hear the combers crash upon a reef afar
and see the mast jag at the moon and bob beneath a star.
But better far to smell the hay across the thinline foam
and see the winking cottage lights upon the hull at home.

11th

Consecration

O my seeds have been within thee, sap has stir'd with blow for blow
and my roots dig deep into thy heart, thou canst not bid me go.

I am glory, honor, laughter, pity, horror, and defeat
I am Pears upon the barricade and morris in the street.

I am wonder, splendor, beauty, and illimitable loss,
James Connolly tied to his chair and Christ upon his cross.

71
15th April

X

O little words of meaning scant
O feeble phrases drab and dull
how shall I keep my covenant
and make men love the beautiful?

I have no skill in curve or line;
I never knew the craft of stone.
my tongue is only loose in wine:
my accents shill men to the bone.

To ye O little words I turn
herding and driving you to pen
till o'er some hilly haze ye burn
and bring the beautiful to men.

By hills o' Down betrays
into the town ages ...
my old bones will be laid
in some lone Antrim glen

22nd

Born in an Antrim glen
I went to work in town
among the dusty men
that hurry up and down.

When I had made some gold
I left the dusty town
to live where gently rolled
the slow soft hills of Down

When my small gold was done
I left the hills of Down
where little brooklets run
to labour in the town

22nd

Be dumb O heart be dumb
and break no heart o break
lest she should hear and come
and find me not awake.

And find me not awake
to face the dawn and her.
O heart be dumb and break
so she shall never stir

The sun was high, the sky was blue.
Spring laden O the wind was sweet
I found but little left to do
so I walked gaily, down the street.

"The world is good and Browning's true"
The words beat rhythmic as my feet.
Then I looked round. Before I knew
a beggar whined along the street.

22nd

And do you think that when this body's laid
under the earth to nurture grass and tree
I will end there ... And afterlife will be
a rusting merely of the sheathed blade?

My friend the bitter years hint you are wrong
for when a living thing has ceased to move
somewhere, I think, around us it will prove
intangible as dawn or skylark's song

'Twas yesterday I passed along
saw lake and trees and blossoms spring
I shall remember this in song
I said that lads to come will sing.

Last night the blossoms and the trees
rifled my mind in search of words -
Today they drone like anxious bees
tomorrow they'll be singing birds

73
22nd. Lament of Gilgamesh - a Fragment.

Thus Gilgamesh began his hoarse lament
beside the sandy river's drear extent,
old hero he of Babylon and prince
known to the gods and feared by them long since,
seeking for Eabani, mate in war
companion 'neath many a desolate star
who with him slew the Bull of Heaven sent
by Ashtaroth for his harsh punishment
But lost at last!

"O Broken I will rise
and hurry after dark uncertainties
till I have ~~seen~~ caught a gleam across the dawn
thy war cry deep exultant, farther on,
till I shall see on the high peaks of snow
blood drip of leopards stricken from thy bow —

74
24th

A warm wind blew the currant scent
from the gay hedges down the lane -
It had been snowing when I went
in sultry hurry to the train.

But that was six long months ago
my hate had thawed and I was come
in penance ... now the only snow
was on the cherry and the plum

25th

O when I rose to wash my face
the sun was up as early
I saw the little white clouds chase
their shadows o'er the barley

I tiptoed down the creaking stairs
the house slept 'twas so early ...
to catch the shadows unawares
that scurried o'er the barley

24th

I met him in a stuffy hall
when hoarse men batted at the stars
he leant against the streaming wall
his bleak face pocked with lines and scars.

He spoke me civil .. told of days
in slengy jargon when he went
beneath the gangy stinging rays
across a desert continent.

Now he is dead: his chest was weak
I walked behind the black draft hearse;
the rain was heavy. Could he speak
his curse this crazy universe.

But matter turns .. I heard her say
"Och darlin sure tis early
but wake yer da; he goes the day
break the bearded barley

25th

Hodge X

I saw him at the fair... I had been told
the tall man had an understanding heart
for tenderly he drove the sheep to fold
or watcht the stars from frosty hills apart...

My friend had said: "And he moreover is
close to the soil, that spring of human good.
He knows the seasons... Surely cottages
are the best cradles for true brotherhood"

So buoyed with this I toucht his muddy sleeve
as he stood with his elbow on the bar.
And he was saying "By next newyear's Eve
I'll have enough to buy a motor car"

29th
O Heart of mine thy beauty is
the rarest of sweet vintages...
I am the cup. Come hither thee in
and life shall taste life's richest wine

The gods upon the hills above
will stagger for the savor of
our passion and come singing down
to find Cup filled - liquor gone.

Sophocles in cities 30th

In Union Street today I went
with that old poet Sophocles
and all his starry regiment
strode after me in twos and threes

I felt the heat of Ajax' rage
the courage of Antigone...
A passing lorry splasht the page
and Union Street came back to me

Flanders Flanders Unforgotten . 29th

Farmer's Boy

In Shropshire County I was born.
Church Ashton is the very place
O poppies rustling in the corn
O sun that tans the farmer's face.

I went across the seas to fight,
a sergeant tall and stiff I strode...
O ghostly quietness of night
O prussian hoptans by the road.

I lost an arm in Moir's sharp fray
and here the hospitable nun
bride up my wound and tints me pray
for this stark horror men have done.

She hears me pray and hides her face
and then looks across this Flemish corn...
Church Ashton is the very place...
in Shropshire, sister, I was born

martyr Unremembered

Against this wall a Flemish lad
was stood with bandaged face and eyes...
The Prussian riflemen had had
a tiresome day out hunting spies

They shot him down: but did not kill
until a spunky young fellow strode
and found his pistol in the still
and hoken body on the road.

Today the wall is ivy grown
& nettles dustily grow nigh...
I listen to the nega phrase
as tourist charabancs whin by

77
Reverie for Poppies and Men

O red the poppies in the corn
and stiff the poplars by the road
as early in the summer morn
the creaking wagon drags its load.

O red the blood of wasted men
and stiff and shait the dead men lie...
The poppies will not grow again
no wagon creak and joggle by.

May 15th

Tonight the crickets sang about the hearth
and fluttered in the ashes 'neath the bars...
A brooding silence broods upon the earth.
The quiet sky is scored by falling stars.

O God the stillness grips my pounding heart.
my eyes ache for the stark flame of a match...
my roughfild nerves jar goating at each start
when loud rats patter thro' the rotten thatch.

Lament for Little Towns

O the towns, the battered towns
where silent women in the street
whisper to the little ones
and curse the endless dusty feet.

O the towns, the shatter'd towns
when runs walk thro' gardens slow
and never hear the dining gurns
their plover and roses make fair shows

Little Boy's Lyric May 11th
night is old. The moon is dead
think I'd better get to bed.

For the Sun won't waken ~~and~~
coming o so quietly...

And if I don't rise in time
he'll have fimsht half his child's
Nursy dear your sleepy head
thinks it's time he was in bed

X

Sonnet 21

To the memory of James Connolly Patriot and martyr
murdered by English soldiers May 10th 1916.

With spring each year I go among the hills,
spy out buds' nests and learn to name the leaves.
I dig up primroses: and daffodils
are in my arms when swallows throng the leaves.

But tho' the season is compact of joy
and clamorous incessantly with love
it minds me what I meant when but a boy —
the Beauty of the World is not enough.

For spring was good that year, the birds as loud,
the trees as green, the daffodils as tall
when Connolly looked at me in a crowd
clutching my father's hand and very small.

Tho' spring comes splendid round the stony track
the beauty of the world can't bring him back.

79
29th

Sonnet 22

Because I have been silent these three days
 You say I am from cold and void of love
 and lack indeed the very semblance of
 that ardent hearted lover whose wild ways
 burnt up your heart in its triumphant blaze.
 Your words O Heart of mine are like a glove
 with which one smites a Knight's cheek. 'Tis enough
 You've stung me into sonnet ..

Fancy plays
 with that stiff form in which I've lost my skill
 breaks this the octave that I used to see
 was neatly turned and separate from this,
 and left me with three lines for simile
 nay there are but two now. Your beauty is
 blowing across my pen a daffodil.

80

The Young Spring Gods (first wk in April)
 an Ode

I

O bright buds break along black boughs
 a dust of green sprays hedge and tree
 and crocus bugles spear the earth
 that lay in bleak sterility
 High larks in effort to arouse
 the dreaming blossoms utter forth
 their bubbled hearts' whole mystery.

A blackbird, humble chorister,
 sings from a beech beside the pool
 and distant starlings answer her
 across the green park's cloisters cool

II

Spring comes agen to brim kind memory's cup.
 Spring comes agen: our hearts are lifted up.
 For Spring it is that satisfies the want
 our hearts feel after winter's table scant
 New Spring.. Old Spring that keeps
 eternal covenant
 with augury in perfumed clouds and heaps
 of blossom that is summer's sundrunk vaunt.

81
III

The young gods of the earth arise
 the young Spring gods that old world knew ...
 Drunk Bacchus with his tipsy cries
 who lived in Naxos where the blue
 sea sleeps an everlasting sleep
 as blue and deep
 as velvet skies
 hung like dark curtains from gold star to star
 immeasurably far.

IV

The young gods of the earth arise
 Pale Alys that Astarte loved and sought.
 Shriill music of high flutes is heard
 about the dusty streets of men ...
 when that red catafalque is brought
 by weeping women thro the town
 their long black tresses hanging down
 and only by a light wind stirred

O sirus is come back to us
 tho Nile had borne his body hence.
 Isis the fair and tremulous
 has vanquish Set's dark turbulence.

And swallows flit between the painted walls
 where memnon o'er the level water calls.

[Sonnet 23]

V
 Mithra that died, is laid upon a bier
 and mourned with solemn chants until the night
 ebbs from the loes ... and fills their hearts with fear
 lest he rise not ... stands shining in the light.

And Tammuz lovely god of Babylon
 is kiss't to life by Ishtar, stary queen,
 before the stars have wither'd in the dawn,
 before the hoar sleek't grass is brightly green.

Adonis too, the loved of Cybele,
 lamented by the reueous shouting. throng
 with pounding drum and crying psaltery
 and brass vici't booming of the beaten gong:

he too, is risen with the bursting Spring
 to happy voices and soft lute playing.

VI

The youngest of the young spring gods,
to sanctify man's tragedy
is beaten by the rabble's rods
that flintshard way to Calvary

O dearth of earth O hunger, cold!
O barrenness of field and tree
The stone from off the tomb is rolled
Spring comes again in majesty . .

The young Spring god, the risen lord,
stands woundless on the dew-fresh sword.

VII

Heaven and Earth are met to bring
the endless miracle of Spring . . .
Call this one Zeus or this one God
according to the period
and there will be Osiris, Christ,
Baldur, Adonis, sacrifice:
yet still triumphant over death.
Yea, deathless as the young bird's sheath
that pierces thro' the frozen clay
into the heritage of day.

VIII

O Spring no Poet half enough
insists upon thy mystery . . .
The young Spring gods that died for love
from lonely Christ on his stark tree
to Alys wounded and unclad
cannot reveal thy wealth and waste
thy holy prodigality.

IX

O no cold god among the stars
among the peaks of sunset's song
that makes a flaming world or man's
creation with a moon face wrong -
had mind enough to fashion thee!
New Spring, the ancient mystery.

Here ends the Ode of the Young Spring Gods

85
Poems in May.

4th

Lipid beside the lotus pool
plucking his lute wove this sweet song
"O running water's beautiful
and running horses fair and strong."

A brown armed maiden is more fair,
is far more beautiful than these
when tiny fingers loose her hair
and it falls jetblack to her knees"

9th

think that I have drunk too much
at sleep's entrant you waiting long...
from shoulder's icy to my touch...
forgive me dear; I meant no wrong.

What 'no reproach? no greeting yet?
wake love and scold me, lift your head,
How easily we men forget...
God's mercy now. I'm drunk. She's dead.

9th

Let young men sing of Helen queen, of Troy
and brown boys praise the name of Ashtaroth.
Let pale girls weave perpetual tapestries
and tell the old tales in immortal cloth.

But give me peace O young man and brown boy
to sit deaf to thy delicate delight
brooding by candle on one fair as these
till lyrics flare before me in the night

13th

I the poetaster Horn
make this song that men may know
it is lucky to be born
when the hawthorn is in snow.

For to see the flowering may
drown the hedges mile on mile
makes the birthpangs of a day,
and your mother's care, worth while.

Sarcophagus

Waltman

8
9th May

They bound her in white linen, smear rich spice
over her cold limbs: close her sleeping eyes;
tied back her jetblack hair in two broad bands;
and on her small breasts laid her small brown hands.
They laid her gently in a cushioned sleep
in a long box set rich with pearls the deep
sea yielded up to flashing naked men...
For she was dead and would not laugh again.

She was a king's daughter... young and very fair.
O Isis how the sunlight on her hair
struck gold from ebon till like Danaë
she stood flame erect to her naked kneel.

A tall man came and counted out some gold,
and took me to the tomb. He was too old
to weep that beauty dies away to dust.
He pointed to the box and said "You must
paint on this side - and this" Her father was
a Pharaoh, and for her in kindness has
given her this burial in sculptured stone."

87
And say: He is the greatest Pharaoh known:
the strongest ruler since Osiris here
put empire in the desert and put fear
on the dusk dwellers by the palm-skirted Nile
and dread in every mud-drowned crocodile."

He went away. I took the colors and drew
not what the tall man said but what I knew.
And I shall die tomorrow when he comes
to drive the demons off with little drums.

"~~Here lies a nightingale that did not sing.~~
I loved her once: her father was a king."

Lyric 17th

Yellow Bill O yellow bill,
yellower than daffodil
pick these crumbs from off my sill.

Go then to thy feathered folk
tell them a kindhearted bloke —
Don't bolt greedy, or you'll choke!

Sonnet 24.

Northman June 30? 88
May 13th

Since brooding men put beauty in a rime
and fix it there forever by their skill
there is no need for any daffodil
to fade because Spring withers with old time.
Tho' beauty be intangible as the chime
of mellow silver bells from some high hill
it is our privilege with ink and quill
to board it up against an age's crime.

And if my name be known awhile to men
it shall not be because of flaming deeds
but rather as a rude and artless pen
cut in bleak season from the whistling reeds
wherewith the spirit of the years wrote down
the half-created beauty that else had flown.

Sonnet 25

13th May

So when you think of me I would have you think
 of bluster march's flying leaves and hail,
 sudden blue skies, cloud-galleons that sail
 headlong upon the sawtoothed mountain's brink.
 Then old gold days of harvest, jars that chink
 by barn doors while brown arm'd men rest the flail:
 again of rusty armor, mildew'd mail,
 and weary soldiers with scarce strength to drink.

For I, like these, had little that was prime:
 I was all Spring's young promise till I grew
 suddenly old and ere I askt the time
 Autumn was on me and the days were few
 for me to reap the harvest ere it pass,
 bright summer had hid from me, chideef in grass.

Sonnet 26

14th May.

Crosland, tonight I heard thy stormy fame,
 gold stories of the kindness in your heart ...
 and drabber tales how in the dusty mart
 you wore your bones out, spent your eager flame
 in bread and butter struggles till you came
 to hitch thy Pegasus to a grocer's cart ...
 But tho' you penn'd cheap pages, still apart
 a singing god hid sadly in your name.

Brother, thy hand I feel across the dark ...
 clasp mine and strengthen it for days to come.
 Life's ribs were gaunt, his face was bleak and stark:
 the wonder is O Poet thou wert not dumb.
 Surely if thou couldst sing in barren season
 my silence in this summer were a treason.

91
Sonnet 27

14th May

The lists are set. The knights-in-mail ride out,
 their pennons flying in the clear May air ...
 The swaying particolored people stare
 till thought becomes a challenge and a shout.
 Thy champions ride forth so let no doubt
 waver thy salutation, give them ease.
 They must think only of the arms they bear
 and how t' unhorse the foe in dusty rout.

Their horses are the best ~~the best~~ thy fence could buy:
 thy enemies have mounts that beggar'd towns,
 and ^{are} rattled in splendid panoply
 But be assured their armor is of wrong
 and will not stand the dint of combat long.
 Tonight thy champions will wear the crowns.

Sonnet 28

14th May

We have no need to span the narrow street
 with heapt up sacks and barricades of stone.
 Right comes to us by ways we should have known.
 There is no time to halter with defeat.....
 The bloodless battle's over and retreat
 from the fast thinning ranks agen is blown.
 The crops are ripe, 'tis time that they were mown;
 the road is loud with busy reaper's feet.

The seasons come to us with quiet tread:
 summer's on spring's green heels before we know:
 the young bright leaves are quickly turned to red,
 and autumn morns surprise us with fresh snow.
 So shall this England put new splendor on,
 while in the dark the old dishonor's gone

Sonnet 29

14th May

I clutched death by the throat and thrust him off
 He cowered and gibbered in the dark at me...
 till dawn, a silent blossom quietly
 opened its petals and when light enough
 I starved into the corner whence his gruff
 and obscene gabble had precluded the
 final assault and leaping battery
 whereby he tried to stifle me with cough,
 and phlegm and icy fingers round the neck.
 He was not there. But purring on the mat
 and washing laws meticulous the cat
 brought the cold horror of encounter back...
 And made me wish for Christ to exorcise
 the demon in the hateful creature's eyes.

Sonnet 30

14th

O swallows fill the skies with whirring wings:
 two corncrakes hurry up the little hill;
 a blackbird on a beech with yellow bill
 discusses with his mate his lovemaking.
A speck between two clouds begins to sing —
 'Tis choirboy skylark vaunting his new skill
 and trying over descant slur and trill
 to make me feel sole worthless, songless thing

But birds! I will outsing you everyone!
 I'll capture you with my small net of words
 and when this little summer season's done
 I'll stew a heap of blossoms, buds and birds
 my pages will be clamorous with tunes
 you taught me in the sunbright afternoons.

93
Sonnet 31

14th.

That's vanity! Why even, cuckoo, you
 tell more than three two syllables can say.
 A blossom drowsy lene, a summer day,
 high light white clouds, and open skies of blue,
 and little winds across the cornfield's few
 bright minted yellow come in some strange way
 upon the canvas of my mind, tho' gray
 and heavy clouds make one dull hopeless hue

of city windows, roofs, tramcars, and men
 when I repeat thy name or read a line
 from Davies say, that calls you up again -
 What could I then thus hampered by this tongue
 that needs two score flat words to say what nine
 hicups of yours can compass in one song?

Sonnet 32

14th.

Night comes that is not night but merely day
 wilted upon its stalk because the sun
 withdraws his energy, for rabbits run
 and never stop to sniff the beaten way
 And here beside my window in the gray
 and broken shadows of dark trees where none
 can see branch separate from leaf there's one
 unknown but nearfamiliar bird at play.

The moon is out fullblossom, and the stars
 chatter across the vacancies of space
 Old earth is cold somehow since windy bars
 of ravel'd cloud shade sunlight from their face . . .
 The clock ticks at the pore of things and deep
 thought broods on men who sleep or do not sleep.

Sonnet 33

14th

Words play me false, run truant, disobey
 and leap the little fences of my mind...
 as straying sheep are often hard to find
 yet seem more precious when abroad they stray,
 than those that dully keep commanded way
 and hence are spiritless and deaf and blind.
 Perhaps when I've explored each twist and wind
 deep in my brain they shall make brave array.

So nature too, cannot control her means,
 makes blunders, stupid guesses and mistakes,
 and finds instead of loveliness obscenes,
 absurdities like cancer and earthquakes.
 If I shall win perfection over sound,
 what wonder will nature fashion of mere ground?

Sonnet 34

14th

She has put on authority with use
 and I am not unwilling that it's so...
 For who protests when Spring lays thrall of snow
 along the hedges? And who would not choose
 rather to be bound in love's arms than loose
 and naked when cold winds of trouble blow?
 She has stolen over me as ivies grow
 unnoticed in invasion till the hues

Of the old leaves are covered up and hid.
 So Dear I quite transmuted by her touch,
 invaded, conquered, under tribute laid...
 O may my subtle servitude be such
 as in old time reared up the pyramid
 t'immortalise the monarch for whom it's made.

Sonnet 35

14th

Tomorrow I will go and say to her
 that those words hardly compact what I meant,
 that they perhaps had robbed her of content,
 had broken open her heart's sepulchre
 when I intended them to be as myrrh
 upon the hurts I did being insolent
 presuming on her love because she went
 so far to meet me. Tonight I will not stir

No I will pass the ticking hours away
 in a deep dream of passion while she too
 will feel the sting of love quite pierce her thro
 in the uneasy splendor of his sway.
 But when the morrow comes then I will go,
 judgment decided if still love it so.

Sonnet 36

15th

The rose, and, cursing, strode into the night.
 We sat about the fire and talked of things
 remote from those that bred our arguments —
 how it is sweet to read by candlelight, —
 or dream by burning wood — and other trite
 but pleasant commonplace memory things
 into the trickle of flat gossipings —
 for he had turned upon us in mere spite.

Our hearts were bitter at him but we said
 never a word of scorn because the blow
 had been too great, too swift. Our hearts were cold
 benumbed by our high idol's overthrow.
 Then one spoke "I'd forgive him were he dead,
 or if he had deserted us for gold!"

207
Sonnet 37

16th

A blackbird shook the way, raindrops fell
 upon my hot face as I watcht his toil
 half thinking of his color, half of spoil
 those little boys woud make were I to tell
 his hiding place. It is no miracle
 to them that he his enemies can foil,
 his tiny ones deliver from their coil
 in this way home by stealth so lovable.

They say that children's wonder is their charm
 when lands behind they gaze with open mouth.
 It's only when they're very young that's so.
 From six at least they're busy plotting harm
 not wondering why swallows hurry south
 because the cooling air gives hints of snow.

Sonnet 38

21st may

my early love for coarse democracy
 has wither'd somewhat. I have lost the glow
 of hearty indignation at the snow
 for making streets cold when weak beggary
 snuffles and hobbles in the shadows. The
 grimy host is pitifully slow
 in seeing what we needs must overthrow
 before we build the new society.

They whine and cower from sunset to sunset
 while hunger rapes their little virgin maids
 and never raise a whimper at the crime . . .

O they are useless sheep. - And yet and yet
 these christs that die upon the barricades
 God knows it I am with them all the time

22nd May

Never mind
 the crying wind
 that moans along the night.
 Or the rain
 upon the pane
 rapping with sharp knuckles on the bright
 and steaming glass.
 'I will pass
 Tomorrow will be fair.
 And the air
 full of buds and blossoms to the sky.
 It will be dry
 and warm.

This is just the cuckoo storm!

22nd

Tomorrow I will go
 Tomorrow I will see
 how the little blossoms show
 on every tree.

But today I prefer
 to be sitting here
 saying quiet things to her
 who is so dear

Compromise 23rd

Take this song to pay my debt
 for there's scant coin in my purse
 and tomorrow I shall get
 gold for one that's even worse.
 So till day I'll sit and write
 burn your candle, waste your wick
 while my bed may be tonight
 hired out to Tom & Dick.

22nd

a cornerake all night long kept me awake
 crying beneath the moon deep in the grass...
 but when an early wind began to shake
 the dewdrops from the meadowsweet he was
 almost beyond my earshot, hardly heard.
 and yet I could not sleep. His plaintive call
 brought back the flickering kitchen and the bird
 upon the shelf that market times interval.

28th

Thin lips, shut eyes, white hair
 you're old love, and asleep...
 I do not greatly care...
 unless you weep.

For I am weak and old
 no longer strong and stout.
 Thank God our hearts grow cold
 at equal rate.

28th

I mind the time when every thought meant song...
 when every song meant an untroubled hour
 but now thought stumbles and towards go wrong
 till there's a host of petals but no flower.
 For in that primal innocence a tree
 was rooted at earth's heart and touched the sky
 and nothing but was obvious to me -
 now none is more surprised at life than I

Election 28th

They shout about the streets tonight and make
 a blur of sounds that makes the untroubled stars
 but their hoarse clamor does not even shake
 times prison bars.

They might be ants at war for all they mean.
 would for my feet were forty fathoms long
 then I would rise and stand across the scene
 and right the wrong.

28th.

When I walk in the gaudy summer glow
and hawthorn perfumes drug my sleepy sense
I find no moral in the cherry's snow
no blossoms full of harsh impermanence.

And painless I look upon the OLD,
the dripping gold laburnum, and light green
while common daisies make the grass look cold
- half-melted snowdrift high cool hills between.

I rather dream of beauty lost, afar
in the clear air of night. The full paid moon,
the old unsquandered loveliness of star
beat ever in my brain their ancient rune.

Herrick to John Symonds (23 May)

O welcome sir. Tomorrow I go home
to merry London where the best wits live,
where lottery-men vend cheap balsamum
and lords to poets weighty dinners give.

23rd May

28th

When I was young gold bought few things
the air was free, unmeasured, and the birds
filled gratis trees with generous thanksgivings
beyond all words.

But gold buys heads, says bills and rent
and school fees for the offspring of my loins.

The frozen and the milkmen airt content
with lyric coins.

Herrick III 23rd

Wake not my love Julia
tis dawn's feathered parliament
heralding the dismal day
when our nuptial night is spent.

I am angrier than thou
ever thoughtest, dear, to see —
night despite my deepest vow
would not stay eternally.

night Frost 28th

The brittle branches cut across the moon
and shattered it to fragments like a plate
that was subverted with cracks and left upon
a cupboard's upper shelf. The hour was late
but talk had held me heedless of the ^{times} ~~hour~~ lapse
until the clock struck and I rose to go.
The wind was noisy, full of sleety whips
and in the west low clouds held hints of snow.
But in among the creaking trees it was
unreal almost as I strode alone
the air around seemed cold and hard as glass
the soft turf underfoot was hard as stone.

23rd

Herrick on Leaving Dean Bourne

Dean Bourne I leave with but a small regret
that flower girls will not guarantee to bring
a dewy posy of rose and violet
and executed daffodils neset spring

Herrick I

O Julia deare
before you goe
I would release
a lyric verse
intoe thy eare
and bidde thee knowe

That anywhere
the roses bloom
and fille the night
with the subtil light
and drowse the aire
with rich perfume

I will recalle
thy rare fedde face
their petals kiss
to token this
memorial
unequall'd grace

29th May

Sonnet 39. (Challenge: a lyric sequence I)

I put love in a cabinet, laid in my rh,
and unguents and old embalming spice.

I did not strangle those harsh memories
because of that old love I bore for her.

But O the casket trembles, wrappings stir,
and shadows put in flesh before my eyes.

A timid scraping - old love seems to rise
and blow across my heart with lavender.

O God why cannot you like any dead
lie quiet in the darkness of the grave?
Why must you rise and shake a lovely head
and moan about the faith we could not save
and read, you fool, the dreams wherein I have
your wounds and mine so darkly garmented?

Northman

II

I have had other loves since I loosed you:
the pity of it is I have one yet.
O is it not a cruel thing to do -
this bursting on me when I would forget?

You could not hold me when you had my love.
It dribbled from your fingers on the sand.
If there's a kindly influence above
surely you'd let me be, and understand!

IV

Why did you come to haunt me, Heart o' mine,
after the lapse of care erasing years?
Now I must get another anodyne
to ease the hurt that oozes bloody tears.
I sought a three years' solace in strange song
of Cleopatra, Helen - - - Babylon - - -
And those dear names were soothing to my woe,
for you were dead and done with, dead and gone.
But now I see that you were haunting still
cruel - Helen, harsh - Egypt's queen
And I cannot get quit of you until
Christ's mercy shows me some new Gadarene.

III

You bring the hawthorn and hibernum back
and they bring you for it was on a May
my citadel gave in to your attack
and draft its streets with flags for holiday.

You were repulsed. Another foeman came
putting a deeper bondage on the place.
But when the Hawthorn burns with white hot flame
the treaty's threatened by your mocking face.

V

You had no right to plant that rose again.
Its early buds were fair - I grant that time.
But they soon withered; and a cyclamen
is flowering in the very place it grew.

I want no thorns to choke this later plant.
It would be long before your rose bush bloom.
And I have made a solemn covenant
to give this cyclamen my whole heart's room.

June Verses

1st

O I will clamor ever at your heart
 like rain on villa gardens in the spring
 until the soil is sodden and things start
 to grow up green and little birds to sing.

But you will never know, will never know
 that I began this miracle of spring
 nor care I much indeed did sweetest so
 plants thrust up green and little birds for sing.

I did not know the pain of loveliness
 until I saw a beautiful lady die
 her dark eyes filled with beauty's unsuccess
 her thin hands gesturing mortality.

Now never a moon can blossom in the skies
 nor star stab sight with pregnant hint of love
 but may just clog the brain, crawl to the eyes
 and show that beauty cannot be enough

7th

The loud triumphant brass of Caesar's Rome
 has blared its way into the dusty past...
 tho' ever now diminished echoes come
 ringing against, and beaten by, its blast.

But the cool flutes of Greece are never still
 tho' waning with each century tho' will ring
 among the level meads of daffodil
 the goatfoot Pan pipes in reluctant Spring

10th

Tho' the heavens have betrayed me star by star
 I could endure the emptiness of night
 and never flinch but they relentless are
 immovable across the harsh cold night

Like one that fact his peers in scorn
 yet was forever haunted by a sense
 that they still watch, I must abide till morn
 their pitiless, their stony insolence

9th June

Blank Verse "Sonnet"

The rain last night brought all the blossoms down.
 The lane is white with little scented flakes
 your feet fight shy of tramping on. Today
 white clouds are high and scarce and speeding swift
 beyond the sun. The sky is far more blue

Than it has right to be in Ireland now —
 God how the rain has sweetened everything
 and washed it clean with thunder for its mock!

There must be rain in heaven else the air
 would get too drowsy with the angels' breath
 and gods' rich incense would fill up the eyes
 with happy tears. There must be blessed clouds
 to dark the sun sometimes else glory light
 would blind the eyes and sear the angels' brains

Villa Gardens.

10th June - 11.

I

You planted a rosebush by the door
and stood at the gate
trowel in hand, with earthy gloves
not knowing it'd be late.

The roses are red by the door
but weeds before the grass
and tho' I stand for hours at the gate
you never even pass.

III

There is a god for the little streets
a god for the country house
but in the redbrick suburbs neat
no lucky gods enounce.

Hay! There's no god Broods on the place
with beer and knuckled fist
that fool success spit in his face
and be an atheist

II

The curtain matcht the garden seat:
The tiles in the passage were red.
It was a change from our shabby street -
at least you often said -

Any change enough my dear altho
I am alone who was not, then
for in that shabby little row
there were no widowed men.

IV

Her face had faded like her hair
but paint and powder made brave show
I often used to watch her stare
sadly along the leafy row.

He was a business man and gray -
but thirty years had been at sea.
She could not quite forget the way
she used to wait so anxiously

V

The cobweb wins its battle with the brush
metho put ^{gain} a tribute ^{where} the wardrobes stand
over the house there lies a fearful hush
but you are dead and do not understand.

The dock defeats the roses and the grass
the moss has overcome the broken tile
I think of your vain labor as I pass
and yet for pity's sake I do not smile.

18th June

Christ hung upon the crooked tree;
the nails and spearhead entered in
and thro' his penance he made free
the body of the body's sin.

But when will come the greater Lord
and who shall name that tall tree's kind
that will absolve the Thought and word?
Who will do penance for the mind?

24th June

There's not a word
that I can say
has not been heard
before today.

yet I shall not
give over these -
the world's fog of
their messages.

29th June

Christ slept like the cuckoo in ^{summer}
half hidden in Lebanon grass:
but they dragd him to him shouting
sitting stiff on the foal of an ass

But now he sleeps under the arches
or blows his fist in the sleet
and offers you laces or matches
when you pass him by in the street

23th June

Concallye.

A man came out of a pub with drink and a whine in his voice
and staggered over to me and pusht a bundle of songs
into my empty hand and said "Here mister take yer choice
a penny price for any. But the lot belongs

to you for half a crown if yew that much to spare"
I gave him a penny and handed them back agen.
And he glaid at me with an almost angry stare
and said "Ye fool yew insulted the last in the singin' men"

Roun the heart in heavin air
I had a shillin' angels air
An' gie the old red legs a stir
an' then start singin' it.

Start singin' what? ye bloody fule
There's only wan song for a man —
But then ye never were at schule
wi' singin' fellees from the Bann

There's none in the pubs wants til hear the old tunes
that I used to be raised from mornin' til night
So they gie me a shus an' a blout an' a curse
an' say ye old doctor get outa me sight.

But their fathers was cool an' decent an' kind
and hearty in given their silver an' hence
O fool it's a pity I'm eighty an' blind
or I'd lambaste their bloody impudence

The Fenian Boy

Did they bring you home at last
my Fenian Boy?

Did they bring you home at last
when the bitterness was fast
did they bring you home at last
my Fenian Boy.

It was them that had no right to
to they take a great delight to —
It was them that had no right to
John Devoy.

For there's lads across the sea
my Fenian Boy

For there's lads across the sea
knows our 'Irish' rent free —
O there's lads across the sea
my Fenian Boy

holds a dream close till their hearts too,
that will die in furrin parts too —
holds a dream close till their hearts too
John Devoy!

115
Poems in August.

Tourist talks morality in Paris

St. Denis with his head between his arms,
who preached the sermon on the martyr's mount,
must surely laugh from his rain beaten niche
at those map-sellers with th' indecent cards
tied up in tissue-paper in their bags ...

Two thousand years since Christ died on a hill
that we might look on women without lust;
yet in the shadow of a holy place
lewd hucksters trade in shame with that same leer
the Pharisee gave to the magdalene.

Northman (W.?)

at the Gypsy Queen's Red Tent.

She read my hand and told me patent lies ...
The little truth she said was in my face ...
One can't disguise one's feelings when a word,
uttered by chance or craft, probes memory.

said I was disappointed; and in love ...
would get some money from America ...
and must beware a tall strange man in black ...

But then she said "Your lover is untrue
and even now is kissing someone's hair ..."
How could she know that he was fond of hair
and kissed mine till it fell in a black flood?
God! How I hate her for her second sight.

The clock strikes Twelve

If anyone should come and find me here —
 "no one can come" she said "the door is locked —
 The blinds are drawn. Dear take me in your arms,
 and we will tend Love's ritual in peace

Her hair was odorous of Orient spice;
 her neck and breasts were fragrant as the bloom,
 dew studded, that still overhangs the lane.
 God! She was warm against me in the night;
 and her young limbs were full of quiet peace.

But when the pendulum down in the hall
 sang to itself the tune of twelve o'clock
 a creak stole up the stair and ratched the door.
 I startled. But asleep on my right arm,
 her heart against my breast, she did not stir
 altho' you stood above us in the dark
 O God! I know so well that you would come.
 a day ago I murder'd you for this . . .

mystery.

I felt a hidden purpose in the air
 when that man's face smacked at me in the crowd,
 and yet I could not tell its meaning then
 being engrossed with trivialities,
 and only feeling this strange questioning
 like a cold eddy round a swimmer's feet.
 It had been ten years since he mocked me last —
 I had gone home to hear that she was dead
 I thought then that he loved her and was glad
 she was beyond my greedy arm's embrace . . .
 Today amid my usual casualness
 I talked and smoked and climbed onboard a tram
 and read my paper till at this street's end,
 dismounting, I remembered his harsh face.
 And that so strange unquiet in the air
 suddenly rushed upon me . . and I went
 with a fantastic dread deep in my heart
 that maybe he too loved my second love,
 and I should find her dead. But at the gate
 she ran to meet me, wondered why my kiss
 lacked vigor, why my eyes looked strait ahead.
 I have not slept since then. I shall not sleep
 until someone has died to succour me,
 and make atonement for his mocking face.

5th September

They clamored at him where he stood,
Then cast him forth most brutally.
A thousand years ago they would
Have crucified him to a tree.

O Christ that shake the bitter word,
O Christ that shook the angry fist,
whose faith was as a naked sword,
Have pity on that Communist!

3rd October

Dawn broke, a narrow golden streak,
severing like a sword for me
the quiet grey hills from the bleak
and wrinkled waters of the sea.

Let but a poet make a song
as beautiful and exquisite,
and by his deathbed all night long
grey quietness will come and sit

10th September

Do on thy silks and cramoisie.
Do on the satten redde.
Then thou schalt ride to kirke with mee -
But shee is dedde, they sayd.

Smooth the out the linen sheets soe white
Strewe roses on the bedde
When we schall spend our wedding night -
But shee is dedde, they sayd

3rd October

Three days the rain fell while the wind
blew it against the foggy panes.
When I looked out the leaves were thin and
and rainspikes danc'd along the lanes.

But the fourth day the wind blew light;
rain ceased: and to my anxious stare
the trees were naked, clean and bright,
and autumn heavy on the air

4th October

Hugh Gordon who for forty years
rode into Castle Blaney fair
despising all his neighbor's sneers
set out with his flea-bitten mare.

That night before his open fire
he sat and argued in his soul -
"The heifer's eaten" in the byre -
They askt me twenty shillin's toll "

4th

Where tiny tables flung like foam
across the sidewalk surge and spill,
just on the kerb before Le Dome
as rushing taxis clatter'd shrill,

I saw him stand in cape and hat
like some old print for Murger's book -
His legs to be waddled at
not more than two gave him a look

4th

I walked across the mountain where
that stormy agitator Tone
stood up and shook his windy hair
and claimed the land the People's own

But that was sixty years ago
and he is dead. I lost three men;
they did not even say 'hello'
Wolfe Tone! you'll have to come again!

6th October

I spoke to ten men in a dusty room
about the things lay nearest to my heart.
The fire blanket: while the gaslight in the gloom
made each blackface from changing shadows start.

Two hours they struggl'd in mesh't impotence
striving to seize the point I sought to prove -
I may not, Jesus, know thy innocence
but Lord, I know thy deep impatient love!

X

(Some time in October)

Autumn Lovesong.

Spring brought you with the Swallows
in a cloud of daffodils.

Now the winds are moaning hollow,
bleak winds blowing from the hills
and the leaves have fallen and drifted,
drifted deep the autumn rills

Fainter (sinks the sun) and fainter:
lower dips (its golden) blood.
Autumn, that (fantastic) painter,
splashes the unquiet wood
(with bright yellows, golds, and crimsons),
where the greensleeved Spring once stood.

Love has richer, deeper splendor
now all's withered but its core —
Love has nothing to surrender
left of all the leaves it bore —
Tree to tree in naked (glory)
I can only love you more.

ebbs the year
— the sun's red —
fanatic

with faded lathered rags
of crimson

— feature

Sonnet 40.

I almost have forgotten how to write:

the easy phrase, the ready words are gone.
My talk's gapped tooth and brittle — like John Donne,
save that my flint sparks give no lasting light.
Before this was no trouble in a night

to string a line of sonnets like this one.
That was because philosophy had spun
a seeming scheme of eternal wrong and right.

now I know more I seem to know far less.

Great cracks gape in my chastely carved shrine,
and faint keels of the canvases of my faith.
Nailed to my cross, of one look up and saith
"Here sufferer drink this drowsy anodyne"
I would not have the dead Christ's steadfastness.

Sonnet 41

November 4th.

Again I strive. The form resists. It traps
 my misty thought and shews its texture thin.
 O anvil of the sonnet who shall win
 to splendid smithy music. Tiny taps
 encompass my weak harmonies. The din
 of my old clanging sonnets is perhaps
 beyond me now, because of unknown sin —
 Again I strive. Octave resists. It snaps.

I am defeated, utterly put down,
 and driven from the door without an alms,
 who was ambitious of the lyric crown
 and felt not undeserving of the bays —
 But I shall win redemption. In my palms
 the nail wounds have been aking many days

Sunrise in November

(4th)

The sun like the head of the risen Apollo
 rises red in the light of molten gold of the dawn.
 Birds twitter and flutter and scatter and follow
 where the wheels of his chariot rattle the lawn

My footsteps are lighter, my hearing is clearer
 and brighter the vision I hold in my heart...
 For the Greek gods are nearer and kinder and dearer
 than the near men I'll meet in an hour at the mart

Killer Street (15th Nov)

In Killer Street one never sees
 grass growing, sunshine, windy trees;
 for Killer Street's a dirty row
 of houses built too long ago.
 And those that live in Killer Street
 have hungry bellies, illshod feet,
 & Killer Street the frost made white
 the rooftops in a single night,
 and over every window pane
 scrawled flowers from a fantastic brain.
 Forgive me, but I cannot tell
 the meaning of this miracle.

Sonnet 42

19th Nov.

Jane Shore : any woman to her lover.

You deem love openhanded, liberal
and place me Queen upon your heart's bright throne . . .

You would be spendthrift of the richest stone
in building round my feet a palace wall .

And meekly I consent . . . consent to all
this splendid nonsense . Someday you'll atone .

You'll pay in thinning blood and cracking bone
for your embattled heresy . you call

To mind the golden pageants of the Past,
the valiant loves of vanisht queens and kings,
and cry that with such wealth we too are rich .

Yet even when your humor holds me fast

I sometimes hear a stalen voice that sings

" The mistress of a King died in a Ditch "

12th December

Carol

10 December Carol

O the lute strings and voices of angels
rang clear in the frost and the snow
for the baby that laught in the manger
and the mother that smild long ago .

But tonight in the sleety drear city
the waits in the slush stamp their feet
and whimper their wavering carols
while many drags up the dark street .

Should they turn for a moment from singing
and seek her a place to lie down

O the lute strings and voices of angels
would clama high over this town .

From Bethlehem to Calvary he went :
the greatest journey ever made on earth .
He hung upon the Wood, omnipotent,
whom three kings sought to worship at his birth .

More than many know not, as we know now,
that frosty morn, his victory & loss . . .
O See her stoop to kiss his quiet brow . . .
The rafters of that stable made the Cross

11th Dec A Song for Christmas

The child's asleep, and Mary's hands
lie quiet in her lap.

With flickering lantern Joseph stands
in wonder at this hap
for three tall kings await before
the stable's creaking door.

In silence then he beckons them.

On tiptoe they come in —

A cockcrow wakes ~~for~~ Bethlehem
with its hoarse insolent din —

for that wondrous streaming star
maketh dawn seem not far.

The sky rips up. Gold flashes down
and heavenly trumpets blow.

Light wakens Mary, puts a crown
upon her peasant's brow;
and the shouting shepherds run
to see the little one.

The child wakes up & gives a cry
and Mary weeps for joy.

The kings salute majestically
the peasant's baby boy —

And bewildered Joseph stands,
the lantern in his hands.

29th Dec

Saint Stephen's day. The sun was bright.

It seemed a prelude of the spring;

the robins pecked at withered haws,

and stiff-necked swans were on the wing.

The old men with their coats and sticks

came tottering along the roads,

sun-blinded, blinking, ^{seem now} as they were

^{like and sprung wakened} chill-blooded and half-frozen toads.

And yet their voices clattered shrill

like noisy lads intent on play

for surely they saw winter gone,

and bawled once ^{again} more of his tough prey.

Tutorial

13th December.

The talk today was of old shadowy kings,
their treaties, battles, and dull bickerings.
The Scotch professor with his ^{banter} organ drone
rolled on and on until I, sleepy grown,
saw my notebook swim before me, dropt my pen,
and walked two hundred years ago with men
who wore large wigs and spoke in epigrams.

— See lusty Peter! How his mouth he crams,
yet mutters schemes for making Sweden give
Esthonia. Look! There's Charles the fugitive,
drilling his shabby guard at Bender. He
will only live in Johnson's poetry.

Shades gather at Versailles, stand round the floor
that nakedly reflects old Louis' whose
who sprawls across the ceiling, fixed in oils.
They are discussing who will take what spoils
when young Theresa's bundled off her throne.

These shin from me; and on times whirlwind blown

I see grim peasants in the autumn lanes
 cut their scant fuel in the winter rains.
 I see the cottage fires, the peasant wife
 lifting a kettle, sharpening a knife
 to cut the coarse head, set it on the table:
 or sitting in the firelight tell a fable
 to sad faces, rept and listening little girls
 with strawlike locks in rags to make them curls,
 and chin in fist.

God knows I'd rather have
 a quiet life ~~life~~ this from cradle to grave,
 and let folk then no more remember me,
 than be a famous man in history.

The City Beautiful. 31st Dec.

A spire, three chimneys, and a row of hills,
 with sunset silhouetting them behind:
 while down the dark lanes lamps like daffodils
 flicker in fusts - with these I'll load my mind.

That when some night I stride along a road
 under clear stars & by the moonlight seas
 I shall not wish to shatter man's abode
 for in its way it is as fair as these

Wind.

December (16th?)

It's only in the woods one sees the wind.

I have gone here and there and heard her cry
 in distant places, and carry in my mind
 her many voices till the day I die.

In towns her tumult makes me think of men
 who huddle close in doorways from the sleet:
 until my hands grow hot and cold again
 at house injustice in the gusty street.

On ships the wind sings in the moaning wires,
 blows up the sunset, clears the sky for dawn.
 She frolics with tincans, glows watchmen's fires,
 and heaps the yellow leaves upon the lawn.

The sand betrays her footprints, rippled light:
 but to her passage we, poor men, are blind.
 She seems to come and do these things at night -
 It's only in the woods one sees the wind.

Sonnet 43

Dec 29th

An old playgoer addresses a Dead Comedian.

I spent this evening in a music hall,
 watcht longleggd women dance in unison,
 and two rednod comedians for fun

throw plates into the air - and let them fall ..

An acrobat stood spinning on a ball,

and then a fellow came, when he was done,

to imitate the turn by which you won
 in distant days so many a curtain call.

And I was sad, being perhaps the last

who could remember, tho then a tiny boy

When I came back from the bar he too had passed.

My grief dried up, knowing for sure that I

shall soon applaud your antics in the sky

who are a Jester in the Courts of Joy.

Il Pleut from the French of F. Gregh (1873 -)

It rains:

rattles the panes.

The spring wind cries like autumn in the park.

A gate creaks endlessly out in the dark.

It rains.

Each raindrop taps the window like a pin
 in a monotonous dain.

It rains:

rattles the panes.

The deep blue tatters of the sky

are hidden by

grey clouds come suddenly.

It rains.

O Life is bleak.

No matter. Blow wind. Gate creak. Rain patter. No matter!

The darkness cannot keep light from my face.

My life has its own open skyblue space:

and in my heart's a garden ringd with tufted trees

that sway obedient to the summer breeze ...

Thus comes the memory fleet.

It rains. But life is sweet.

Poems written in 1930.

1930

2nd Jan.

We do not watch the high stars close enough,
 running intent about the lamplit tower
 on greasy barter, pocketing of coin,
 until our bodies crumble and fall down.

But those old Babylonian wizard men
 who stood nightlong on frosty towers to see
 the steadfast seven tilt dew-rusted crowns
 wrung quiet wisdom from astronomy.

on Reading Defoe's Tour Jan 2nd.

When old Defoe gazed at the high church leads
 that windy night in Southwold long ago
 and saw the silent multitude of heads
 where these cold swallows rested in a row,

I wonder was his heart not resting too,
 until a gracious wind blew off the land
 and drive him headlong to those skies of blue
 where shaggy Curlew stides along the sand

Sonnet I

6th Jan

Distress Ball at the Plaza Jan 8th.

Tonight you'll sway before th' appraising stare
 about the shining floor in some one's arms
 in languid challenge to the drum's alarms;
 and you will have your back and bosom bare,
 tho' not because you have no clothes to wear
 but rather to display your maiden charms
 to swift advantage, for this dancing warms
 even old men's veins - but I shall not be there.

No: I shall stand where windy corners meet
 and shout my gospel to the bitter folk
 who falter, Lause, and then lurch down the street
 to bare plank beds and grates that give no smoke
 — Just when you stumble on your partner's feet,
 and blush, and pass the thing off as a joke.

Sonnet II.

6th

We gave you buns at Christmas and free shows
 of thrilling pictures when you had your bite -
 As we recall your obvious delight
 I'm sure the heart in each of us still glows
 and decent dampness agitates each nose
 at what-some-would-call pathos of the sight.
 Our kindness knows no limit, so to night
 we dance at this Distress Ball - no one knows

If you get any poorer what we'll do.
 I think that we shall have to have a war:
 it would help business - And by this time you
 have quite forgotten what the last was for.

I've thought too much already. Thought breeds doubt.
 We'll dance while you yourself can think it out.

16th

13th
 I curse the fate that flung my weary days
 in the cold mid night of this century.
 The air is foggy, difficult the ways,
 and blackness swallows up both hell & tree.

I stumble blind to do what there was a light
 my fathers found in their bleak afternoon.
 But this is darkness, not the shining night
 when every little puddle had its moon.

16th

I have put on the molleys of old time
 from the sark of Langland to the hose of Donne
 have gone in rime, and gone without a rime
 and worn new webs that I myself have spun
 till wisemen deem my antics boyish fun.

How can they know that it is no mere joke
 this doing on and off of varied dress.
 I needs must seek a weatherworthy cloak
 to drape my vision of earth's loveliness
 that she be not ashamed in life's rude press.

I have been good to her -
 old mother earth - I mean
 gone here & there with little stir
 and left her meadows green.

Of course she paid me back
 with rainbows, roses, dawn:
 and let me watch the rabbit tracks,
 and let me feed the swan.

But one thing she withheld
 of her rich treasury
 just as she did to those who felled
 that old star snaring tree.

Why does she gudge it so?
 In what way have I sinned
 I feel its fingers, hear it blow -
 but cannot see the wind

16th.

The wind growled in its corner, shook its chain,
 then made a wolfish leap to break away;
 jerked back, it moaned and cried. The steely rain
 drove sleety knuckles in my face at play.

Night snarled me in his care. The peering moon
 came out to jibe at me. I hid my face.
 For fingers, eyes and ears are no great boon
 when elemental things make their grimace.

17th

I do not sing. I pompously announce
 my platitudes in lines that strut & jerk.
 But humor haunts me, plays the catfoot ounce
 and springs upon me even when I smirk

and bow to trees and stars that they may know
 I keep a tryst with them & deem them fair.
 It's their turn then, when dark across the snow
 the creature drags me screaming to his lair

17th

Stone deaf to all delight
 and heeding not bird song
 with chin on breast I brood
 on life's dull pet & wrong.

The nightingale in vain
 may plead. The sky lark trill.

I hurry thru the streets
 intent on pity still.

When I have rid the place
 of bitterness and hate
 perhaps I'll stop awhile
 and listen on some field's gate

But no. The joy's won back
 for all for men's delight
 Here still will be my heart
 to rid of its deaf night.

Biography 21st.

I have known several men
 of the high Shakesperian line
 who talked obscenities - and then
 did things that were divine.

And one or two there were
 ('Tis these that most I miss -
 cold marble chipt with care,
 from the
 shades of acropolis.

Know another
 I ~~early knew~~ ^{there's only he} ~~one~~ man:
 these days he ~~seems to me~~
 that follows where Christ ran
 (like that first Christian,
 thro' starlit
 who stood by Galilee.

Passion 21st

I thought this passion would
 shatter my body, bring an early death,
 when it stormed shouting thro' my blood
 and tore the roots of breath.

I never thought to see
 life last this passion out & watch it die.
 Pray God you miss the agony
 of feeling veins run dry.

night 23rd

The starry leopard of the night
 has velvet paws and icy breath.
 He comes as quietly as death.
 He sneaks away before the light.

I thought death was his other name
 until a friend died. Then I found,
 that when the Sun swung on his round,
 death did not sneak away for shame

Winter shower 24th

The sun's gone done. A glimmering light still flickers
over the cold bleak hill. The wind begins
to freshen, blows the birds about the sky
like flapping leaves torn off a creaking tree.

A moan springs up foreboding early rain.

The heavy clouds tumultuously pass,
ragged with rain, and scowling for a storm.

That glimmering light fades out. There is a patter
of sudden drops among the tugging branches.

Another gust, and both my cheeks are wet.

For night runs hissing thro' the tumbled grass.

The lamps are lit when I come to the corner,
and blink and flare against the slanting rain.

Blind at Eighty 23rd.

There's no one now to speak to me.

I'm old, alone . . .

The sunshine's hospitality
is spent and done.

Tho' a road was an adventure
my legs are weak.

I dare not leave this little room or
I should feel sick . . .

God knows, if I were dead indeed
there would be friends
to link my arm along that road . . .
There would be hands . . .

Keep then my mind awake.

Say to the Robin

protect me from sin.

But the Bright Kingfisher
hath my heart in his care

The Litany of little Birds

Say to the sparrow

thou art my brother.

Say to the Chough

I thee do love.

Say to the Linnet

I envy thy wit.

Say to the Lark

Would Heaven were my Park.

Say to the Jay

Good day and good day.

Say to the wren

thou art wiser than men.

Say to the Thrush

thy bush is a burning bush.

Say to the Starling

^{but beats wing}
blessed be those that sing.

Say to the nightingale

blest be both wing and tail.

Say to the blackbird

thine is the last word.

Say to the corn crane

Poems in February

Reality (1st & 3rd)

Since chimneys and brickwalls are
as elemental as the breeze
a broken window is a star
and lampposts merely iron trees.

Mill gables are but crazy cliffs
washed by the traffic of the town ...
- and all these shop signs hieroglyphs
by long dead poets jotted down

7th

I took a walk today in search of Spring,
for yesterday the elfin trumpets blew
about the houses when the robins sang
and these now sunlit slates seemed gold and new.

The fields were wet. I stooped before each tree
but earth and sky were firm in winter's hand.
And for the five mud miles I could but see
the scard and screaming rocks across
plowed land

Seagulls a symbol 4th

The seagulls inland wheel among the trees:
a storm has blown them in from their black shore;
but in their hearts they hear the crying seas
hiss thru the grating pebbles evermore.

And when the wind creaks at the tugging leaves
it is not trees they hear around them sing
but quiet voices, on red distant oars,
that leaf the cliff-foot with low murmuring.

This storm is over: but another gale
may blow again and drive them headlong home
to where the last salt-bitten hedgerows fail,
and grass is whitened by light flecks of foam.

Who knows? Or will they, when the sun is high,
sniff the far water and turn gladly back
flying and crying with that startled cry
upon their urgent paths that have no track.

Sonnet III

Lines for John F. Lenzels.

14th

I count myself with those who deem it wrong
to fill a child's clean veins with poisoned dirt
in strange protection 'gainst imagined hurt.

But this belief's illegal ... Laws are strong,
and none can break them and be free for long.

John Lenzels and his wife defied the Law.

But she was jailed. And ten ten slow days saw
the story grow too intricate for song.

Now she is free, he treads an alien ground
remote from those that he had fought to save.

So while the sun drags on his dreary round
his little ones, remembering him, are brave
being too young to know of freemen's rights —
Some magistrates, I hope, sleep sound o' nights.

11th

O Shake the Fox out of the Moon
into the swollen Argoes
of clouds the gusty Wreck of Wind
has blown from blue spume-foamy Seas.

Then when this Cargo's jettison'd
the Moon will right Herself and float —
the Golden Flag ship of a Queen,
or else a shining elfin Boat.

21st

The sun with great moonface of brass
rose up to dispel the scattered mist:
but frost had leprosed the grass
and given the trees an elvish twist.

I stoop before a frozen pond...
a sudden fancy beckoned me —
for water and I have some close bond
throughout its wide repertory.

I dug my heel into the ground
to loosen a stone to break the ice...
for David once a pebble found
that felled Goliath in a trice.

If I could find a stone to fling
to free a far more mystic pond
I think the quiet stars would ring
in thin cold trafficking beyond.

Drover

I came abreast with him just where the road
 dips in its headlong stumble, at a stream.
 A matted horse strained past with creaking load.
 The city's windows glitter'd in the gleam
 a dying sun sent arrowlike between
 the quiet hills now shadowy and far.
 On either hand the trees were budding green
 and covering up the winter's blight and scar.

He walked behind three heifers: so he said —
 I thought that they were cows but he said no
 Tho' that one there, the black one, not the red,
 cost twenty pound las' ^{month} ^{at} Thursday Dublin Show.
 Behind their whisking tails I fell in step,
 gave him a fag and listened to his talk —
 These Antrim cattle! Gasus how they let
 Aye. Jus' beyon' the Boghill ... a fair walk ...
 He gabbled on: an artist in his way
 secure in knowledge of their every trick,
 and free of sunlight and the windy day,
 and scornful of the narrow lanes of brick.

So, tho' a nomad, yet he felt he was
 in some quite tangible way a useful man ..
 There's someone's got tae put them out to grass
 and bring them in tae market. Like the lan'
 somebody be tae plow it, sow, and reap,
 for them that ^{bides} lives in towns can't live on air ...
 So while the whole bunch lies in bed asleep
 someone is up and workin' here and there,
 shippin' their stuff acrost the stormin' sea,
 or standin' in a lighthouse on the shore,
 makin' great noises thru the fog that they
 might have their loaves and boots for evermore ..
 He too, was useful: I admitted this,
 tho' blushing somewhat, for what use was I,
 remarket "That sun was splendid but it is
 too quick in slipping from the naked sky"

By this new rally I had changed the talk,
 and gather'd lore of blossoms, leaves, and birds,
 that lasted for the whole length of my walk,
 and never turned on plowmen or on herds

To His Holiness the Pope

5th.

So you will pray for Russia, pray for those
 that rumor says are being trampled on.
 You'll send your snail tracks out across the lawn
 that Lenin's men have just brushed-clear of snows:
 you that in purple pomp, between the rows
 of rich and scarlet cardinals, have gone
 to see the Albigenses hung and drawn,
 and broken heretics cast to the crows.

I think the young man Christ must blush for you,
 and your high Virgin goddess hide her face
 at this last crazy venture you appoint.

For even, Holy Father, it were true,
 your hands are not so clean that you can point
 a jeweled finger at the slave's disgrace.

Rendezvous. 11th

I promised Spring in halting words
that I should meet her when she came
announced by signalling of birds,
and arrayed by the whin's new flame:

that I should take the sacrament
even her feathered lovers take
when apple boughs with bloom are bent
that only west winds dare to shake.

She, for her part, gave me a sign
how I should know the high green flood.
'The air' she said 'will taste like wine
and strange enchantments stir thy blood.'

The crows began at half past five
this morning, so I thought to see
thy young Spring, laughing and alive,
hang her bright ribands tree to tree.

And in my blood there was a stir,
so I went out among the hills,
and scoured the riverbank for her,
and sought primroses daffodils.

But tho' the birds are high and loud,
and tho' the air is sweet as wine;
tho' catkins flutter in a crowd,
Spring's broken her word, but I've kept mine.

A Checker's Song 13th

When engines scare me with their groan & roar
and steamy turmoil grapples at my throat
and sweating workmen stagger thru the door
with bulky bales that I must check & note

I almost laugh, because I know beyond
the crashing factory's row of beech and fir
that lines the long drive up there is a pond
where once I saw a sudden kingfisher

13th

I wish I knew the names of little birds...
When I was small I had a picture book
with ostriches and emus in their heads
that stood then stiff no matter when you look.

But now when I have learned the names of trees
and know a pine clump even in the dark
for quiet music, little they can please
if I can't tell a starling from a lark.

31st Le Soir (V. Hugo)

It is the hour twixt day & night:
I, gazing, lean upon a gate
and watch the tattered flags of light
fade from the plowed land desolate.

Then sad at heart I look across
the darkening fields, and see an old
and ragged peasant stride & toss
the seeds of autumn's coming gold.

His huge black figure looms above
the furrows as he strides about...
It must be some strange mystic love
that bids him scorn the thought of doubt.

He threads his way across the plain
and back & forth flings grain from him:
Thrusts in his hand, begins again
as I still ponder, shadow dim.

His shadow spreading flapping spars
with mighty tumult grows and grows,
and overtops the very stars
with the blest shape of one who sows

30th 151

Ophelia.

Northman

In the fine rain small birds made merry din
when she turned down the lane towards the river ...
Then gusty march blew down, and in the thin
and delicate sunlight set the rushes ashy.

The sun grew strong, the rain wore off, and she,
bending above her rake, began her labor.
Pleek crows beat fast; and somewhere in a tree
a hidden bird made melody her neighbor ...

She did not come to help him with the cows
in the far meadow when her father shouted ...
He only startled thrushes from the boughs
who fled like frightened fledglings, cuckoos routed ...

In the cold dawn small birds made merry din
when tanned men searched the willow-bordered river
And when the wind blew back the rushes thin
they found her drowned when valleys creak and shiver

152

31st

Sonnet Pour Helene (Ronsard)

When you are very old, by candle glow,
spinning beside the fire with wearied brain
that rings and rings to many a memoried strain,
remember how I praised you long ago.
And then you maid, who drowsily and slow
dozes over her work, will wake again
at my forgotten name and that refrain
wherewith for you I wrought Time's overthrow.

I shall lie deep in clay, a misty wraith
'neath myrtle shadows taking my repose
while you that crouch beside the flickering grate

will cry against your scorn for my young faith —
Gather today, life's everfading rose.
Believe me Love, Tomorrow is too late.

13th

The Secret

When tomorrow I am gone away from you
 then you'll perhaps remember why it was
 I sat last night with firm shut mouth because
 your brother said my story was not true

I'd planned it so to spare him but he went
 full tilt against it, tearing it to rags.
 God knows when he has scrambled over crags
 as pitiful as I have - he'll relent. ...

He will not now believe you if you say
 in similar words the thing I hinted at.
 I pity you ... Yet last night shut mouth sat
 Hell! But we're bloody fools in our own way

Poems in April

10th Neurosis

When I have sunk a shaft in you
 I shall step back & watch the spring
 rush bubbling out. When I have wrung
 and shaken the last drops that cling,
 then I shall leave you. What to do?
 Apples to weigh, & skeins to wind,
 til on the backs of Friends & I ung
 I stand, a newton of the mind.

10th Responsibility

But now that I am cald a man in years,
 having a voice to sway the Commonwealth,
 and could be hangd for murder if I kill
 I feel no change. This came on me by stealth -
 my river had no cataracts or weirs:
 my lungs have failed to mark the low rise of the hull

10th Analysis

So, I have threaded paths with Jung
 and stopt to turn huge stones with Freud
 til I repent the hours I've sung
 that had been usefuller employd -

And yet I shoud not blame myself -
 My tendencies are so and so ..
 no clock can jump down from its shelf
 and break its mainspring and still go.

11th

Fragment of a Ballade.

These were my masters. First my Morris comes
 sad in the evening sunshine of late June
 of sweet wilt blossoms where the brown bee hums
 to snatched from silver petals its bright boon.
 Till over the garden rises the white moon,
 and somewhere in the trees a far voice sings
 of forevers & fadings to a tune
 that has been banisht with old lovely things

13th

The Secret

When tomorrow I am gone away from you
 then you'll perhaps remember why it was
 I sat last night with firm st...
 your better said my

31 Days.

I'd planned it so to spa
 full tilt against
 God knows when he
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He will not now believe
 in similar words
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JANUARY, 1922.

JAN. 26 & 27.

27 FRIDAY [27-338]
 ● New Moon, 11:48 p.m.

Now I have wrought a style that is my own
 And will throughout the misty future years
 stride singing down the sunset lanes alone
 or in the market bellow till your ears
 are deaf with tumult

stone alone

drums
 mantrypoms
 beunums

These were my masters: first my moris comes
 sad with the evening sunshine of late June
 from bee hums
 my song my to boom.....

boon
 swoon
 soon
 soon
 llenilune
 croon

I should not blame myself —
 cis are so and so...
 an jump down from its shelf
 its mainspring and still go.

11th

Fragment of a Ballade.

are my masters. First my moris comes
 the evening sunshine of late June
 set with blossoms where the brown bee hums
 hid from silver petals its bright boom.
 o'er the garden rises the white moon,
 and somewhere in the trees a far voice sings
 of presence & fading to a tune
 that has been banished with old lovely things

11th

2 memoriam: D.H. Lawrence.

(Sonnet 6)

For Lycides the laurel is not rare

tho he who wore that garland long is gone ...

The moon still rises for Endymion

tho' Shelley's cloud and skylark many a year.

By splendid singing one in days more near

has been raised to that galaxy alone,

tho' his young body lies beneath a stone

by the resounding cliffs of Skyrros sheer.

And you, shall you go out into the dark
without the tribute of one feeble song?

Your titan gestures, stern, tremendous, stark,

your wounded challenge to the stary sky

have turned my thoughts to brood on ancient wrong

and from that brooding I have made this cry.

Alternative quatrain from lines 5-6-7-8

Already he who sleeps beside the sheer

sea-battered cliffs of Skyrros till the dawn

has joined the immortal fellowship tho' van

his little star among the heath appear.

11th. Fragment of a Ballade

There's Skellon too, the whimsical,
who with the ragged rimes sobbed:

And Donne, not intellectual,

whose fancies twisted and grew cold.

' And Michael Drayton who once told
of Barons' wars and Oberon,

and that one sonnet couldn't fold —

These were my masters, and are gone.

Then by himself George Herbert shall

come sobersuited, chastely staid,

rends and repeatedly virginal,

his verses heavy with the world.

And Robin Herrick, sunny robed,

and master Thomas Campion

who played upon the lute of gold —

These were my masters and are gone

17th. Note: On standing at
'The Classic' Corner.

I stand upon the hallowed ground
where Henry 9 of Mac Cracken died,
while well dressed bitches, bookies, Jews,
insult my soul on every side.

22nd.

When boys throw stones at trees
to rattle chestnuts down,
or scramble on their knees
thru crisp leaves red and brown,

I long to stop and play,
throw stones and hurt my knees
lest I forget the way
I used to look at trees.

157
Sunset.

21st.

In the cool hush of twilight when one star
breaks the blue fading arch with torch of gold,
and willows bend to watch their images
float on the quiet waters motionless,
as I was walking down the river bank
I heard a flutter. It was not a bird:
the wing work was unsteady. Once before
I saw a bat: but that was in a barn
when I climbed in the rafters after a nest
I thought I saw a swallow build. Tonight
this was my second as with flight unsure
he reeled and tilted out across the stream
and disappeared into the silent trees.

It seems just then a useful simile:
the life o' men is like that. Across some stream
we flit and falter, disappear in the dark.
And if we fail to cross we sink and drown.
Though what we gain by crossing I don't know. . .

158
22nd

When men begin to fell trees round a house
it means they'll leave within the coming year.
The frightened rooks desert the threatend boughs
knowing the end of their high homes is near.

But when men make bird's nests impossible
the spirit of the trees retaliates . . .
And in a year the weeds choke up the well
and there is grinding of red rusty gates.

22nd

If young men, walking in these woods, must sing
let it be some old ballad of the place,
how Oisín met a lady wandering
and found her fair & full of comely grace:

or a rare catch the ancient heroes made
when they lay in the woods about their fire
of famous horse, or spear, or shining blade,
or of a princess that was their desire.

But in these high woods do not let them sing
barbaric lilt of bastard melodies
that call to mind the cymbals' crash & ring,
the painted face, hoarse voice, & naked thighs

24th

The season's late: twelve months ago
here in this very place I stood
between two drifts of hawthorn snow
and braided the cool shade of the wood.

Today a timid flickering
of green lights on the frost black branch.
The wood is bare. But thrushes sing
including summer's avalanche.

(after the Early Yeats) 25th.

Be not afraid for it is I,
 the youngest of that company
 who sang of Eire. But my name
 is still unsold of easy fame,
 tho I would be accounted one
 with Mangan, Yeats, and Ferguson.
 With Mangan but a little, tho
 he taught me how the handstrings go.
 With Yeats increasing day by day
 my mind works in his subtle way.
 But since in Belfast was begun
 my pilgrimage, and Ferguson
 was Townsman there, and knew the hills
 and where to find the daffodils,
 and where to find frail nests of birds,
 and how house plain country words,
 to him then most of all I owe
 for any lore I seem to know ...
 Tho none can say what lies ahead
 I only hope when I am dead
 that I may be accounted one
 with Mangan, Yeats, and Ferguson.

mysticism 28th

The mist like little gusts of smoke
 blew from the east into my face,
 and like grey snow drifts heapt the hills,
 and dreary grey fuzes thro the grass.

My feet kept to the path beneath
 until I reached the fairy thorn:
 but there the mist was piled so thick
 I did not know which way to turn.

30th

Down the valley's way
 where the salleys sway
 and the catkins toss
 in the wind all day
 I strode across
 till the bright clouds blew down
 and built of thin mist an enchanted town.

Easter Tuesday (Sonnet 7) 28th

I carefully let Easter pass this year
 without a thought of Calvary's bare hill,
 being intent on bird and daffodil
 and April skies with one cold star and clear.

I watched the red-tipt daisies peep and peer
 out of the fresh thick grass, and sky larks fill
 the air with fluttered chorusing until
 I felt myself a similar sonneteer.

But yesterday a man went up the street
 singing a rebel song of Easter week,
 and the old unquiet woke within my head.

I saw again the blood-bedabbled feet
 and all the pity that I dared not speak,
 and knew that Christ and Connolly were dead

28th Arithmetic

Sisk larks are not so sweet as one
or fingers were not made to count.
I lay on bracken in the sun
and watcht the urgent songsters mount
till there were dozens in the sky
crowding it with monstony.

But striding thro the beaded grass
I heard a corn-crake call its mate:
The echoes seemd to pass and pass
across two hedges and a gate -
I was fairy almost - then I knew
one com-crake's not as good as two.

Poems in May

13th.

I used to cheer when motorcars went past
as children do, in country places, still:
for pride, I think, that men should move so fast,
and not grow breathless running up a hill.

Today I never see a motor car
but blood bespatters axle, chassis, tyre ...
It is another trick whereby men are
enslaved and broken on a flaming gyre

20th

Out in the fields today
I heard the skylarks say
Spring's young, altho' 'tis May:
we think she will not die
till hawthorn brings July.

But I am not content
because I also heard,
'mid that high parliament,
the doleful cuckoo bird
rebuke the skylark's word.

27th

Dawn flashing its bright glass
stabs your mind thru the eyes
with the sweet wet smell of grass,
wandering voices and cries,

till from a sleep like death
you waken up to see
the challenge aimed at breath
by day's mortality.

27th.

I had forgot that hawthorn bush was pink
but the laburnum never left my mind
and any droop leaf chestnut made me think
the one at Queen's was of a rarer kind.

Now I come back it is not these I see
the less thin branches dim newminted gold,
and lay white candles on the chestnut trees,
for I had thought the hawthorn's snows were cold.

27th.

I saw the year's first bluebells in a glade:
 on one hand fir trees, green about the tips,
 stood stiffly in a barnack round parade
 and made no noise with their low moaning lips:

And on the other side a row of larch
 stuck out their little brushes to the light.
 I gazed upon that blue pool thru an arch
 of ombre pines, dark vestals of the night.

At noon next day a lion man in the street
 made my heart bitter that in this fair land
 we add things so ill. Then, with heart,
 now he had those first bluebells in his hand!

(Sonnet 8)

27th

So we sat for one splendid hour while day
 stood shining on the limits of the sea
 before it hoised and vanished bloodily
 in welter of gold waves across the bay.
 There on a gorse ~~cliff~~ cliff above the grey
 sea tangleing rocks, romantic poets three
 sat talking of life's heartless urgency
 while the sun sank to make us at our play.

Now you, and you go down diverging lanes
 and nevermore will sit upon a hill
 watching old Phobos loose his golden reins
 when his long claying chariot is outrun
 by night's black horses. . . Yet I dream we will
 jostle across the causeway of the Sun.

Poems in June.

Sonnet 9

(15)

What tho the body play adulterer

if there be no unfaithfulness of mind?

I am grown sick of flesh that's halfinclined
but when the fancy falters does not stir:

or as some weary kneed idolater

abases him halfdrowsy, incense blind,

tho in his ears rings crying on the wind

from larklound meadow or unquiet fir.

For I have said before and say again

we must not wrest the body from its course

or turn the mind from its old rutted lane:

nor should we let stark thoughts' pale sentries force

over the blood the suffrage of the brain:

I am a Centaur not a man and horse.

6th.

If I were naked as a birch
my blossoms would be pink for shame:
for modesty I learnt at Church
with other sins I dare not name.

Now the who made the naked birch
filled her thin twigs with innocense —
But since we built the bawdy Church
we must endure its insolence.

12th

I hear a horse stamp in the dark
and whining at the gate:
but I lie still on listning sheets
and watch the last glow of the grate.

The clock ticks away in the dark
too early it is... or too late.
I will not go down the dim stairs
to mount the grey horse at the gate

12th

In the chill grey woods a bat
flittered out of the shade,
and somewhere in the twilight an owl's cry
made
me afraid

Alone in grey woods at night
with no star in the sky
and a wind with its fingers at my throat
I
dare not cry.

12th

And cows turned lazy heads
wading in mist to the knees
while above bracken and heather
the dew hung its beads on the trees.

Already the sun broke cover.
The mist on the city thinned.
But here on the lonely cold hillside
there was no wind.

Sonnet 10.

7th June

Written in despondency.

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 fires
in comfortable houses, wine, and song?
And we may lose the skill for such desires
at windy corners if we stand too long.

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

Let us go home. And if, at any time
men dream mad dreams, let them read out this rhyme.

12th.

Tomorrow perhaps or tonight...
But no my dear, not now...
She moved on tiptoe across the room
and laid her cold hand on his brow.

O Love you can hear me I think,
It is I ... your young bride...

Remember you more that bright morning
never to leave my side...

The moonlight fell on his face,
and over the heap on the bed.

And she knew by the way he was twisted
her lover was dead.

18th.

The old songs waken weary men from rest,
sting them awake to memory and pain
your breast shall never crush against
her breast
in Hawthorn shelter from the ^{silver} stinging rain.

26th.

The rain blew off. Then thunder crackt its whip,
drove in the ragged pickets of the night.
The East glowed like heaven's honeycomb adrip.
Trees lookt like ~~men~~ things men in that half light

At screeching bird beat up into the wind:
Then one by one the candles of the stars
were snuft by dawn's pale fingers. But my mind
still faced its cage and banged against the bars

Poems in September

9th Seine.

So willows grow by rivers even here,
the women beat gray clothes on flat wet stones
lifting brown faces as the barge draws near
by orisiz with the crew in raucous tones.

But I think not of them as on the bow
I shade my eyes to watch the willows sway,
remembering in greener places how
in ^{cooler} willow shadows I used to fish and play

Epitaph.

15th.

He'd trampt the streets of the City,
not having the price of a bed;
for the only wretches we pity
are those that are twelve years dead. But all the time I was dreaming

of a new dawn breaking, red,
when no one is ever hungry,
and there are no overfed.

Propaganda 11th

Come George, champagne & oysters
a rubber - and then to bed -
said one of the never hungry
to one of the overfed...

a sick girl cought in a doorway;
a beggar sang in the street:
and children crawled in the gutter
looking for something to eat.

Then at a windy corner
a thin man shook his fist.
The policeman rubbed his pencil
and wrote "a Communist".

{Sonnet 11} On Menchen's marriage - (Sept?)

Menchen, God help us, married to a bitch
 that scribbled in the company of swine
 who masturbate and slobber line by line
 in praise of Rabbit and the lousy rich,
 till Decency is left without a stitch
 and Poetry is drowned in pools of wine,
 and Art becomes a lead electric sign
 and every mountain will a fetid ditch.

Menchen, the bastard, clad in armoury
 of shallow wit and vulgar insolence,
 who urinated over love's white bed,
 is now a traitor in a double sense;
 in that he's married after what he said
 and to a woman dirtier than he.

[Sonnet 12] The Doctor Muses. 15th Sept.
 W. V. 4th Sept (J. Horne)
 1950.

Last night I sat beside a woman's bed:
 a candle in a bottle gave us light.
 But when the child came it was cold and dead.
 The father shouting ran into the night.

If it had lived there would have been no heat.
 The grate was empty. Even slums are cold
 when dawn slips silver sandal down the street,
 and turns the gutters to bright streams of gold.

Prize pups have better chances than a child
 who stupidly select a dirty slum
 to be born in. Why not a month ago
 a duchess had a baby... Clynes went wild
 and all the Lefers made a splendid show
 and only filthy Communists were dumb.

15th Sept. The Moscow Road.

Let us go out & take the Moscow road:

Too long we have sat idly in the shade,
or grunted up high hills beneath the goad
of hunger and the heaviness of trade

We went along so many devious ways
that we are 'wilders, weary, & footsore.

We've staggered up and down for dreary days...
But courage comrades - time for us stretch now, with double barrel and puff.

There is one belt left now for us to take:

The old and rutted road to no promise land,

Stand up! Be men! and for your children's sake,
face forward to the sun, march hand in hand.

W.V. 1-11-30
John Home
Fair game 20th

A man stopped me in a lane:

"For Crissake give us a smoke
my belly's rumblin' w' hunger.
I'm on the road as 'broke."

Over the hedges I saw

while he was lighting up

a gamekeeper striding along

with double barrel and puff.

"He's goin to look at the pheasants

The trunk saw blowing rings.

I caught & meekly suggested

how much we bungle things

with features puckered & puzzled

he waited till I had done...

I wish you'd seen his face when I said

"You ought to have that gun!"

workers voice 27th (174)
under name Jack Home
20th

[Sonnet 13]

mendicant I

new title.

The Little Bourgeois is Upset.

A woman rapped my door tonight and stood
nursing a baby in the stinging rain.

Its face was twisted as it wept in pain,
and then thro' lack of sunshine, warmth, and food.

She asked me for a copper, "or as good -
a slice of bread to give the cryin' wean."
I gave her both, told her to call again:
with cold blue lips she thanked me, said she would.

So I went back and sat before the fire,
lit up my pipe, and tried to read a book.

The wind and rain outside became a storm.

I drew the blinds, and heath the fuel higher

but could not free my mind from her thin form
and that poor baby's pitiable look.

lets
25th

[Sonnet 14]

Heart II

W. T.

He Suggests a Solution.

So I have written this that men may know
 Comfort and Warmth are curses till we make
 a new bright world for little children's sake
 and pleasant paths where they may come and go,
 yet not feel cold when winter brings the snow,
 nor suffer thirst in summer none can slake.
 For is the earth not ours if we but take?
 And what is there that we must overthrow?

A Landful, here and there, of insolent men
 whose word bids when the leaf is starve or dead,
 who call in at their offices at ten
 and leave their motors purring in the street.
 By God it's simple — just as you say when
 their little world will crash about your feet

20th

Toga & Consolation.

A preacher stood in the lamplight,
 pray'd loud and bang'd a book,
 while openmouth'd the people throng'd
 to nod and laugh and look.

But we at a lonely corner
 shook to three men and a dog.
 The rain's gold shone in the gutter
 the lamps glow'd green in the fog.

The raved and ranted of heaven
 and glory following death,
 and sang of the pearly portals
 till he splutter'd and choked for breath.

But we were preaching a gospel
 harder and colder than that
 of the better class war & the struggle
 'twixt worker and Plutocrat

yet in the days coming after
 I see men marching proud,
 their standard a bloodred banner
 and not the dead Christ's shroud

26th.

On the names of Awe and Wonder

Tho these things be intangible and dim
 with overthought and study they become
 like missal margin'd heads of seraphim
 smudg'd blank of beauty by earth's dirty thumb

So let us leave them as we leave the wind
 free now from task of waftage or of skin
 for beauty only loves the unconfined,
 rings in the birdsong, scorns the violin

Sonnet 15

26th

When I have made a poem I feel proud
 with joy that lacks relation to its worth,
 As in long seasons of mindwinter's dearth
 my spirit whimpers, shaking this grey shroud.
 So when my hand damp clay with life endowed
 I shook the sky with laughter, scattered mirth
 like kettle spillings round a singing hearth:
 knowing myself elite above the crowd.

The secret of the Universe is there:
 God did not shape us for a thought-out end,
 nor weeps he now because we go astray.

But rather on the limits of the air,
 since utter joy creation doth attend,
 he made us and was glad and went his way.

3044
 to love
 to love

To one who came untimely (March 28 - 29th 1910)

You should have come before this if at all
 for I am sunken back into content,
 like to the man, behind the Bastille wall
 when freedom came, who knew not what it meant.

hid in this quiet town where nothing stirs
 from golden sunset to red sunrise glow,
 save writhing branches of the dark green firs
 that only rest when burdened by thick snow,

I am grown part and parcel of this peace,
 my heart encompassed by this quiet world:
 my day - drift by like smoke from cottages
 rising in softness and gently curled.

Time stops here: and however much we cry
 we only watch the seasons go and come,
 for nothing else moves onward with this sky,
 since man has settled here and made his home.

The Hawthorn by the inn is ageless too:

those oaks along the roadway to the right
when Alfred fled the Danes as saplings grew
and drift their acorns an armada night.

You should have come before this, O my love,
ere I was rooted deeply in the clay.
a growing plant is ever hard to move:
you should have come and plucked me yesterday.

O I am sad having no joy alone,
nor any like in heaven's high fastness.
Had you not come a slow faith would have grown.
You should have come before this - if at all.

The Old Apple grower

It breaks my heart to sell this fruit:
for twenty years I've known each tree,
have cared for bark, and branch and root,
and lived mid them right happily.

But till I fill a sack with good
I must do this, betray my trees
for I am nigh fourscore ^{years old} ~~and old~~,
and mortal stiff about the knees.

Whappen I'll fill that sack this year
then dang the apple will I sell
but call my friends the Janakeper
to make the cider he makes well.

Then I will take the old coachroad
to where the orchard blossoms in spring
and ^{draw to town a merry} ~~stagger back beneath~~ a load
that is not meant for marketing.

Apparition

I stood at twilight on a mound.
The grass was wet beneath my feet.
A dripping moon rose wet & round
as low wind blew faint horn retreat.

A shape of mist with shield and spear
stood in the bracken to his knees.
I raised my hand to call him near...
He trailed his spear into the trees.

I turned me lonely to my hut...
the curtained candle seems a star...
It may have been Cuichulain - but
I think 'twas only Conicobar.

Sonnet 16

29th Sept

On a Trial for Sedition

Our comrade Johnson in a public place
 uttered the truth that most men fear to say.
 So in a stuffy Court one Autumn day
 they sentenced him to prison and disgrace.
 Tho' not to us who know the human race
 moves only where the martyrs shew the way.
 Now he is gone to rest him from the fray:
 for long months we shall not see his face.

It has been said two thousand years ago
 an urgent scolding Jew spoke bitter words
 whereat the High Priest had him bound with cords,
 and crucified, that dreaming men might know
 the danger in rash talk —

Is it not odd
 that magistrates and Mems. call him God?

Poems in October

Gardening

1st

When I catch a whiff of smouldering leaves I know
 that old Time burns his Babylonish garment,
 and, having put away th' accursed thing,
 will turn to strenuous endeavour and
 breast the high crags and icewind blasted hills.
 For, wantoning in summer with the sun,
 he wasted days that had been better spent
 in making household order for his boy,
 who will come home, a singing prodigal,
 when spring floods lanes with blossomy spray and snow.

The easy moral: have your Autumn fire
 to burn the rubbish; work thro' cold boned days
 in sure expectation of the young men's feet,
 that they may move in beauty and with speed
 about the common causeways of the world.
 So when you're gone they'll maybe give a thought,
 of not to you, at least to brooms and fires
 that made a clearing in the garden. Spring
 surely, I think, flings back a pensive glance
 to the bare fields and naked trees of winter.

1st

The next Step

I said to men: thought is too cold a thing,
and intellect is brittle, and will betray.
Wherefore, I cried, subdue these harsher powers
to the hot domination of the flesh.

Obey your instincts. Adam's error was
in eating fruit of knowledge. We are meant
t'obey these tutelages of the blood.

Else why should it so course thro' ebb and flow?

So in my folly I derided thought
how after days of wandering in towns,
observing men - their drear marketing,
I turn and cry - not that th'instincts betray,
for few men have them pure and unimpaired -
but since men drift about at beck and call
of every wind of mental influence -
for God's sake think! think! think! Look out! Beware!
Set down to bedrock! Base your lives on sense;
and when the nations have done homage to this -
time then to give the instincts fuller play,
and have a world race passionate and pure.

2nd "A Thought"

The lawn where crocuses were bright,
and after, daffodils were gold
is carpeted with fresh delight,
for dead leaves burnish old brown mould.

3rd Another - ten O'Clock

A dry crisp mist came down:
street lamps were green and yellow.
Steps rang. Breath's moist. But brown
damp leaves made night air mellow.

no hint of dawn was there:
nor heed for any morrow;
for dead leaves in the air
are synonyms of sorrow.

Again 4th

Saint Peter gazed at Birkenhead,
to heaven hurried, newly dead.
He leaning on a dying stair
excused himself for his affair

4th On a Recent Disaster

I go to bed with book
and candle. Till dawn's crew
in at the window look,
and spray with grass with dew,

I seek to ^{strangle} ~~decide~~ thought
as an assassin strives -
but effort's sum is wrought -
My God! How miners' wives!

Premature Epitaph 4th

God help you, master Chesterton,
the target of your wit is gone.
Soon shall men deem you ^{fault} ~~too~~, as myth
and chuck both Chesterton - and Smith

Said Peter then "When you have done
I'll quote a bit from Chesterton

Charity

A man spoke to me in the dark
 "He haven't a copper to spare?
 This beggin's the hellum lark . . ."
 Under scarf his chest was bare.

I suppose you're a Catholic . . .
 I saw when he spoke of his home . . .
 You stupid bastards make me sick
 with you Pope and his jewels in Rome . . .

"He woudat dar say that to me
 he cined" - the street I belong -
 Amen Lord God. My charity
 is ending of my song.

Matin: Lyric

6th

Imagine a song of the days that are over,
 over, and done with, and far away:
 gone with the singing breath of the clover,
 gone with the dreaming scent of the hay.

Butter I dare not. The red dawn is breaking
 See dawn tinges the tops of the trees:
 Already the birds in the branches are ^{waking}
 Shall I sing counter to any of these?

Pathway 5th

Tho I be resolute and strong
 I am betrayed by wandering eyes:
 tell at earth's agony and wrong
 I scold, with knuckles in my eyes.

One day I know not where or when,
 embittered by my sterile thought,
 and saddened by experience
 I shall discover that I sought;

finding in death my only trust,
 and in the grave my strongest stay:
 for one shall dry my tears with dust,
 the other stop my mouth with clay

Threnody 6th Oct

Passed me a cart with a load of clover,
 as I trod, singing, - an autumn lane -
 singing a dirge for the harvest over,
 a dirge and lament for the rich ripe grain.

For the corn that swist when the wind went sighing,
 and toost gold heads when the tree tops were still,
 in shaken sheaves, in the black barns lying,
 waits for the threshing, the sacks, and the mill.

"Nothing left now that the harvest's over,
 save dreams to glean and heap on the wain"
 These were the words that I sang when the clover
 high in a cart jolted fast in the rain.

The Optimist

6th

He stood in a gateway out of the rain:
 his boots were broken, I saw his toes.
 yet he was as happy as Charlemain,
 tho the wind shook the drip off his nose,

Tho he was happy and whistled a song,
 and smiled up at the clouds in the sky
 I could not share his neglect of earth's wrong
 but when ^{with} last with a curse in my eye

Lines to a Revolutionist in Jail

I went about the town
on business all day:
On little things intent,
in ordinary way.
The price of butter's down.....
Too bad about those men
killed in that accident....
Ager ager ager....

Then in a bus I saw
a young man look at me.
I thought I knew his face....
I knew it could not be.....
Last week did not the law
take you away from us?
O God the sore disgrace!
I - sitting in a bus!

A Fragment in Half rhyme

About the spring tide of that year
I went, a lonely worshipper,
to my saint's shrine to gather his
votive garlands of field lilies,
that aforetime had been brought
in a blossomy charriot.
There walked three maidens, in their hands
carrying thin wally wands,
and strangely wrought embroideries
adorning their silken bodices.

Palm Sunday Remembered

Last night the gale had torn
loose leaves adrift, and spread
a carpet of crisp noise
to startle my dull tread.
The clouds were grey with morn
I thought of that high noon
when to the myriads' voice
Our Christ rode into town.

Astrologer.

Her little house
was sheltered by
thick leafy boughs
that hid the sky.

But the stars
were never seen
towards the bars
she used to lean

and in the flames
she could descry
the flickering names
of those to die.

The Blind Beggar in (6th) Great Victoria Street

She sits and nods and nods
and shakes her little tin,
yet hears the singing gods
above the traffic's din:

When I shall pass some day,
I will not see her there.
She shall have gone away
into the sunbright air -

to run and play with gods
that know not hate nor sin...
But now she sits and nods
and shakes her little tin

189
The Poet and the People

6th

Tho the dream of the poet be singing and golden
the coat of the poet is dirty and old:
Tho he call to the mind the fair days and olden,
he will gain for his pains but a handful of mould.

Tho he shew to the world Heaven's password as taken,
and statter the glories that linger ahead,
Yet the world will not rest till his body be broken,
till they can rejoice and cry out he is dead.

But when the cold clay and the grass his grave cover,
and back in the town they are drinking their wine,
far down in their minds will turn over and over
the cry of a starga, the lilt of a line.

And in an hour the mob will come singing;
singing together the people will come:
from Heaven's steeples a peal will be ringing,
beating his measures to muster them home

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Norman June 1931

Christendom and Heathenry

7th

As I stood alone on a windy mound
and counted the stars in the sky
a horseman came riding northward bound,
but he slackened his pace at my cry.

"O where do ye ride? O where do ye ride
that the rein is loose in your hands?"
"To preach the word of Christ," he cried,
"to the dwellers in heathen lands!"

A year and a day plodded last me there
as I stood on the mound alone,
when the horseman came back with the wind in his hair
but his face was as white as a bone.

"O where do ye ride with the clenched fist?
O where do ye ride again?"
"To deliver the broken body of Christ
from the hands of Christian men"

Derrière la Brume (Alfred Drouin)

Le Souvenir (Henri Regnier)

The sun is dead
behind the mist.
From that far roof
smoke eddies twist.

The lake lies black
beneath black trees:
dark ghosts flit past
in companies.

The earth is cold,
and damp the air:
dawn will not come:
the trees are bare.

Not even a bird
moves, nor a breath ...
Time's gaunt loom weaves
grey shrouds of death.

Do you remember O Romeo, do you remember
the splendid nights of blood above Verona,
and the yellow and green Adige?

Do you remember
the fresh garden, the fountains, & the cypresses
the rival palace bastions with hate,
with chains and dark portcullises?

Do you remember O Montagu?
And the high festival where the tall lords
called across the hall

and the masks?
And the battle
in open street and market place -
the bloody hand the bruised face
and the rattle
of pikes on the flagstones?

Have you forgotten the wrinkled nurse
with the wagging head;
the apothecary's mutter's curse,
and his room in the gloom,

And the shed
with fat vats of poison and - worse?
And the monk in brown gown
who used to kneel down
and numb his old knees
with long rosaries;
and the crash of the gate as it closes,
and the nightingale loud in the roses.

Three English tourists climb the stair
where the broad porch narrows.

A market's held in the Palace square:
red parasols cover green narrow.
where fountains used to bubble, moss
chokes pipe and drain the court across
and brown men trundle barrows.

The marble slab, once white as snow,
where you were buried, Romeo,
is brown and beslobbered with scum.
You make no sound. Yet if I shout the name
of her who shares with you undying fame
As one throws a stone in a pond
You will come.
You will respond - you will remember, Romeo

(17) Sonnet by Pierre Camo

Born in a land of sunshine and hot blood,
 are Spain's best villages not Catalan,
 where cool streams trickle thro' the quiet wood
 but granting comfort to noon-weary man?

For far horizons were to my young eyes
 an open window no rude hand could close
 azure heights and depths of luminous skies
 and shining hills that never shed their snows.

I have gone gladly under burning days
 that split the too ripe pomegranate's rind
 and beaded honey in fantastic ways -
 But more my soul adores the shouting wind
 that sweeps the stars and all Immensity
 with thunderous clamor of the student sea.

(18) La Cathédrale by Edmond Rostand (1858-1918)

They have increased the wrong they must atone.

This building is not lost: the walls remain.

As tho' a Rodin with a vaster brain

Had but turned architect this thing has grown.

A Fort is dead when all its guns are gone.

A shattered temple always is a fane,

for eyes, that look on ^{ceilings} ~~close-roofs~~ with disdain,
 delight to see the sky thro' jagged stone.

Give thanks for we have what we lacked so long
 that which the Greeks had on their golden hill -
 a symbol of beauty sanctified by wrong.

Give thanks then to the friars of that fane
 for they have wrought, tho' they had meant to kill
 a shame for them, for us a Parthenon.

(19)

To the Memory of Heredia by S. C. Leconte.

Hail, sleeping master on thy couch of clay:
 'tis thus a man rests from far conquests
 under the quiet beating of golden wings;
 his purple glory dazzling death's array.
 Sound we the shrill horn, bid the trumpets bray
 in heralding these imperishable things
 that thy defiance loud and louder rings
 magnificent, till even death obey.

Say then is not our sorrow worthy thee?
 Tho' storm clouds gather, sire, are we not brave
 in uttering our stately threnody?
 For surely shall hale mourners by thy door
 transmute to music - music evermore
 the tumult of the world about thy grave.

(20)

Credo by Paul Harel.

I am not one of those that life dismay's:
 The weakness of my fellowmen I hate:
 altho' the tide of doubt be in full state
 I do not lack for anchorage these days.
 How timid hearts seek solace in a phrase
 and weep and call themselves unfortunate.
 My road is roughed, narrower my gate.
 I am not one of those that life dismay's.

I know that one must sin. That is my creed.
 I know that one must strive. It is the law.
 Wherefore I strive to free my soul from dross;
 And when, how sinner, ready is my need
 I only look to Christ, his wounds are raw,
 and doubt and coldness leave me at his cross.

197 26th

The Vacant House .

The wind broke chips off mid night with its blade
whetted to nothing on the frosts' sharp hone:
They dropt with little noise, and left unfrayed
The silence of brown water deep in stone.

The rats of darkness gnaw the moon's green cheese:
mists drifted out, cold panes a child's breath blurs...
And in the waning moonlight naked trees
flickered like shadows of old banisters.

Game. 26th

Last night they say the geese went by:
I was too deep in sleep to hear
The honking phalanx of the sky...
The night, they say, was cold and clear.

For all their nature love they'll sit,
next Christmas, at a steaming board,
eat geese and turkey, mingle wit...
and poetry... — Have mercy Lord.

(Tristan Kluge) 198

Le Rideau 29th

26th Similes

The moon is like that Spartan lad
who hid a fox beneath his cloak:
and tho' it disembowled him
he neither cried nor spoke.

The stars are sparks from Vulcan's forge,
but cold and fist in vacancy,
and growing colder year by year
til post numb earth and sky.

Émile Henriot (30th)
Les Joueurs de Tennis

The thick mist's curtains lifted by the sun.
A young girl shows her face
moving her window curtain from its place,
and my heart brightens in its turn

Bare armed, with open shirt, they stand in white
magnificently tense to take the flight
of the fly ball by a swift and easy stride.
They are superb. They move with quiet pride
about the white lined squares, across the grass,
like these greek lads loved by old Phidias
when in the arena sinewy they saw
how wage their shining battles in the sun.

30th

Memento

Now Autumn groans for movement
at naked shivering trees:
for mists no sooner wave than rent
grant them but little ease.

But Spring for all her daffodils
and lambskins in the sky
wanders uttering thro' the hills
a sad and blossomy cry

Thought 30th

I have no great capacity for doubt
being with meagre reasons satisfied.
But even to me that stony virgin, Thought,
comes often to lie coldly by my side.

And tho' she try to tender touch my blood
chafing my body with her bony hands
I get no heat from her. Yet I am wood
when any fancy loosens her breastbands,

or shows a hint of bosom next her blouse.
O what have I to do with Thought that she
should come to me or linger in my house
and beg me partner her adultery?

Epigram 30th

Aye that's the trouble. Poetry's a rape
of Thought with Language. Thought's the masculine...
And lightfoot, if the Siren's word escape
Pan Thought can only scratch himself and whine.

Evolutionary Lyrics

I 30th

In waking hours I am discreet
and circumspect in deed & word:
and in the roaring city street
am hardly noticed from the herd...

But in the dark when snug abed
and blankets cloak my breathing shape
I leave great burrows for my dead...
& crack my fleas like fatter ape

III 31st

Potbellied men who sit and smoke
O shapeless women in the bus -
our fathers once were hardy folk
but they would disincline us

if they should see us in a wood
deprived of clothing, strength and youth -
where once on swaying boughs they stood
and gibbered at the sable tooth

II 30th

With men in houses I forget
my arboreal lineage -
turn up my collar when it's wet
and read strange markings on a page -

But at the sight of windblown grass
deedrotted fancies trouble me.
Without a hay I never pass
beneath the shadow of a tree

IV Ichabod 31st

My fathers trapped the Mammoth,
and stabbed the great Elk's side
then put it in a picture
before the last glow died.

And would you wish an artist
to paint you high on a stool
trapping a writing-ledge
or stabbing with a - rule!

V

31st

The Cavemen lasted ten thousand years
 then lay in the gravel and died ...
 Ten centuries saw the Roman spears
 fall splintered by Tiber's side.

Three hundred years since we vanquish Spain
 and took to the open seas ...
 Already we crouch in the slanting rain
 and rest our chins on our knees

VI 31st

Christ's dead and is clean forgotten ...
 all this in two thousand years ...
 the wood of his cross is rotten:
 we find no sign of the spears ...

Yet out of the silent gravel
 the flint and the skeleton ...
 God knows how far we must travel
 or if we have fairly begun ...

Perhaps when Troy's towers were burning
 or fires were first lit in a cave
 our ancestors took the wrong turning
 and our journey must end in the grave.

Poems in November.

Sonnet 21

3rd.

Revolutionary Anniversary

Tho' Lenin sleeps within the Kremlin wall,
 and Trotsky, to himself and us untrue,
 basks in the sunshine by the Bosphorus blue:
 yet the great work goes on perpetual.
 And shall, until all men have heard the call,
 and scorning life and danger, build anew
 a habitable house where nettles grew,
 and pleasant paths where weeds were rank and tall.

Let us rejoice, exulting in men's hate:
 across the world our comrades can be found ...
 Tho' massacred in China, captive bound
 in Meerut, Dayton, and Ontario,
 we hasten in the day they celebrate
 in our great Brotherland of pines and snow

The Northman Nov 1931

A Chant for the Workers of the World,
on the 13th Anniversary of the Revolution.

Let the engines roar. Let the engines roar.
We must make far more. Let the engines roar.
Let the shuttles sing. Let the shuttles sing.
And the hammers ring. And the derricks swing.
Shoulder to shoulder, woman and man,
another leave for the five year plan
five year Five Year Five Year Plan.

Pull down the slums. Give the factories room.
Comrade, comrade, back to your loom.
Build bright houses with plenty of room:
no more cramping in the dirt and the gloom.
Way for the tractor: ten miles of wheat,
and children waiting for bread in the street.
Shoulder to shoulder, woman and man,
another leave for the five year plan
five year Five Year Five Year Plan.

You with the ladder, me with the hod ...
far too busy to bother with God ...

Far too busy building a school,
or making a city beautiful ...
Let the engines roar. Let the engines roar
from the Urals crags to the Baltic shore.
Shoulder to shoulder, woman and man,
another leave for the five year plan.
five year Five Year Five Year Plan.

Marx was a man with a big black beard,
he's dead many years, but he still is feared.
Not because of his menacing look:
but because of the words that he wrote in a book.
Ilyitch Lenin was small and square,
but he bored thro the Iron with his gimlet stare ...
And now he sleeps in the Kremlin wall:
Ilyitch Lenin, square and small ...

But if he should find us standing there
he'd bore us thro with his gimlet stare.
And Marx would shout "You've forgot to look
at the thick black type in the big red book."
So comrade, comrade, back to your loom.
Let the engines roar. Give the factories room.

We must not stop till every man
 is part of the World's Great Five Year Plan.
 We must not stop till kings go down,
 and across the Earth there isn't a crown.
 And no one hungry, and no one cold,
 while others sit high on their bags of gold.
 We must not stop till Russia's all wheat,
 and children are singing for joy in the street.
 We must not stop till the World is free
 of War, and Hate, and Poverty.
 Till the World is free. Till the World is free.
 Let the engines roar. Let the engines roar.
 Shoulder to shoulder, woman and man,
 another leave for the five year Plan
 five year

Five Year
 Five Year Plan

Christmas Concert

On Christmas morn our thoughts go back
 to Josef and the lowing beast.
 But thought forsakes her zodiac
 and lingers o'er another feast:
 for tho' the snow drift on the sill
 we think of Calvary's bare hill;
 and of the tomb where he was took -
 insooth a very Christmas box
 that nothing yields till it be broke.
 Thus turn our fancies to the flakes
 and tho' we think of Calvary
 it is the manger that we see.

14th Annunciation

It seem'd that I must bid the Muse farewell,
 choose Roger Fry or Ratten for a guide,
 begin all over, learn to read and spell,
 in a new idiom, by my teacher's side.

Reverie

Now Meredith has gone away,
 Graeme Roberts named, settles down,
 and Paddy's hoping for the day
 when Cheryl'll wear her bridal gown,
 There's only David left - and me:
 and now our paths are torn in two.
 Forlorn and lonely shall we be
 who sought to build the earthenew,
 and altogether bring the day
 that lesser poets only sing.
 But Meredith has gone away
 and Roberts wears a wedding ring.

But at each turn Thought blew his bugle call
 and creepmouse fancy spun his lyric mill
 for every bird or picture on the wall
 was big with Thought whose only cord fulfilled

207
Poems in December.

I

1st

I heard a strange bird cry across the moon
as I strode slowly home, thought's chin sunk low...
A dark grey tattered cloudquilt boded soon
the quiet tuminal of the year's first snow.

I stoft and lookt. The moon was nearly full:
but thro the cloudrents stars pinnd up the sky,
I could not see the creature, knew no rule
to tell bird's plumage from one startled cry.

To know the names of all the bards of Greece,
and old dead poets' versecraft is a boon
that I'd give up to win my spirit peace
from that strange nightbird's cry across the moon.

II

When a cold wind sears & scorches
and frost cracks the smarting lip
stars are slaves with windy torches
swaying from a steady ship.

When the autumn night is mellow
and the trees are not yet bare
stars are fireflies, witting, yellow
pinnd invisibly in air.

III

I wake instinctively with song
when daffodils shake in the sun
and cawing rooks on bare trees throng
to watch the green advance begun.

So too, in winter when the frost
plays pixie with his snow-cold talk
the lyric fervor that was lost
renews in me like sap in stalk.

2nd

[22]

Sonnet

on a lizard in a box.

Where old Cassandra rested her tired bones
when she was brought with other spoil from Troy
is prey to wind and weather: dog and boy
make here their^a haven for their raucous tones.
And where dark Helen, shaken with low moans
wept for lost Paris and those days of joy
the wall is rent, her girdle's someone's toy
and spotted lizards squirm beneath the stones.

Today my heart goes seaward with the ships
that Greece flung from her for that ten-year's war...
and you have Helen's eyes, and you her lips
and I lift up dead Ajax's scimitar...
because, forsooth, a lizard someone brought
has chiseld fancy's marble with sharp thoughts.

December 2nd.

How came you here? Was it some peasant boy
 who rudely seized thy restless shape in his hands
 when you were basking on broad table lands
 of slab and pavement in the ruins of Troy?

Or did some dusty scientist for joy
 ensnare thee in net at midnight on the sands
 that drift the hollow places where Thebes stands
 a specimen for one, for one a toy?

Does some god grieve me so and I not hear?

O lizard we are strangers you and I,
 and kinsmen in the company of fear
 and aliens beneath this wintry sky
 who turn instinctive leads away from this
 dreaming we see the dawnbright Acropolis.

2nd

Tomorrow I will sing, tomorrow make
 a bitter lyric for the people's sake
 that are this winter in so sore distress
 with sleet and rags, cold days and wretchedness.

But for today by fingertwists of will
 I shall forget them, dreaming of a hill
 that lies light coated with the year's first snow,
 and watching thro' the dream, white swanshapes go
 stiffnecked in circles from the freezing lake.

Tomorrow I will go - tomorrow make
 a shouting anthem of a world set free,
 if not from frost, at least from poverty!

2nd.

With camels to Shah Solomon
that Arab lady Sheba came,
and in the old King's eyes there shone
a subtle flame, a lustful flame.

That Arab lady seduced his bed,
the soft white bed of Solomon...
and sent a Nubian maid instead
to nurse him till his fire was gone.

But Nubian maids and Jewish girls
were cold companions to the King
who longed to kiss those Arab curls
and hug her thighs, and hear her sing.

So thus it was one morn she came
to jest and give wise Solomon
bethinking they had quenched his flame...
They got that day young Prester John.

2nd.

Think not that I these days refuse
the bedfight of the naked muse,
for long have I to her been wed,
if not in church, at least in bed...

But that awhile I turn apart
to grapple with another art
wherein I get what she can't give,
a comfortable way to live...

Aye means enough to keep us both
when I am passed my eager youth.

Aye means enough til she can make
a kind world keep me for her sake.

6th.

I walked today within a wood...
Spring made the sap kin to my blood,
and as the trees, thin branch by branch,
saluted Spring's green avalanche.

I stood and shouted out like mad:
Here was the Grail - and Galahad...
and all the earth was clean with youth...

The lyrics lines dried in my mouth
for in each knur and knot of tree
were wrinkles of adultery,

til, branch by branch, elm, oak and fir,
a dutress and adulterer,

filled earth and sky with lewd desire
til blood and sap became one fire...

til even the vestal moon receives
a lattice of lascivious leaves...

And as the dark came quietly
the stars were pollen of the sky.

10th.

The trees and moon, if black and gold
had been a little fainter
were like a picture by an old
and yellow slanteyd painter.

And yet no lyric in my Reed
put on that wistful fashion:
but writhing sonnets, hissing, red,
ran molten from my passion.

10th.

I waited for the snow
because at dawn the wind
blew steadily from the northeast
and shook the cord of the blind.

And when I saw the tree
it stood no longer strait
but croucht & whined in a sullen dread
and creakt like a rusty gate.

12th.

no lyric comes. I twist and turn,
 th' excretâ clogs my colon up.
 My guts are withered by men's scorn;
 and tho' I writte no turd will drop.

Maybe the worried men I pass
 who fustle, whitefaced in the streets
 long too for lyric loveliness
 but carry hard turds in their guts.

Philosophy ... 15th

I turn from that old Roman Emperor
 who laid a firm hand on my quaking heart
 and bid me clench my teeth. I turn from him
 who laugh and scolded thro' rough Palestine,
 being too conscious of the nails and spears,
 and weary of the clamor of the crowd
 who wear their garlands, then cry "Crucify"
 Not being old enough I cannot wear
 the mellow purple of King Solomon:
 longing indeed not for emotional things

A Prayer. 26th.

'Let not your heart be troubled. Ye
 believe in God, believe in me.'

I hope you do not think it odd
 that I love {^{you} Christ} but have no God.

(a Freudian wish) but for the intellect
 and its cold lines and quiet exactitude.

So in my three and twentieth year I turn
 to one old Poet classic men ignore
 in their most dusty arguments and strife.
 I turn to my Lucretius. On his scroll
 are hieroglyphs will open Ali's Cave,
 and deck me and my verse in vestiture
 not unbecoming in the courts of men.
 Then over tumult of both tongue and pen
 I'll walk like Christ that night on Galilee.
 And in the proper arena of my peers
 they'll draw aside, leave holders, nudge and whisper,
 "Beware of him. He is a man of one book."
 And puffing schoolmen, beaten to their knees,
 will rise, dust hoods and cassocks, and slink away.

For by the gods of any faith on earth
 I must be free as all men must be free.

19th

The Warts

I sat beside the dusty grate
and struggled with a difficult lore.
Snow drifted deep on sill and gate...
but boys sang carols at my door...

I rose impatient to bid them go,
but high above their voices heard
thin camellias across the snow
ring like a dewy throated bird.

My grate flared up, and in the room
I saw grey faces glimmer white:
old Joseph and Mary made my room
a haven from the snowy night.

So when hard knuckles rapped my door
I ran with eagerness to greet
the tall dark shepherds with their lore
but they had left the lamplight street

20th

Dawn came at breakfast, flinted on my plate,
spun threads of gold from mother's silver hair,
and, tho' the day was cold, his coming late
made fresh & sweet the clear december air.

I had been wakened by the noise of crows
and thrushes in a quaint antiphony
to watch the trees thro' that grey light dawn
before he ^{light spang} ~~drifted~~ ^{thru} ~~the~~ ^{as} herald of his advent from the sea.

at night the house seemed large ^{for both} ~~enough~~ ^{for us:}
two chairs take little hearthroom at the most.
And fires can be too bold and generous,
yet little worth in thawing fog or frost.

But now the house was tiny once again
and in the bright cold air the table stood,
with little cups carved & uncut for ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{two} ~~two~~ ^{men}
and two small loaves like tiny blocks of wood.

216

22nd.

Boarding house Cooks

White maggots crawl across the meat,
the week-old dishcloths stiff with grease -
a thousand years from this dull street
to dim Greek dauns she bares white knees.

The cobwebs catch the flying dust
teardrubbles stain the dirty cloth
and tho' her body writhes with lust
she cuts white celery for the broth

The Shortest day 22nd

Snatching a winesweet hour at noon
I made a truant holiday
because I knew an early noon
should lantern my cold homeward way.

For Winter's King today and gives
only a fistful of the sun
and tho' by sun each creature lives
the fare is scanty, and soon done.

A mist still waft earth all about
and frost creakt anklejoint & knee
but in a sheet I saw Spring's scout
a lively branch and budding tree

Via artis. 24th.

my early discontent
has dwindled with the years
til I no longer cry dissent
against the troubled stars...
Tho' I these days have not
wrong meaning from earth's heart
I give dismissal to cold thought
and eat and sleep for art.

As that old Aryan prince
who when a lad had cined
for the flying moon. But once
Sumantra by his side
held up a polished steel
and caught the moon for him
so thro' this gateway beautiful
my spirits' peace shall come.

30th.

I

When you are dead I shall not wear
 throughout the day the flowers you wrought:
 enough to deck my braided hair
 with the cold lilies of thy thought
 before a lonely mirror's glance
 when candles burn with steady flame
 lest men should deem my arrogance
 a blot upon your quiet ^{name} flame.

III

The shadows that writhe on the wall
 the shapes that play pranks with the blind
 may rattle and beckon and call
 far down in the well of my mind.

yet only the clock in the hall,
 the fire, and the book on my knees
 keep my body this side of the wall
 when the wind calls my kin to the trees.

II

There is more wisdom in a verse
 tho' spoken by a beggarman
 than in the charts astronomers
 tra'd out on bricks in Babylon.

And yet the songs of Babylon
 that strange folk carol'd thro' the years
 have left no hieroglyph on stone,
 have dwindled in the starry air.

IV

The old old woman and her friend
 whisper of old and quiet things
 knowing full well that near the end
 old minds stray on strange wandering.

and they would end their days in peace
 but not as cattle dealers die
 or grumbling veterans find release
 in a ruff salute or market cry.

30th

[Sonnet 24].

So I have laugh'd that others may not cry,
 have play'd young Gobbo for their longer mirth,
 making bright jest and paradox of death
 lest they grow 'ware and waken with a sigh
 and like sleep walkers stumble suddenly.

For they, poor fools, forget the pains of birth,
 ignore the honest candor of the earth,
 and dream that when men die they do not die.

For I have seen too many seasons pass
 to festulate a body that survives
 the quiet treaty of the worm and grass.

But I know too when autumn leaves go down
 they bear no hints of spring's returning lives
 nor shout for greenness, being red or brown.

[Sonnet 25]

If Adam had not fallen there had been
 no Troy nor Helen, and no hearts ^{that} to turn
 to watch Ulysses flounder, Dido burn,
 nor march well up and bubble o'er in green.
 Nay also there had never been the teen
 of Socrates who was too wise to spurn
 the henlark. And there would be none to learn,
 if Christ had lived, what his hot phrases mean.

Then let us praise the name of mother Eve,
 and couple Adam in our praising rime,
 for if thro' them we too have learned to grieve
 from their rash theft springs what makes man sublime;
 and surely God who out of boredom wrought
 this universe will add a kindly thought.

Credo.

The real world is perfect. This is broken.
 How else can cankers flaw the early rose?
 But somewhere, by this very rose's token,
 there is a land where blossoms open and close,
 perpetually to ebb and flow with the seasons,
 yet never hurt by ugliness or death.
 Tho' figures flicker, still there never lessens
 the heart beat throbbing out the heart's red faith.

So I have come to this. That after bitter
 and lonely moments on thought's mountain peak,
 I leave the stony summits, called to utter
 the starbright truth the elder poets spoke.

There is no death. This world is only seeming,
 and somewhere in the limits of the sky
 there is a pageant coming, going, coming,
 of which we mirror fragments brokenly.

And, if your eyes are keener than your fellows;
 you too shall see beyond what's here and now;
 shall see the shivering daffodils and swallows
 while yet the earth is black before the snow.

Tho' nigh two thousand springs have died and quickened
 since Christ hung limp upon the wretched rood,
 tonight you will see, if you are truly wakened,
 th' eternal gesture of the dying god.

Then never fear that what ye do is little
 and disregarded in the vasty night,
 for each shrill skirmish here is half a battle
 wag'd once, and ever, in the infinite.

And tho' ye die, and bone and sinew dwindle
 to the grey dust of death, and men forget
 'tis but the shadow passes. The spirit's candle
 is in that starry panorama set.

Parodies - December 1930.

The Wandering Yeats telleth the Policeman of the
 noise that is in his head.

I

Say did a tram pass?
 Aye had an hour ago.
 Who drained my bloody glass
 How the hell could I know?
 Better to be sitting here,
 head down but elbow up
 drinking a mug of beer
 or maybe a cider cup.

II

I went into "the Hazel Wood"
 because a thirst was in my throat;
 and stood and banged the bar and drank
 til I had spent my last pound note.
 But when the clock cried out at ten
 the room was clear save for a lout
 who gripped me by the pants and ran
 and ran and ran me out.

I will arise and go now and go where booze is free
 and a large whisky will I have there and a mug of foamy beer
 and a fair young rosy red barmaid shall sit along with me
 till stars fall out of the sky and the cold dawn is here.

The fancy changes and the place is changed. The
 accent becomes bucolic

Get up lad, up and ready —
 the gutter's wet and cold
 and lads should all go steady
 lest they grow quickly old...

Nay friend I lie easy
 without my hat and shoes.....
 The gutter's soft as velvet
 to one that's full of booze.

Fragment of "An Ode on 1930"

I don't wear the bardic robe losing
 not in deft lyric stanzas of the spring,
 nor in a cold analysis
 of any intellectual thing
 that is
 too intricately wrought
 for common understanding and clear thought.

I only sum
 the many echoes that have come
 from this now dying year
 that I may make
 a solemn unity
 of diverse things that were,
 to be
 an odic temple for the old year's sake,
 and in some way a dim remembrance of me.

A year of pity and of hopelessness
 and deep distress:
 of hunger in the slums, and discontent —

A year of sudden death in earth and air,
 of pity at the eve of things,
 of barren autumns, ~~deserted~~ springs,
 of summers that were fair,
 but fair too soon:
 and found their orchard trees inevitably rent
 till a white harvest moon
 found only its broad image on the fields
 where floods
 bore off the premature discarding of the woods —

England before 1750. (an exercise)

The period I sing begins in hope,
 Tho' vested in the garb of Mr Pope.
 Men gaze expectant on the morning skies
 and see new kings and noblemen arise.
 For trading swains with guineas made at work
 in selling shirts and broadcloth to the Turk
 have put on coronets, laid by their shears,
 and move as equals 'mid the Nation's peers.
 Their wives and daughters curtsy in the press,
 in hot Ind's fluttering muslin loveliness.
 But common folk, alas, do now begin
 to spend the Peace in Palaces of gin!
 Our wars are done. The Spaniard's met eclipse;
 and on his main there throng our laden ships.
 The landed men have trampled on the Crown,
 and sit to make our Laws in London Town.
 For these nor King nor Lackey's worth a groat
 but Fortyshilling Owners have a Vote.
 So when the German King grows tired of men
 and longs for women, he retires to Ken...
 But Verdant Woods nigh that enamell'd Stream

no longer in the rural Sunshine gleam.
 The Whigs, rejoiced to see the Tories broke,
 in secret Conclave rule the State - and smoke.
 The Monarch, comprehending not their talk,
 yawns, dozes, yawns - and goes out for a walk.
 They choose for Chairman Robert of King's Lynn,
 to face and quell the Lower Chamber's din.
 He knows the Merchants are his friends and need
 Tobacco, Silk, and Wine, from taxes freed.
 He knows the Tories look to Gallia's Strand,
 so keeps high Taxes off the Tories' Land.
 Wars all cost money: that makes Taxes soar.
 His Policy is Peace. The Benches snore.
 Beyond the City turn ye back and scan
 the stately redbrick Houses of Queen Anne.
 No crazy Gables these for Tudor bores -
 and linkboys throng about the massive Doors.
 There goes my Lady in her Fontange Hood.
 What Nation boasts as beautiful - or good?
 Skills both at Whist and Spinnet she can play
 till parted Curtains bring the Sudden Day.
 The Footman snuffs the Candles unaware,
 and calls the fellows with the Sedan Chairs.

The eightday Clock creaks at the Hour of Five
 and Hawkers Barrowes make the Streets alive.
 The Watch wakes up, sees Sunlight on Paul's Dome,
 cries out the Time and Weather, ^{hobbles} hurries home.
 The ladies rise, despite the Hostess hints,
 and rustle o'er the floor in Yellowe Chints.
 Silkguilled Petticoates, Steel Hoops and Bone,
 mark them as Venus' Vestals and our Own.
 Now they are gone: and there is naught to see
 save th' Urban Glory of Mahogany.
 Dawn breaks along the Levels of the Thames,
 begets the famous Palace of St. James.
 See what a vista broadning Daylight yields
 You's Tyburn standing in Green Open fields.
 There Tarpin died. The York Road's safe at last.
 The Age of moonlight Gentlemen is past.
 O bear thine ear and list the Hunters Horn
 ring hollow thro' the Dewy Air of morn.
 My Lord rides out, announced by farmyard cocks,
 to lose ten pound & kill the darting fox.
 He skewes his Head to the slow Logging Row,
 for th' old fullbottomed Wig is dying out.
 Thus Fashion's change. And in remotest lanes

where hobblers bore Swords they carry Canes.
 The merchant's high Ambition and Desire
 is for the Silver Buttons of the Squire.
 Shopboys ^{stroll} walk now in new trim plotted Scenes,
 instead of Ledgers, reading Magazines!
 O noble Press, this is thy Golden Age.
 We think of Steele's Gay Wit, and Swift's hoarse Rage,
 of Addison's new tribe, and of Defoe
 whose ceaseless Quill illuminates the Show.
 Tho' Lords may hunt, the Rusticks on the Green
 with Innocent Amusement fill the Scene,
 at Morris dance and maypole. After here
 they, with thick limbs, urge on the Flying Sphere.
 And Frugal too. They need but for Delight
 rye bread and cheese that Townsman would not bite.
 And sturdily they use the Spade and Plow
 with honest Perspiration on each brow:
 content, beside their masters shearing fields,
 with all the gain their boggy common yields.
 For have they not in their low Cottage Rooms
 the Bales of Wool, and wealth expanding Looms?

Thus Albion is as a Landlords Heir

who, after strife with kinsfolk for his share,
 and hard contention with his Neighbours great
 wins both his Battles, gaining his Estate.

A happy England this: and we must thank
 the cunning Scotsman and his famous Bank:
 the gentlemen Adventurers of the East
 who come back Nabobs, wealth and Fame increased;
 the busy men who labor hard at home
 in spinning fortunes with the frame of Lombe;
 the stout and hardy mariners from far Cathay
 who bring us Cargoes of the fragrant Tea;
 and Lady Montagu who taught us how
 to kill the Poxe with Bile wrung from a Cow.

Run then O nymphs and tell th' Olympian Jove
 that here's a place where his gay Throng may now
 yet deem on high Olympus still to be —
 In cultivation, Empire, Trade and Tea!

Serenade from "Passant" (François Coppée)

Darling here again is spring:
 comes the Sun from wayfarings -
 Look the nests are loud with love.
 Clear the air and light the sky
 on each tree you may descry
 the soft snow of the turtle dove.

Leave thy false bewitching glass
 that so long the mirror was
 for the weaving of each bliss.
 Take no thought of clasp or bow -
 soon the tangled twigs will throw
 loose its golden loveliness.

Ode for 1928.

O Year of no account! O year that led
 in its embrace no flaming deed or bold.
 The axe strikes and the weary tree is felled,
 its boughs amolte in the blustered cold
 gray wind that sweeps the dead leaves of the year ...

How shall we know you, turning o'er the page?
 What thought shall blossom from the yellow leaf?
 How shall men weigh or gauge
 you? For great joy or grief?

The seasons held their wonted pilgrimage
 and swallows came, and cornerakes on the hill.
 The curtains dropt upon the dusty stage
 in strict accord with playwright nature's will ...

Tonight I tally up what has been done,
 and what the wise men of the earth have said.
 So there is naught to lend oblivion
 or blow the dusty drifting dust that heaps the dead.

May. Hardy died. The long grey twilight passed
of that great time of narrative and song.

Great Pagan then art buried, then the last
of those high spirits whose fame the overcast
shall break upon an age that long
survives our petty heritage of wrong.

And Goose is gone, booklover, minor bard,
to be with Austin Dobson, Andrew Lang.

And Haywood, stormy son and foully starved,
whose name o'er earth for revolution rang.

Thames rose and swept the gutters of the slums,
in augury of when the people rise.

And Etna with her shudder-thunder drums
rained desolation from her flaming skies.

And hurricanes on far off shores
market men as lacking empery of earth.

But anxiously to ape tornado roars
mad statesmen bring wild policies to birth
of armaments and cannery and gas.

For 'tis but slowly that we slough the beast...

And still are kneeling in tones' dewy grass

groping for tines to light the bloodlust feast.

And half a world away a sturdy king
forces an equal yoke

upon the necks of his wild bigand folk
that they resent and struggle with. I sing

of other wars, of China, risen, young,
of small republics marking in their hate,
of desert riders from the sandhills sprung
that gather ominous at Mecca's Gate:

but these have been before and are not new.

A frog-pufft man sits in the Clair of State
and rules the wide dominion of the West:

America, no change has come to you.

The same old fingers clutch the cracking reins,
the same pail coffers hold the thinning gains.

I had feared. In Nicaragua

Sandinio's horsemen guard old Freedom's flag

that flamed once north and South America

with universal brag.

A madman's flight. Lost blindmen in the snow.

Dishonoured names, and nameless deeds unspoke.
 A swaying battle... till all peoples know
 The broken men have seen the Russian smoke.

May year, then hast account, none shall forget
 The smokeless chimneys and the idle wheels,
 The slow starvation and the weary feet
 of stunted mothers. How the years a reel
 to think that men after two thousand years
 have got ~~so~~ further on the road than these
 proud charities
 and fait unreal tears!

If this fast year has deepened discontent
 and set the hearts of people red a glow
 with fanatical desire to overthrow
 the things of wrong, then surely it has meant
 far more than some bright year
 that seems to bring the better day more near!

I have been good to her
 We do not watch the light stars
 Hard buffeted
 St. Stephen's day
 I never heard the birds
 The cold today was more intense.

O you are kind and lavish Sennet.

