

***Youth and Age (extract)***

Verse, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying,  
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee -  
Both were mine! Life went a-maying  
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,

When I was young!

When I was young? - Ah, woeful When!  
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!  
This breathing house not built with hands,  
This body that does me grievous wrong,  
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands  
How lightly then it flashed along,  
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,  
On winding lakes and rivers wide,  
That ask no aid of sail or oar,  
That fear no spite of wind or tide!  
Nought cared this body for wind or weather  
When Youth and I lived in't together.

***Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)***  
***born in Ottery St Mary***

***It is not growing like a tree***

In bulk, doth make men better be;  
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,  
To fall a log at last, dry, bald and sere:  
A lily of a day,  
Is fairer far in May,  
Although it fall and die that night;  
It was the plant and flower of light.  
In small proportions we just beauties see;  
And in small measures, life may perfect be.

***Ben Jonson***  
***(1572-1637)***

***Mrs Darwin***

*7 April 1852.*

Went to the Zoo.

I said to Him –

Something about that Chimpanzee over there reminds me of you.

***Carol Ann Duffy***  
***Poet Laureate***

***A bit averse***

Can't get enough  
of poems from an earlier time;  
because they rhyme.

Their good old rumtytum  
points surely where they're leading,  
and shapes my reading.

You say that I am retro  
to think such poets merry  
—and worth the sherry?

Poetry in motion  
is not for me, nor is the fluffy.  
So sorry, CA Duffy!

***Jonathon Treyer***

***Gather ye rosebuds***, otherwise known as  
***To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time***

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying:  
And this same flower that smiles to-day  
To-morrow will be dying.  
The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,  
The higher he's a-getting,  
The sooner will his race be run,  
And nearer he's to setting.  
That age is best which is the first,  
When youth and blood are warmer;  
But being spent, the worse, and worst  
Times still succeed the former.  
Then be not coy, but use your time,  
And while ye may, go marry:  
For having lost but once your prime,  
You may for ever tarry.

***Robert Herrick***  
***(1591-1674)***

## ***CORMORANT***

See how steadfastly they stand  
the cormorant of Lympstone Sand  
in ranks, like booties on parade,  
with all their better parts displayed.

They face up nobly to the wind  
and neatly tuck their tails behind  
and number off from left to right.  
Their hearts are true. Their eyes are bright.

They never twitch or jig about  
But hold their heads high, chest puffed out  
and perk their bills up, if you please,  
to smackbang forty five degrees.

These cormorant of Lympstone Sand  
defer to none in all the land  
nor ever let their bearing flag  
lest some fond souls might think them shag.

***Ralph Rochester***

***We'll go no more a-roving***

So we'll go no more a-roving  
So late into the night,  
Though the heart be still as loving  
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,  
And the soul wears out its breast,  
And the heart must pause to breathe,  
And Love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,  
And the day returns too soon,  
Yet we'll go no more a-roving  
By the light of the moon.

***Lord Byron***  
***(1788 – 1824)***

***When June is come***

When June is come, then all the day  
I'll sit with my love in the scented hay:  
And watch the sunshot palaces high,  
That the white clouds build in the breezy sky.

She singeth, and I do make her song,  
And read sweet poems the whole day long:  
Unseen as we lie in our haybuilt home,  
O, life is delight when June is come.

***Robert Bridges***  
***(1844-1930)***

Sumer is icumen in –  
Lhude sing, cuccu!  
Groweth sed and bloweth med  
And springeth the wude nu.  
Sing cuccu!

Ewe bleteth after lamb,  
Lows after calve cu,  
Bulluc starteth, bucke farteth.  
Merrie sing, cuccu!  
Cuccu, cuccu,  
Wel singes thu, cuccu!  
Ne stop thu never nu!

Sing, cuccu, nu! Sing cuccu!  
Sing, cuccu! Sing, cuccu, nu!

***Anonymous***  
***(c. 1250)***

### ***Sonnet number eighteen***

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd:  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest.  
    So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
    So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

***William Shakespeare (1564-1616)***

*To celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
of the publication of Shakespeare's sonnets in May 1609*

***Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam.***

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,  
Love and desire and hate:  
I think they have no portion in us after  
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:  
Out of a misty dream  
Our path emerges for a while, then closes  
Within a dream.

***Ernest Dowson***  
***(1867 – 1900)***

***Rose thou art sick***

O rose thou art sick:  
The invisible worm  
That flies in the night  
In the howling storm,  
Has found out thy bed  
Of crimson joy,  
And his dark secret love  
Does thy life destroy.

***William Blake***  
***(1757 – 1827)***

## ***A Red, Red Rose***

My luve is like a red, red rose  
    That's newly sprung in June:  
My luve is like the melodie,  
    That's sweetly played in tune.  
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
    So deep in luve am I,  
And I will luve thee still, my dear,  
    Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
    And the rocks melt with the sun!  
And I will luve thee still, my dear,  
    While the sands o' life shall run.  
And fare-thee-weel, my only luve,  
    And fare-thee-weel a while!  
And I will come again, my luve,  
    Tho' it were ten-thousand mile.

***Robert Burns***  
***(1759 – 1796)***

***Good Appetite***

Of breakfast, then of walking to the pond;  
Of wind, work, rain and sleep I never tire.  
God of monotony, may you be fond  
Of me and these forever, and wood fire.

***Mark van Doren (1894-1972)***

### ***Breakfast***

We ate our breakfast lying on our backs  
Because the shells were screeching overhead.  
I bet a rasher to a loaf of bread  
That Hull United would beat Halifax  
When Jimmy Stainthorpe played full-back instead  
Of Billy Bradford. Ginger raised his head  
And cursed, and took the bet, and dropt back dead.  
We ate our breakfast lying on our backs  
Because the shells were screeching overhead.

***Wilfrid Gibson (1878-1962)***

***Golden slumbers***

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,  
Smiles awake you when you rise:  
Sleep pretty wantons do not cry,  
And I will sing a lullaby,  
Rock them rock them lullaby.

Care is heavy therefore sleep you,  
You are care and care must keep you:  
Sleep pretty wantons do not cry,  
And I will sing a lullaby,  
Rock them rock them lullaby.

***Thomas Dekker***  
***(1572-1632)***

Western wind when will thou blow,  
The small rain down can rain –  
Christ, if my love were in my arms  
And I in my bed again.

***Anonymous***  
***(15<sup>th</sup> century)***

***A Celtic Riddle***

*Many were met, men of discretion  
wisdom and wit, when in there walked...*

Two ears it had, and one eye solo,  
two feet and twelve hundred heads,  
back, belly, a brace of hands  
a pair of sides and shoulders and arms  
and one neck.

***Name, please!***

**from the *Exeter Book of Riddles*  
(copied c. 940 & given to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric d.1072)  
*translated by Michael Alexander***

***The Night Has a Thousand Eyes***

The night has a thousand eyes,  
And the day but one;  
Yet the light of the bright world dies  
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,  
And the heart but one;  
Yet the light of a whole life dies  
When love is gone.

***Francis William Bourdillon***  
***(1852 – 1921)***

***It matters not...***

We can't all play a winning game  
Someone is sure to lose.  
But we can play so that our name  
No one may dare accuse.  
That when the Master Umpire  
Scores against our name  
It won't be whether we won or lost  
But how we played the game.

***J. B. Downie  
(1925)***

***At Lord's***

It is little I repair to the matches of the Southron folk,  
    Though my own red roses there may blow;  
It is little I repair to the matches of the Southron folk,  
    Though red roses crest the caps, I know.  
For the field is full of shades as I near the shadowy coast,  
And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling of a ghost,  
And I look through my tears on a soundless-clapping host  
    As the run-stealers flicker to and fro,  
        To and fro: -  
O my Hornby and my Barlow long ago!

***Francis Thompson***  
***(1859 – 1907)***

### ***Bare Back Riding***

I've ridden a New Forest Pony,  
I've ridden a camel too;  
I've ridden a wonky donkey,  
And a llama in darkest Peru;  
I've ridden a mule in Morocco,  
But there's one thing I don't recommend:  
That's riding a hedgehog naked,  
Cos it don't half hurt your rear end.

***Mike Jubb***

## ***The Swallows are here!***

The swallows are here! The swallows are here!  
White on the breast and black to the rear!  
They'll bring us the sun and a happy new year.

Your larder's quite full – just bring out the keys,  
To roll out a plum cake their hunger to ease,  
With a bottle of wine and a basket of cheese;  
They'll not turn their beaks up at wheat and your pease.

'We'll go if you give, but stay if you don't,  
We'll choose for ourselves a gift if you won't.  
We might take the door, or even its post –  
A fitting reward for a miserable host.  
Your wife sits inside – she's not very tall;  
We'll carry *her* off: she's easy to haul!

Just open the door! The swallows are here!  
We're not crusty oldies, just kids, so don't fear!

***Alcaeus of Mytilene***  
***(c. 600 BC)***  
***translated by Giles of Lympstone***  
***(c. 2009 AD)***

*On the island of Lesbos, when the swallows arrived, the children went round the neighbours pretending to be swallows and hoping for a cake or other gift.*

Spring is sprung,  
The grass is riz,  
I wonder where the birdies iz.  
The bird is on the wing, they say,  
But that's absurd –  
The wing is on the bird.

***Anonymous***

*from The Garden*

Much toil, much love, much care and many years  
Went to the slow reward; a grudging soil  
Enriched or lightened following its needs  
Potash and compost, stable-dung, blood, bones,  
Spent hops in jade-green sacks, the auburn leaves  
Rotted and rich, the wood-ash from the hearth  
For sticky clay, all to a second use  
Turned in a natural economy,  
And many a robin perched on many a sod  
Watched double-trenching for his benefit  
Through the companionable russet days,  
But only knew the digger turned the worm  
For him, and had no foresight of the frost  
Later to serve the digger and his clod  
Through winter months, for limitations rule  
Robins and men about their worms and wars,  
The robin's territory; and man's God.

*Vita Sackville-West*  
(1896 – 1962)

***In the Garden of Eden***

Eve first to her husband thus began:  
“Adam, well may we labour still to dress  
This garden, still to tend plant, herb, flower,  
Our pleasant task enjoined, but still more hands  
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,  
Luxurious by restraint; what we by day  
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,  
One night or two with wanton growth derides  
Tending to wild.”

**from *Paradise Lost*, Book IX**

**John Milton**

**(1608 – 1674)**

## ***THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN***

Our England is a garden that is full of stately views,  
Of borders, beds and shrubberies and lawns and avenues,  
With statues on the terraces and peacocks strutting by;  
But the Glory of the Garden lies in more than meets the eye.

For where the old thick laurels grow, along the thin red wall,  
You will find the tool- and potting-sheds which are the heart of all;  
The cold-frames and the hot-houses, the dungpits and the tanks:  
The rollers, carts and drain-pipes, with the barrows and the planks.

And there you'll see the gardeners, the men and 'prentice boys  
Told off to do as they are bid and do it without noise;  
For, except when seeds are planted and we shout to scare the birds,  
The Glory of the Garden it abideth not in words.

Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made  
By singing:--"Oh, how beautiful!" and sitting in the shade,  
While better men than we go out and start their working lives  
At grubbing weeds from gravel-paths with broken dinner-knives.

Then seek your job with thankfulness and work till further orders,  
If it's only netting strawberries or killing slugs on borders;  
And when your back stops aching and your hands begin to harden,  
You will find yourself a partner in the Glory of the Garden.

Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees  
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees,  
So when your work is finished, you can wash your hands and pray  
For the Glory of the Garden, that it may not pass away!  
And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away!

***Rudyard Kipling (1865 – 1936)***

## *The Garden*

What wondrous life in this I lead!  
Ripe Apples drop about my head;  
The luscious clusters of the Vine  
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;  
The Nectaren, and curious Peach,  
Into my hands themselves do reach;  
Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,  
Insnar'd with Flow'rs, I fall on grass.

*Andrew Marvell*  
*(1621 – 1678)*

***Lyonnesse (Cornwall)***

*This poem records Hardy's first meeting with Elizabeth Holder, his wife-to-be*

When I set out for Lyonesse,  
A hundred miles away,  
The rime was on the spray,  
And starlight lit my lonesomeness  
When I set out for Lyonesse  
A hundred miles away.

What would bechance at Lyonesse  
While I should sojourn there  
No prophet durst declare,  
Nor did the wisest wizard guess  
What would bechance at Lyonesse  
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonesse  
With magic in my eyes,  
All marked with mute surmise  
My radiance rare and fathomless,  
When I came back from Lyonesse.  
With magic in my eyes !

***Thomas Hardy***  
***(1840 – 1928)***

### ***Tall Nettles***

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done  
These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough  
Long worn out, and the roller made of stone:  
Only the elm butt tops the nettles now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most:  
As well as any bloom upon a flower  
I like the dust on nettles, never lost  
Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

***Edward Thomas***  
***(1878 – 1917)***

### ***Pied Beauty***

Glory be to God for dappled things –  
For skies of couple colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;  
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.

***Gerard Manley Hopkins***  
***(1844 – 1889)***

Slurping peaches in the bow  
we drift round broad and reedy bends

brothers and sons  
in the lost green heart of England.

Bishop's Finger and philosophy,  
beam-butting, foreline leaps...

Wild rovers we steam up the Mekong,  
the heron's intense realm  
where dead dogs bob

pass into the Underworld.

***Nick Shirley***

## POEMS STILL IN COPYRIGHT

### ***Mrs Darwin***

by Carol Ann Duffy

Can be found in *Selected Poems: Carol Ann Duffy* (Penguin)

### ***Their Lonely Betters***

by W. H. Auden

Can be found in *The Collected Poems of W. H. Auden* (Penguin)

### ***Apples***

By Margaret Toms

Can be seen on the walls of Exeter Hospital

### ***Anahorish 1944***

by Seamus Heaney

Is from *District & Circle by Seamus Heaney* (Faber & Faber)

### ***Bacon & Eggs***

By Paul Farley

Can be found in *The Boy from the Chemist is here to see you* (Picador)

### ***In a Bath Teashop and A Subaltern's Love Song***

by John Betjeman

are both from *The Collected Poems of John Betjeman* (John Murray)

### ***40 – Love***

by Roger McGough

from *The Collected Poems* (Penguin)

### ***Bad Report – Good Manners***

by Spike Milligan

is from *The Oxford Book of Children's Verse*

### ***Amulet***

by Ted Hughes

can be found in *Collected Poems: Ted Hughes* (Faber & Faber)

### ***Appearances***

by Humphrey Clucas

from *Gods & Mortals* (Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets)

### ***The plain facts***

#### ***By a Plain but Amiable Cat***

by Ruth Pitter

is from *End of Drought* (Barrie & Jenkins)

***Considering the Snail***

by Thom Gunn

Can be found in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, ed. Ricks