

Classic Poetry Series

**Robert Louis Stevenson**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

## Robert Louis Stevenson(1850-1894)

Robert Louis Stevenson was born November 13, 1850 in Edinburgh, Scotland, the only son of respectable middle-class parents. Throughout his childhood, he suffered chronic health problems that confined him to bed. The strongest influence during his childhood was that of his nurse, Allison Cunningham, who often read aloud *Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Old Testament*, his most direct literary influences during this time. In 1867, he entered Edinburgh University as a science student, where it was tacitly understood that he would follow his father's footsteps and become a civil engineer. Robert, however, had much more of a romantic nature at heart and while ostentatiously working for a science degree, he spent much of his time studying French Literature, Scottish history, and the works of Darwin and Spencer. When he confided to his father that he did not want to become an engineer and instead wished to pursue writing, his father was naturally upset. They settled on a compromise ? Robert would study for the Bar and if his literary ambitions failed, he would have a respectable profession to fall back on.

In order to fully understand the world in which Stevenson was raised, it is necessary to understand that there were two Edinburghs, both which played a part in molding his personality and outlook. On one hand was New Town, respectable, conventional, deeply religious, and polite. On the other was a much more bohemian Edinburgh, symbolized by brothels and shadiness. The juxtaposition of the two aspects in contrast to each other made a deep impression and strengthened his fascination with the duality of human nature, later providing the theme for *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

In the autumn of 1873, Stevenson was taken ill with nervous exhaustion and a severe chest condition, consequently, his doctor ordered him to take an extended rest abroad. For the next six months, he convalesced in the South of France, working on essays. On his return to Edinburgh, he spent much of his time writing book reviews and articles and experimenting with short stories. Slowly but surely, he earned a name for himself in journalism and his pieces began appearing in distinguished journals such as *The Fortnightly Review*. At this time, he met an American married woman, Fanny Vandergrift Osbourne, ten years his senior, whom was in Europe trying to escape her estranged husband's influence. For three years, Stevenson (still in ill health) continued his relationship with her and eventually followed her to San Francisco, where she obtained a divorce from her husband and married Stevenson in May 1880.

During this time, he published his first book, *An Inland Voyage* in 1878, an

engaging account of a canoeing holiday in Belgium. In August 1880, the Stevensons returned to England. The story of Stevenson life from this point forward is a story centered on a search of a climate where he could live without the fears of his failing health. He and his wife wintered in the South of France and lived in England from 1880-1887, and this time was marked by an active period of literary achievement. His first novel, *Treasure Island*, was published in 1883, followed by *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and *Kidnapped* (1886). For the first time in his life, Stevenson had become a popular author.

Upon the death of his father in 1887, Robert Louis Stevenson decided to leave England and sailed for America, where he stayed for a year. In May 1888, accompanied by his wife, his step-son, and his mother, he set sails for the South Seas. Eventually, Stevenson was so enchanted by the life of the South Seas that in December 1889 he bought an estate in Apia, Samoa, convinced that he could never endure the harsh winters of his native Scotland or England. Apia was a perfect location because the climate was tropical but not wild, the people were friendly and hard working, and it possessed a good postal service. He lived at his 300 acre estate, Vailima, in the hills of Apia until his death five years later. The list of his writings for 1890-94 reveals an impressive range of activities. During this time, he completed two of his finest novellas, 'The Beach of Falesa' and 'The Ebb Tide', two novels, *The Wrecker* and *Catriona*, the short stories 'The Bottle Imp,' 'The Isle of voices' and 'the Waif Woman,' and the short pieces collected under the title of *Fables*. He also worked on a number of novels that he did not live to complete, including *St. Ives*, *The Young Chevalier* and *Heathercat*. He worked with enthusiasm on *Weir of Hermiston* until the day of his death, December 3, 1894. On that day, he dictated another installment of the novel, seemed in excellent spirits, and was talking to his wife in the evening when he felt a violent pain in his head and almost immediately lost consciousness. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage a few hours later at the age of forty-four.

# A Child's Garden Of Verses

For the long nights you lay awake  
And watched for my unworthy sake:  
For your most comfortable hand  
That led me through the uneven land:  
For all the story-books you read:  
For all the pains you comforted:

For all you pitied, all you bore,  
In sad and happy days of yore:-  
My second Mother, my first Wife,  
The angel of my infant life-  
From the sick child, now well and old,  
Take, nurse, the little book you hold!

And grant it, Heaven, that all who read  
May find as dear a nurse at need,  
And every child who lists my rhyme,  
In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,  
May hear it in as kind a voice  
As made my childish days rejoice!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# A Good Boy

I woke before the morning, I was happy all the day,  
I never said an ugly word, but smiled and stuck to play.

And now at last the sun is going down behind the wood,  
And I am very happy, for I know that I've been good.

My bed is waiting cool and fresh, with linen smooth and fair,  
And I must be off to sleeps-in-by, and not forget my prayer.

I know that, till to-morrow I shall see the sun arise,  
No ugly dream shall fright my mind, no ugly sight my eyes.

But slumber hold me tightly till I waken in the dawn,  
And hear the thrushes singing in the lilacs round the lawn.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# A Good Play

We built a ship upon the stairs  
All made of the back-bedroom chairs,  
And filled it full of soft pillows  
To go a-sailing on the billows.

We took a saw and several nails,  
And water in the nursery pails;  
And Tom said, "Let us also take  
An apple and a slice of cake;"--  
Which was enough for Tom and me  
To go a-sailing on, till tea.

We sailed along for days and days,  
And had the very best of plays;  
But Tom fell out and hurt his knee,  
So there was no one left but me.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# A Thought

It is very nice to think  
The world is full of meat and drink,  
With little children saying grace  
In every Christian kind of place.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# A Valentine's Song

MOTLEY I count the only wear  
That suits, in this mixed world, the truly wise,  
Who boldly smile upon despair  
And shake their bells in Grandam Grundy's eyes.  
Singers should sing with such a goodly cheer  
That the bare listening should make strong like wine,  
At this unruly time of year,  
The Feast of Valentine.

We do not now parade our "oughts"  
And "shoulds" and motives and beliefs in God.  
Their life lies all indoors; sad thoughts  
Must keep the house, while gay thoughts go abroad,  
Within we hold the wake for hopes deceased;  
But in the public streets, in wind or sun,  
Keep open, at the annual feast,  
The puppet-booth of fun.

Our powers, perhaps, are small to please,  
But even negro-songs and castanettes,  
Old jokes and hackneyed repartees  
Are more than the parade of vain regrets.  
Let Jacques stand Wert(h)ering by the wounded deer -  
We shall make merry, honest friends of mine,  
At this unruly time of year,  
The Feast of Valentine.

I know how, day by weary day,  
Hope fades, love fades, a thousand pleasures fade.  
I have not trudged in vain that way  
On which life's daylight darkens, shade by shade.  
And still, with hopes decreasing, griefs increased,  
Still, with what wit I have shall I, for one,  
Keep open, at the annual feast,  
The puppet-booth of fun.

I care not if the wit be poor,  
The old worn motley stained with rain and tears,  
If but the courage still endure



That filled and strengthened hope in earlier years;  
If still, with friends averted, fate severe,  
A glad, untainted cheerfulness be mine  
To greet the unruly time of year,  
The Feast of Valentine.

Priest, I am none of thine, and see  
In the perspective of still hopeful youth  
That Truth shall triumph over thee -  
Truth to one's self - I know no other truth.  
I see strange days for thee and thine, O priest,  
And how your doctrines, fallen one by one,  
Shall furnish at the annual feast  
The puppet-booth of fun.

Stand on your putrid ruins - stand,  
White neck-clothed bigot, fixedly the same,  
Cruel with all things but the hand,  
Inquisitor in all things but the name.  
Back, minister of Christ and source of fear -  
We cherish freedom - back with thee and thine  
From this unruly time of year,  
The Feast of Valentine.

Blood thou mayest spare; but what of tears?  
But what of riven households, broken faith -  
Bywords that cling through all men's years  
And drag them surely down to shame and death?  
Stand back, O cruel man, O foe of youth,  
And let such men as hearken not thy voice  
Press freely up the road to truth,  
The King's highway of choice.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# About The Sheltered Garden Ground

ABOUT the sheltered garden ground  
The trees stand strangely still.  
The vale ne'er seemed so deep before,  
Nor yet so high the hill.

An awful sense of quietness,  
A fulness of repose,  
Breathes from the dewy garden-lawns,  
The silent garden rows.

As the hoof-beats of a troop of horse  
Heard far across a plain,  
A nearer knowledge of great thoughts  
Thrills vaguely through my brain.

I lean my head upon my arm,  
My heart's too full to think;  
Like the roar of seas, upon my heart  
Doth the morning stillness sink.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Ad Magistrum Ludi

NOW in the sky  
And on the hearth of  
Now in a drawer the direful cane,  
That sceptre of the . . . reign,  
And the long hawser, that on the back  
Of Marsyas fell with many a whack,  
Twice hardened out of Scythian hides,  
Now sleep till the October ides.

In summer if the boys be well.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Ad Martialem

GO(D) knows, my Martial, if we two could be  
To enjoy our days set wholly free;  
To the true life together bend our mind,  
And take a furlough from the falser kind.  
No rich saloon, nor palace of the great,  
Nor suit at law should trouble our estate;  
On no vainglorious statues should we look,  
But of a walk, a talk, a little book,  
Baths, wells and meads, and the veranda shade,  
Let all our travels and our toils be made.  
Now neither lives unto himself, alas!  
And the good suns we see, that flash and pass  
And perish; and the bell that knells them cries:  
"Another gone: O when will ye arise?"

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Ad Nepotem

O NEPOS, twice my neigh(b)our (since at home  
We're door by door, by Flora's temple dome;  
And in the country, still conjoined by fate,  
Behold our villas standing gate by gate),  
Thou hast a daughter, dearer far than life -  
Thy image and the image of thy wife.  
Thy image and thy wife's, and be it so!

But why for her, { neglect the flowing } can  
    { O Nepos, leave the }

And lose the prime of thy Falernian?  
Hoard casks of money, if to hoard be thine;  
But let thy daughter drink a younger wine!  
Let her go rich and wise, in silk and fur;

Lay down a { bin that shall } grow old with her;  
    { vintage to }

But thou, meantime, the while the batch is sound,  
With pleased companions pass the bowl around;  
Nor let the childless only taste delights,  
For Fathers also may enjoy their nights.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Ad Olum

CALL me not rebel, though { here at every word  
                                  {in what I sing  
If I no longer hail thee { King and Lord  
                                  { Lord and King  
I have redeemed myself with all I had,  
And now possess my fortunes poor but glad.  
With all I had I have redeemed myself,  
And escaped at once from slavery and pelf.  
The unruly wishes must a ruler take,  
Our high desires do our low fortunes make:  
Those only who desire palatial things  
Do bear the fetters and the frowns of Kings;  
Set free thy slave; thou settest free thyself.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Ad Piscatorem

FOR these are sacred fishes all  
Who know that lord that is the lord of all;  
Come to the brim and nose the friendly hand  
That sways and can beshadow all the land.  
Nor only so, but have their names, and come  
When they are summoned by the Lord of Rome.  
Here once his line an impious Lybian threw;  
And as with tremulous reed his prey he drew,  
Straight, the light failed him.  
He groped, nor found the prey that he had ta'en.  
Now as a warning to the fisher clan  
Beside the lake he sits, a beggarman.  
Thou, then, while still thine innocence is pure,  
Flee swiftly, nor presume to set thy lure;  
Respect these fishes, for their friends are great;  
And in the waters empty all thy bait.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Ad Quintilianum

O CHIEF director of the growing race,  
Of Rome the glory and of Rome the grace,  
Me, O Quintilian, may you not forgive  
Before from labour I make haste to live?  
Some burn to gather wealth, lay hands on rule,  
Or with white statues fill the atrium full.  
The talking hearth, the rafters sweet with smoke,  
Live fountains and rough grass, my line invoke:  
A sturdy slave, not too learned wife,  
Nights filled with slumber, and a quiet life.

Robert Louis Stevenson



## Ad Se Ipsum

DEAR sir, good-morrow! Five years back,  
When you first girded for this arduous track,  
And under various whimsical pretexts  
Endowed another with your damned defects,  
Could you have dreamed in your despondent vein  
That the kind God would make your path so plain?  
Non nobis, domine! O, may He still  
Support my stumbling footsteps on the hill!

Robert Louis Stevenson

## After Reading "Antony And Cleopatra"

AS when the hunt by holt and field  
Drives on with horn and strife,  
Hunger of hopeless things pursues  
Our spirits throughout life.

The sea's roar fills us aching full  
Of objectless desire -  
The sea's roar, and the white moon-shine,  
And the reddening of the fire.

Who talks to me of reason now?  
It would be more delight  
To have died in Cleopatra's arms  
Than be alive to-night.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Air Of Diabelli's

CALL it to mind, O my love.  
Dear were your eyes as the day,  
Bright as the day and the sky;  
Like the stream of gold and the sky above,  
Dear were your eyes in the grey.  
We have lived, my love, O, we have lived, my love!  
Now along the silent river, azure  
Through the sky's inverted image,  
Softly swam the boat that bore our love,  
Swiftly ran the shallow of our love  
Through the heaven's inverted image,  
In the reedy mazes round the river.  
See along the silent river,

See of old the lover's shallop steer.  
Berried brake and reedy island,  
Heaven below and only heaven above.  
Through the sky's inverted image  
Swiftly swam the boat that bore our love.  
Berried brake and reedy island,  
Mirrored flower and shallop gliding by.  
All the earth and all the sky were ours,  
Silent sat the wafted lovers,  
Bound with grain and watched by all the sky,  
Hand to hand and eye to . . . eye.

Days of April, airs of Eden,  
Call to mind how bright the vanished angel hours,  
Golden hours of evening,  
When our boat drew homeward filled with flowers.  
O darling, call them to mind; love the past, my love.  
Days of April, airs of Eden.  
How the glory died through golden hours,  
And the shining moon arising;  
How the boat drew homeward filled with flowers.  
Age and winter close us slowly in.

Level river, cloudless heaven,  
Islanded reed mazes, silver weirs;

How the silent boat with silver  
Threads the inverted forest as she goes,  
Broke the trembling green of mirrored trees.  
O, remember, and remember  
How the berries hung in garlands.

Still in the river see the shallop floats.  
Hark! Chimes the falling oar.  
Still in the mind  
Hark to the song of the past!  
Dream, and they pass in their dreams.

Those that loved of yore, O those that loved of yore!  
Hark through the stillness, O darling, hark!  
Through it all the ear of the mind

Knows the boat of love. Hark!  
Chimes the falling oar.

O half in vain they grew old.

Now the halcyon days are over,  
Age and winter close us slowly round,  
And these sounds at fall of even  
Dim the sight and muffle all the sound.  
And at the married fireside, sleep of soul and sleep of fancy,  
Joan and Darby.  
Silence of the world without a sound;  
And beside the winter faggot

Joan and Darby sit and dose and dream and wake -  
Dream they hear the flowing, singing river,  
See the berries in the island brake;  
Dream they hear the weir,  
See the gliding shallop mar the stream.  
Hark! in your dreams do you hear?

Snow has filled the drifted forest;  
Ice has bound the . . . stream.  
Frost has bound our flowing river;  
Snow has whitened all our island brake.

Berried brake and reedy island,  
Heaven below and only heaven above azure  
Through the sky's inverted image  
Safely swam the boat that bore our love.  
Dear were your eyes as the day,  
Bright ran the stream, bright hung the sky above.  
Days of April, airs of Eden.  
How the glory died through golden hours,  
And the shining moon arising,  
How the boat drew homeward filled with flowers.  
Bright were your eyes in the night:  
We have lived, my love;  
O, we have loved, my love.  
Now the . . . days are over,  
Age and winter close us slowly round.

Vainly time departs, and vainly  
Age and winter come and close us round.

Hark the river's long continuous sound.

Hear the river ripples in the reeds.

Lo, in dreams they see their shallop  
Run the lilies down and drown the weeds  
Mid the sound of crackling faggots.  
So in dreams the new created  
Happy past returns, to-day recedes,  
And they hear once more,

From the old years,  
Yesterday returns, to-day recedes,  
And they hear with aged hearing warbles

Love's own river ripple in the weeds.  
And again the lover's shallop;  
Lo, the shallop sheds the streaming weeds;  
And afar in foreign countries  
In the ears of aged lovers.

And again in winter evens  
Starred with lilies . . . with stirring weeds.

In these ears of aged lovers  
Love's own river ripples in the reeds.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# An English Breeze

UP with the sun, the breeze arose,  
Across the talking corn she goes,  
And smooth she rustles far and wide  
Through all the voiceful countryside.

Through all the land her tale she tells;  
She spins, she tosses, she compels  
The kites, the clouds, the windmill sails  
And all the trees in all the dales.

God calls us, and the day prepares  
With nimble, gay and gracious airs:  
And from Penzance to Maidenhead  
The roads last night He watered.

God calls us from inglorious ease,  
Forth and to travel with the breeze  
While, swift and singing, smooth and strong  
She gallops by the fields along.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Apologetic Postscript Of A Year Later

IF you see this song, my dear,  
And last year's toast,  
I'm confoundedly in fear  
You'll be serious and severe  
About the boast.

Blame not that I sought such aid  
To cure regret.  
I was then so lowly laid  
I used all the Gasconnade  
That I could get.

Being snubbed is somewhat smart,  
Believe, my sweet;  
And I needed all my art  
To restore my broken heart  
To its conceit.

Come and smile, dear, and forget  
I boasted so,  
I apologise - regret -  
It was all a jest; - and - yet -  
I do not know.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Armies In The Fire

The lamps now glitter down the street;  
Faintly sound the falling feet;  
And the blue even slowly falls  
About the garden trees and walls.

Now in the falling of the gloom  
The red fire paints the empty room:  
And warmly on the roof it looks,  
And flickers on the back of books.

Armies march by tower and spire  
Of cities blazing, in the fire;--  
Till as I gaze with staring eyes,  
The armies fall, the lustre dies.

Then once again the glow returns;  
Again the phantom city burns;  
And down the red-hot valley, lo!  
The phantom armies marching go!

Blinking embers, tell me true  
Where are those armies marching to,  
And what the burning city is  
That crumbles in your furnaces!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# As In Their Flight The Birds Of Song

AS in their flight the birds of song  
Halt here and there in sweet and sunny dales,  
But halt not overlong;  
The time one rural song to sing  
They pause; then following bounteous gales  
Steer forward on the wing:  
Sun-servers they, from first to last,  
Upon the sun they wait  
To ride the sailing blast.

So he awhile in our contested state,  
Awhile abode, not longer, for his Sun -  
Mother we say, no tenderer name we know -  
With whose diviner glow  
His early days had shone,  
Now to withdraw her radiance had begun.  
Or lest a wrong I say, not she withdrew,  
But the loud stream of men day after day  
And great dust columns of the common way  
Between them grew and grew:  
And he and she for evermore might yearn,  
But to the spring the rivulets not return  
Nor to the bosom comes the child again.

And he (O may we fancy so!),  
He, feeling time forever flow  
And flowing bear him forth and far away  
From that dear ingle where his life began  
And all his treasure lay -  
He, waxing into man,  
And ever farther, ever closer wound  
In this obstreperous world's ignoble round,  
From that poor prospect turned his face away.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# As One Who Having Wandered All Night Long

AS one who having wandered all night long  
In a perplexed forest, comes at length  
In the first hours, about the matin song,  
And when the sun uprises in his strength,  
To the fringed margin of the wood, and sees,  
Gazing afar before him, many a mile  
Of falling country, many fields and trees,  
And cities and bright streams and far-off Ocean's smile:

I, O Melampus, halting, stand at gaze:  
I, liberated, look abroad on life,  
Love, and distress, and dusty travelling ways,  
The steersman's helm, the surgeon's helpful knife,  
On the lone ploughman's earth-upturning share,  
The revelry of cities and the sound  
Of seas, and mountain-tops aloof in air,  
And of the circling earth the unsupported round:

I, looking, wonder: I, intent, adore;  
And, O Melampus, reaching forth my hands  
In adoration, cry aloud and soar  
In spirit, high above the supine lands  
And the low caves of mortal things, and flee  
To the last fields of the universe untrod,  
Where is no man, nor any earth, nor sea,  
And the contented soul is all alone with God.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# At Last She Comes

AT last she comes, O never more  
In this dear patience of my pain  
To leave me lonely as before,  
Or leave my soul alone again.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# At The Sea-Side

When I was down beside the sea  
A wooden spade they gave to me  
To dig the sandy shore.

My holes were empty like a cup.  
In every hole the sea came up,  
Till it could come no more.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Auntie's Skirts

Whenever Auntie moves around,  
Her dresses make a curious sound,  
They trail behind her up the floor,  
And trundle after through the door.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Autumn Fires

In the other gardens  
And all up the vale,  
From the autumn bonfires  
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over  
And all the summer flowers,  
The red fire blazes,  
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!  
Something bright in all!  
Flowers in the summer,  
Fires in the fall!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Away With Funeral Music

AWAY with funeral music - set  
The pipe to powerful lips -  
The cup of life's for him that drinks  
And not for him that sips.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Bed In Summer

In winter I get up at night  
And dress by yellow candle-light.  
In summer quite the other way,  
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see  
The birds still hopping on the tree,  
Or hear the grown-up people's feet  
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Before This Little Gift Was Come

BEFORE this little gift was come  
The little owner had made haste for home;  
And from the door of where the eternal dwell,  
Looked back on human things and smiled farewell.  
O may this grief remain the only one!  
O may our house be still a garrison  
Of smiling children, and for evermore  
The tune of little feet be heard along the floor!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Behold, As Goblins Dark Of Mien

BEHOLD, as goblins dark of mien  
And portly tyrants dyed with crime  
Change, in the transformation scene,  
At Christmas, in the pantomime,

Instantly, at the prompter's cough,  
The fairy bonnets them, and they  
Throw their abhorred carbuncles off  
And blossom like the flowers in May.

- So mankind, to angelic eyes,  
So, through the scenes of life below,  
In life's ironical disguise,  
A travesty of man, ye go:

But fear not: ere the curtain fall,  
Death in the transformation scene  
Steps forward from her pedestal,  
Apparent, as the fairy Queen;

And coming, frees you in a trice  
From all your lendings - lust of fame,  
Ungainly virtue, ugly vice,  
Terror and tyranny and shame.

So each, at last himself, for good  
In that dear country lays him down,  
At last beloved and understood  
And pure in feature and renown.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Block City

What are you able to build with your blocks?  
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.  
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,  
But I can be happy and building at home.

Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,  
There I'll establish a city for me:  
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,  
And a harbor as well where my vessels may ride.

Great is the palace with pillar and wall,  
A sort of a tower on top of it all,  
And steps coming down in an orderly way  
To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.

This one is sailing and that one is moored:  
Hark to the song of the sailors on board!  
And see on the steps of my palace, the kings  
Coming and going with presents and things!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Christmas At Sea

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;  
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;  
The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea;  
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;  
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.  
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,  
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;  
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;  
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,  
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide race roared;  
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard:  
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,  
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;  
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'long-shore home;  
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;  
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;  
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)  
This day of our adversity was blessed Christmas morn,  
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,  
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;  
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,  
Go dancing round the china plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,  
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;  
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,  
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessed Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.  
'All hands to loose top gallant sails,' I heard the captain call.  
'By the Lord, she'll never stand it,' our first mate, Jackson, cried.  
. . . 'It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson,' he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,  
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood.  
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,  
'We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,  
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;  
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,  
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Come From The Daisied Meadows

HOME from the daisied meadows, where you linger yet -  
Home, golden-headed playmate, ere the sun is set;  
For the dews are falling fast  
And the night has come at last.  
Home with you, home and lay your little head at rest,  
Safe, safe, my little darling, on your mother's breast.  
Lullaby, darling; your mother is watching you;  
    she'll be your guardian and shield.  
Lullaby, slumber, my darling, till morning be  
    bright upon mountain and field.  
Long, long the shadows fall.  
All white and smooth at home your little bed is laid.  
All round your head be angels.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Come, Here Is Adieu To The City

COME, here is adieu to the city  
And hurrah for the country again.  
The broad road lies before me  
Watered with last night's rain.  
The timbered country woos me  
With many a high and bough;  
And again in the shining fallows  
The ploughman follows the plough.

The whole year's sweat and study,  
And the whole year's sowing time,  
Comes now to the perfect harvest,  
And ripens now into rhyme.  
For we that sow in the Autumn,  
We reap our grain in the Spring,  
And we that go sowing and weeping  
Return to reap and sing.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Come, My Beloved, Hear From Me

COME, my beloved, hear from me  
Tales of the woods or open sea.  
Let our aspiring fancy rise  
A wren's flight higher toward the skies;  
Or far from cities, brown and bare,  
Play at the least in open air.  
In all the tales men hear us tell  
Still let the unfathomed ocean swell,  
Or shallower forest sound abroad  
Below the lonely stars of God;  
In all, let something still be done,  
Still in a corner shine the sun,  
Slim-ankled maids be fleet of foot,  
Nor man disown the rural flute.  
Still let the hero from the start  
In honest sweat and beats of heart  
Push on along the untrodden road  
For some inviolate abode.  
Still, O beloved, let me hear  
The great bell beating far and near-  
The odd, unknown, enchanted gong  
That on the road hales men along,  
That from the mountain calls afar,  
That lures a vessel from a star,  
And with a still, aerial sound  
Makes all the earth enchanted ground.  
Love, and the love of life and act  
Dance, live and sing through all our furrowed tract;  
Till the great God enamoured gives  
To him who reads, to him who lives,  
That rare and fair romantic strain  
That whoso hears must hear again.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Consolation

Though he, that ever kind and true,  
Kept stoutly step by step with you,  
Your whole long, gusty lifetime through,  
    Be gone a while before,  
Be now a moment gone before,  
Yet, doubt not, soon the seasons shall restore  
    Your friend to you.

He has but turned the corner — still  
He pushes on with right good will,  
Through mire and marsh, by heugh and hill,  
    That self-same arduous way —  
That self-same upland, hopeful way,  
That you and he through many a doubtful day  
    Attempted still.

He is not dead, this friend — not dead,  
But in the path we mortals tread  
Got some few, trifling steps ahead  
    And nearer to the end;  
So that you too, once past the bend,  
Shall meet again, as face to face, this friend  
    You fancy dead.

Push gaily on, strong heart! The while  
You travel forward mile by mile,  
He loiters with a backward smile  
    Till you can overtake,  
And strains his eyes to search his wake,  
Or whistling, as he sees you through the brake,  
    Waits on a stile.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## De Coenatione Micae

LOOK round: You see a little supper room;  
But from my window, lo! great Caesar's tomb!  
And the great dead themselves, with jovial breath  
Bid you be merry and remember death.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## De Erotio Puella

THIS girl was sweeter than the song of swans,  
And daintier than the lamb upon the lawns  
Or Curine oyster. She, the flower of girls,  
Outshone the light of Erythraean pearls;  
The teeth of India that with polish glow,  
The untouched lilies or the morning snow.  
Her tresses did gold-dust outshine  
And fair hair of women of the Rhine.  
Compared to her the peacock seemed not fair,  
The squirrel lively, or the phoenix rare;  
Her on whose pyre the smoke still hovering waits;  
Her whom the greedy and unequal fates  
On the sixth dawning of her natal day,  
My child-love and my playmate - snatcht away.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# De Hortis Julii Martialis

MY Martial owns a garden, famed to please,  
Beyond the glades of the Hesperides;  
Along Janiculum lies the chosen block  
Where the cool grottos trench the hanging rock.  
The moderate summit, something plain and bare,  
Tastes overhead of a serener air;  
And while the clouds besiege the vales below,  
Keeps the clear heaven and doth with sunshine glow.  
To the June stars that circle in the skies  
The dainty roofs of that tall villa rise.  
Hence do the seven imperial hills appear;  
And you may view the whole of Rome from here;  
Beyond, the Alban and the Tuscan hills;  
And the cool groves and the cool falling rills,  
Rubre Fidenae, and with virgin blood  
Anointed once Perenna's orchard wood.  
Thence the Flaminian, the Salarian way,  
Stretch far broad below the dome of day;  
And lo! the traveller toiling towards his home;  
And all unheard, the chariot speeds to Rome!  
For here no whisper of the wheels; and tho'  
The Mulvian Bridge, above the Tiber's flow,  
Hangs all in sight, and down the sacred stream  
The sliding barges vanish like a dream,  
The seaman's shrilling pipe not enters here,  
Nor the rude cries of porters on the pier.  
And if so rare the house, how rarer far  
The welcome and the weal that therein are!  
So free the access, the doors so widely thrown,  
You half imagine all to be your own.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# De Ligurra

YOU fear, Ligurra - above all, you long -  
That I should smite you with a stinging song.  
This dreadful honour you both fear and hope -  
Both all in vain: you fall below my scope.  
The Lybian lion tears the roaring bull,  
He does not harm the midge along the pool.

Lo! if so close this stands in your regard,  
From some blind tap fish forth a drunken barn,  
Who shall with charcoal, on the privy wall,  
Immortalise your name for once and all.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## De M. Antonio

NOW Antoninus, in a smiling age,  
Counts of his life the fifteenth finished stage.  
The rounded days and the safe years he sees,  
Nor fears death's water mounting round his knees.  
To him remembering not one day is sad,  
Not one but that its memory makes him glad.  
So good men lengthen life; and to recall  
The past is to have twice enjoyed it all.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Death, To The Dead For Evermore

DEATH, to the dead for evermore  
A King, a God, the last, the best of friends -  
Whene'er this mortal journey ends  
Death, like a host, comes smiling to the door;  
Smiling, he greets us, on that tranquil shore  
Where neither piping bird nor peeping dawn  
Disturbs the eternal sleep,  
But in the stillness far withdrawn  
Our dreamless rest for evermore we keep.

For as from open windows forth we peep  
Upon the night-time star beset  
And with dews for ever wet;  
So from this garish life the spirit peers;  
And lo! as a sleeping city death outspread,  
Where breathe the sleepers evenly; and lo!  
After the loud wars, triumphs, trumpets, tears  
And clamour of man's passion, Death appears,  
And we must rise and go.

Soon are eyes tired with sunshine; soon the ears  
Weary of utterance, seeing all is said;  
Soon, racked by hopes and fears,  
The all-pondering, all-contriving head,  
Weary with all things, wearies of the years;  
And our sad spirits turn toward the dead;  
And the tired child, the body, longs for bed.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Dedication

MY first gift and my last, to you  
I dedicate this fascicle of songs -  
The only wealth I have:  
Just as they are, to you.

I speak the truth in soberness, and say  
I had rather bring a light to your clear eyes,  
Had rather hear you praise  
This bosomful of songs

Than that the whole, hard world with one consent,  
In one continuous chorus of applause  
Poured forth for me and mine  
The homage of ripe praise.

I write the finis here against my love,  
This is my love's last epitaph and tomb.  
Here the road forks, and I  
Go my way, far from yours.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Dedicatory Poem For "Underwoods"

TO her, for I must still regard her  
As feminine in her degree,  
Who has been my unkind bombardier  
Year after year, in grief and glee,  
Year after year, with oaken tree;  
And yet betweenwhiles my laudator  
In terms astonishing to me -  
To the Right Reverend The Spectator  
I here, a humble dedicator,  
Bring the last apples from my tree.

In tones of love, in tones of warning,  
She hailed me through my brief career;  
And kiss and buffet, night and morning,  
Told me my grandmamma was near;  
Whether she praised me high and clear  
Through her unrivalled circulation,  
Or, sanctimonious insincere,  
She damned me with a misquotation -  
A chequered but a sweet relation,  
Say, was it not, my granny dear?

Believe me, granny, altogether  
Yours, though perhaps to your surprise.  
Oft have you spruced my wounded feather,  
Oft brought a light into my eyes -  
For notice still the writer cries.  
In any civil age or nation,  
The book that is not talked of dies.  
So that shall be my termination:  
Whether in praise or execration,  
Still, if you love me, criticise!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Duddingstone

WITH caws and chirrupings, the woods  
In this thin sun rejoice.  
The Psalm seems but the little kirk  
That sings with its own voice.

The cloud-rifts share their amber light  
With the surface of the mere -  
I think the very stones are glad  
To feel each other near.

Once more my whole heart leaps and swells  
And gushes o'er with glee;  
The fingers of the sun and shade  
Touch music stops in me.

Now fancy paints that bygone day  
When you were here, my fair -  
The whole lake rang with rapid skates  
In the windless winter air.

You leaned to me, I leaned to you,  
Our course was smooth as flight -  
We steered - a heel-touch to the left,  
A heel-touch to the right.

We swung our way through flying men,  
Your hand lay fast in mine:  
We saw the shifting crowd dispart,  
The level ice-reach shine.

I swear by yon swan-travelled lake,  
By yon calm hill above,  
I swear had we been drowned that day  
We had been drowned in love.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Early In The Morning I Hear On Your Piano

EARLY in the morning I hear on your piano  
You (at least, I guess it's you) proceed to learn to play.  
Mostly little minds should take and tackle their piano  
While the birds are singing in the morning of the day.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Envoy For "A Child's Garden Of Verses"

WHETHER upon the garden seat  
You lounge with your uplifted feet  
Under the May's whole Heaven of blue;  
Or whether on the sofa you,  
No grown up person being by,  
Do some soft corner occupy;  
Take you this volume in your hands  
And enter into other lands,  
For lo! (as children feign) suppose  
You, hunting in the garden rows,  
Or in the lumbered attic, or  
The cellar - a nail-studded door  
And dark, descending stairway found  
That led to kingdoms underground:  
There standing, you should hear with ease  
Strange birds a-singing, or the trees  
Swing in big robber woods, or bells  
On many fairy citadels:

There passing through (a step or so -  
Neither mamma nor nurse need know!)  
From your nice nurseries you would pass,  
Like Alice through the Looking-Glass  
Or Gerda following Little Ray,  
To wondrous countries far away.  
Well, and just so this volume can  
Transport each little maid or man  
Presto from where they live away  
Where other children used to play.  
As from the house your mother sees  
You playing round the garden trees,  
So you may see if you but look  
Through the windows of this book  
Another child far, far away  
And in another garden play.  
But do not think you can at all,  
By knocking on the window, call  
That child to hear you. He intent  
Is still on his play-business bent.

He does not hear, he will not look,  
Nor yet be lured out of this book.  
For long ago, the truth to say,  
He has grown up and gone away;  
And it is but a child of air  
That lingers in the garden there.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Epitaphium Erotii

HERE lies Erotion, whom at six years old  
Fate pilfered. Stranger (when I too am cold,  
Who shall succeed me in my rural field),  
To this small spirit annual honours yield!  
Bright be thy hearth, hale be thy babes, I crave  
And this, in thy green farm, the only grave.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Escape At Bedtime

The lights from the parlour and kitchen shone out  
Through the blinds and the windows and bars;  
And high overhead and all moving about,  
There were thousands of millions of stars.  
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,  
Nor of people in church or the Park,  
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,  
And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,  
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,  
These shown in the sky, and the pail by the wall  
Would be half full of water and stars.  
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,  
And they soon had me packed into bed;  
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,  
And the stars going round in my head.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Fair Isle At Sea

FAIR Isle at Sea - thy lovely name  
Soft in my ear like music came.  
That sea I loved, and once or twice  
I touched at isles of Paradise.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Fairy Bread

Come up here, O dusty feet!  
Here is fairy ready to eat.  
Here in my retiring room,  
Children ,you may dine  
On the golden smell of broom  
And the shade of pine;  
And when you have eaten well,  
Fairy stories hear and tell.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Farewell

FAREWELL, and when forth  
I through the Golden Gates to Golden Isles  
Steer without smiling, through the sea of smiles,  
Isle upon isle, in the seas of the south,  
Isle upon island, sea upon sea,  
Why should I sail, why should the breeze?  
I have been young, and I have counted friends.  
A hopeless sail I spread, too late, too late.  
Why should I from isle to isle  
Sail, a hopeless sailor?

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Farewell To The Farm

The coach is at the door at last;  
The eager children, mounting fast  
And kissing hands, in chorus sing:  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

To house and garden, field and lawn,  
The meadow-gates we swang upon,  
To pump and stable, tree and swing,  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

And fare you well for evermore,  
O ladder at the hayloft door,  
O hayloft where the cobwebs cling,  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

Crack goes the whip, and off we go;  
The trees and houses smaller grow;  
Last, round the woody turn we sing:  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Fear Not, Dear Friend, But Freely Live Your Days

FEAR not, dear friend, but freely live your days  
Though lesser lives should suffer. Such am I,  
A lesser life, that what is his of sky  
Gladly would give for you, and what of praise.  
Step, without trouble, down the sunlit ways.  
We that have touched your raiment, are made whole  
From all the selfish cankers of man's soul,  
And we would see you happy, dear, or die.  
Therefore be brave, and therefore, dear, be free;  
Try all things resolutely, till the best,  
Out of all lesser betters, you shall find;  
And we, who have learned greatness from you, we,  
Your lovers, with a still, contented mind,  
See you well anchored in some port of rest.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Fifteen Men On The Dead Man's Chest

Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest —  
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!  
Drink and the devil had done for the rest —  
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Fixed Is The Doom

FIXED is the doom; and to the last of years  
Teacher and taught, friend, lover, parent, child,  
Each walks, though near, yet separate; each beholds  
His dear ones shine beyond him like the stars.  
We also, love, forever dwell apart;  
With cries approach, with cries behold the gulph,  
The Unvaulted; as two great eagles that do wheel in air  
Above a mountain, and with screams confer,  
Far heard athwart the cedars.  
Yet the years  
Shall bring us ever nearer; day by day  
Endearing, week by week, till death at last  
Dissolve that long divorce. By faith we love,  
Not knowledge; and by faith, though far removed,  
Dwell as in perfect nearness, heart to heart.  
We but excuse  
Those things we merely are; and to our souls  
A brave deception cherish.  
So from unhappy war a man returns  
Unfearing, or the seaman from the deep;  
So from cool night and woodlands to a feast  
May someone enter, and still breathe of dews,  
And in her eyes still wear the dusky night.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Flower God, God Of The Spring

FLOWER god, god of the spring, beautiful, bountiful,  
Cold-dyed shield in the sky, lover of versicles,  
Here I wander in April  
Cold, grey-headed; and still to my  
Heart, Spring comes with a bound, Spring the deliverer,  
Spring, song-leader in woods, chorally resonant;  
Spring, flower-planter in meadows,  
Child-conductor in willow  
Fields deep dotted with bloom, daisies and crocuses:  
Here that child from his heart drinks of eternity:  
O child, happy are children!  
She still smiles on their innocence,  
She, dear mother in God, fostering violets,  
Fills earth full of her scents, voices and violins:  
Thus one cunning in music  
Wakes old chords in the memory:  
Thus fair earth in the Spring leads her performances.  
One more touch of the bow, smell of the virginal  
Green - one more, and my bosom  
Feels new life with an ecstasy.

Robert Louis Stevenson



## For Richmond's Garden Wall

WHEN Thomas set this tablet here,  
Time laughed at the vain chanticleer;  
And ere the moss had dimmed the stone,  
Time had defaced that garrison.  
Now I in turn keep watch and ward  
In my red house, in my walled yard  
Of sunflowers, sitting here at ease  
With friends and my bright canvases.  
But hark, and you may hear quite plain  
Time's chuckled laughter in the lane.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Foreign Children

Little Indian, Sioux, or Crow,  
Little frosty Eskimo,  
Little Turk or Japanee,  
Oh! don't you wish that you were me?

You have seen the scarlet trees  
And the lions over seas;  
You have eaten ostrich eggs,  
And turned the turtle off their legs.

Such a life is very fine,  
But it's not so nice as mine:  
You must often as you trod,  
Have wearied NOT to be abroad.

You have curious things to eat,  
I am fed on proper meat;  
You must dwell upon the foam,  
But I am safe and live at home.  
Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,  
Little frosty Eskimo,  
Little Turk or Japanee,  
Oh! don't you wish that you were me?

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Foreign Lands

Up into the cherry tree  
Who should climb but little me?  
I held the trunk with both my hands  
And looked abroad in foreign lands.

I saw the next door garden lie,  
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,  
And many pleasant places more  
That I had never seen before.

I saw the dimpling river pass  
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;  
The dusty roads go up and down  
With people tramping in to town.

If I could find a higher tree  
Farther and farther I should see,  
To where the grown-up river slips  
Into the sea among the ships,

To where the road on either hand  
Lead onward into fairy land,  
Where all the children dine at five,  
And all the playthings come alive.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Frag1

About my fields, in the broad sun  
And blaze of noon, there goeth one,  
Barefoot and robed in blue, to scan  
With the hard eye of the husbandman  
My harvests and my cattle. Her,  
When even puts the birds astir  
And day has set in the great woods,  
We seek, among her garden roods,  
With bells and cries in vain: the while  
Lamps, plate, and the decanter smile  
On the forgotten board. But she,  
Deaf, blind, and prone on face and knee,  
Forgets time, family, and feast,  
And digs like a demented beast.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Frag2

Tall as a guardsman, pale as the east at dawn,  
Who strides in strange apparel on the lawn?  
Rails for his breakfast? routs his vassals out  
(Like boys escaped from school) with song and shout?  
Kind and unkind, his Maker's final freak,  
Part we deride the child, part dread the antique!  
See where his gang, like frogs, among the dew  
Crouch at their duty, an unquiet crew;  
Adjust their staring kilts; and their swift eyes  
Turn still to him who sits to supervise.  
He in the midst, perched on a fallen tree,  
Eyes them at labour; and, guitar on knee,  
Now ministers alarm, now scatters joy,  
Now twangs a halting chord, now tweaks a boy.  
Thorough in all, my resolute vizier  
Plays both the despot and the volunteer,  
Exacts with fines obedience to my laws,  
And for his music, too, exacts applause.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Fragments

About my fields, in the broad sun  
And blaze of noon, there goeth one,  
Barefoot and robed in blue, to scan  
With the hard eye of the husbandman  
My harvests and my cattle. Her,  
When even puts the birds astir  
And day has set in the great woods,  
We seek, among her garden roods,  
With bells and cries in vain: the while  
Lamps, plate, and the decanter smile  
On the forgotten board. But she,  
Deaf, blind, and prone on face and knee,  
Forgets time, family, and feast,  
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Plays both the despot and the volunteer,  
Exacts with fines obedience to my laws,  
And for his music, too, exacts applause.

The Adorner of the uncomely - those  
Amidst whose tall battalions goes  
Her pretty person out and in  
All day with an endearing din,  
Of censure and encouragement;

And when all else is tried in vain  
See her sit down and weep again.  
She weeps to conquer;  
She varies on her grenadiers  
From satire up to girlish tears!

Or rather to behold her when  
She plies for me the unresting pen,  
And when the loud assault of squalls  
Resounds upon the roof and walls,  
And the low thunder growls and I  
Raise my dictating voice on high.

What glory for a boy of ten  
Who now must three gigantic men  
And two enormous, dapple grey  
New Zealand pack-horses array  
And lead, and wisely resolute  
Our day-long business execute  
In the far shore-side town. His soul  
Glow in his bosom like a coal;  
His innocent eyes glitter again,  
And his hand trembles on the rein.  
Once he reviews his whole command,  
And chivalrously planting hand  
On hip - a borrowed attitude -  
Rides off downhill into the wood.

I meanwhile in the populous house apart  
Sit snugly chambered, and my silent art  
Uninterrupted, unremitting ply  
Before the dawn, by morning lamplight, by  
The glow of smelting noon, and when the sun  
Dips past my westering hill and day is done;  
So, bending still over my trade of words,  
I hear the morning and the evening birds,  
The morning and the evening stars behold;  
So there apart I sit as once of old  
Napier in wizard Merchiston; and my  
Brown innocent aides in home and husbandry  
Wonder askance. What ails the boss? they ask.  
Him, richest of the rich, an endless task

Before the earliest birds or servants stir  
Calls and detains him daylong prisoner?  
He whose innumerable dollars hewed  
This cleft in the boar and devil-haunted wood,  
And bade therein, from sun to seas and skies,  
His many-windowed, painted palace rise  
Red-roofed, blue-walled, a rainbow on the hill,  
A wonder in the forest glade: he still,

Unthinkable Aladdin, dawn and dark,  
Scribbles and scribbles, like a German clerk.  
We see the fact, but tell, O tell us why?  
My reverend washman and wise butler cry.  
Meanwhile at times the manifold  
Imperishable perfumes of the past  
And coloured pictures rise on me thick and fast:  
And I remember the white rime, the loud  
Lamplitten city, shops, and the changing crowd;  
And I remember home and the old time,  
The winding river, the white moving rhyme,  
The autumn robin by the river-side  
That pipes in the grey eve.

The old lady (so they say), but I  
Admire your young vitality.  
Still brisk of foot, still busy and keen  
In and about and up and down.

I hear you pass with bustling feet  
The long verandahs round, and beat  
Your bell, and "Lotu! Lotu!" cry;  
Thus calling our queer company,  
In morning or in evening dim,  
To prayers and the oft mangled hymn.

All day you watch across the sky  
The silent, shining cloudlands ply,  
That, huge as countries, swift as birds,  
Beshade the isles by halves and thirds,  
Till each with battlemented crest  
Stands anchored in the ensanguined west,  
An Alp enchanted. All the day



You hear the exuberant wind at play,  
In vast, unbroken voice uplift,  
In roaring tree, round whistling clift.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# From A Railway Carriage

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,  
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;  
And charging along like troops in a battle  
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:  
All of the sights of the hill and the plain  
Fly as thick as driving rain;  
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,  
Painted stations whistle by.  
Here is a child who clammers and scrambles,  
All by himself and gathering brambles;  
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;  
And here is the green for stringing the daisies!  
Here is a cart runaway in the road  
Lumping along with man and load;  
And here is a mill, and there is a river:  
Each a glimpse and gone forever!

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Go, Little Book - The Ancient Phrase

GO, little book - the ancient phrase  
And still the daintiest - go your ways,  
My Otto, over sea and land,  
Till you shall come to Nelly's hand.

How shall I your Nelly know?  
By her blue eyes and her black brow,  
By her fierce and slender look,  
And by her goodness, little book!

What shall I say when I come there?  
You shall speak her soft and fair:  
See - you shall say - the love they send  
To greet their unforgotten friend!

Giant Adulpho you shall sing  
The next, and then the cradled king:  
And the four corners of the roof  
Then kindly bless; and to your perch aloof,  
Where Balzac all in yellow dressed  
And the dear Webster of the west  
Encircle the prepotent throne  
Of Shakespeare and of Calderon,  
Shall climb an upstart.

There with these  
You shall give ear to breaking seas  
And windmills turning in the breeze,  
A distant undetermined din  
Without; and you shall hear within  
The blazing and the bickering logs,  
The crowing child, the yawning dogs,  
And ever agile, high and low,  
Our Nelly going to and fro.

There shall you all silent sit,  
Till, when perchance the lamp is lit  
And the day's labour done, she takes  
Poor Otto down, and, warming for our sakes,

Perchance beholds, alive and near,  
Our distant faces reappear.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# God Gave To Me A Child In Part

GOD gave to me a child in part,  
Yet wholly gave the father's heart:  
Child of my soul, O whither now,  
Unborn, unmothered, goest thou?

You came, you went, and no man wist;  
Hapless, my child, no breast you kist;  
On no dear knees, a privileged babbler, clomb,  
Nor knew the kindly feel of home.

My voice may reach you, O my dear-  
A father's voice perhaps the child may hear;  
And, pitying, you may turn your view  
On that poor father whom you never knew.

Alas! alone he sits, who then,  
Immortal among mortal men,  
Sat hand in hand with love, and all day through  
With your dear mother wondered over you.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Good And Bad Children

Children, you are very little,  
And your bones are very brittle;  
If you would grow great and stately,  
You must try to walk sedately.

You must still be bright and quiet,  
And content with simple diet;  
And remain, through all bewild'ring,  
Innocent and honest children.

Happy hearts and happy faces,  
Happy play in grassy places--  
That was how in ancient ages,  
Children grew to kings and sages.

But the unkind and the unruly,  
And the sort who eat unduly,  
They must never hope for glory--  
Theirs is quite a different story!

Cruel children, crying babies,  
All grow up as geese and gabies,  
Hated, as their age increases,  
By their nephews and their nieces.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Good-Night

Then the bright lamp is carried in,  
The sunless hours again begin;  
O'er all without, in field and lane,  
The haunted night returns again.

Now we behold the embers flee  
About the firelit hearth; and see  
Our faces painted as we pass,  
Like pictures, on the window glass.

Must we to bed indeed? Well then,  
Let us arise and go like men,  
And face with an undaunted tread  
The long black passage up to bed.

Farewell, O brother, sister, sire!  
O pleasant party round the fire!  
The songs you sing, the tales you tell,  
Till far to-morrow, fare you well!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Had I The Power That Have The Will

HAD I the power that have the will,  
The enfeebled will - a modern curse -  
This book of mine should blossom still  
A perfect garden-ground of verse.

White placid marble gods should keep  
Good watch in every shadowy lawn;  
And from clean, easy-breathing sleep  
The birds should waken me at dawn.

- A fairy garden; - none the less  
Throughout these gracious paths of mine  
All day there should be free access  
For stricken hearts and lives that pine;

And by the folded lawns all day -  
No idle gods for such a land -  
All active Love should take its way  
With active Labour hand in hand.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Hail! Childish Slave Of Social Rules

HAIL! Childish slaves of social rules  
You had yourselves a hand in making!  
How I could shake your faith, ye fools,  
If but I thought it worth the shaking.  
I see, and pity you; and then  
Go, casting off the idle pity,  
In search of better, braver men,  
My own way freely through the city.

My own way freely, and not yours;  
And, careless of a town's abusing,  
Seek real friendship that endures  
Among the friends of my own choosing.  
I'll choose my friends myself, do you hear?  
And won't let Mrs. Grundy do it,  
Tho' all I honour and hold dear  
And all I hope should move me to it.

I take my old coat from the shelf -  
I am a man of little breeding.  
And only dress to please myself -  
I own, a very strange proceeding.  
I smoke a pipe abroad, because  
To all cigars I much prefer it,  
And as I scorn your social laws  
My choice has nothing to deter it.

Gladly I trudge the footpath way,  
While you and yours roll by in coaches  
In all the pride of fine array,  
Through all the city's thronged approaches.  
O fine religious, decent folk,  
In Virtue's flaunting gold and scarlet,  
I sneer between two puffs of smoke, -  
Give me the publican and harlot.

Ye dainty-spoken, stiff, severe  
Seed of the migrated Philistian,  
One whispered question in your ear -

Pray, what was Christ, if you be Christian?  
If Christ were only here just now,  
Among the city's wynds and gables  
Teaching the life he taught us, how  
Would he be welcome to your tables?

I go and leave your logic-straws,  
Your former-friends with face averted,  
Your petty ways and narrow laws,  
Your Grundy and your God, deserted.  
From your frail ark of lies, I flee  
I know not where, like Noah's raven.  
Full to the broad, unsounded sea  
I swim from your dishonest haven.

Alone on that unsounded deep,  
Poor waif, it may be I shall perish,  
Far from the course I thought to keep,  
Far from the friends I hoped to cherish.  
It may be that I shall sink, and yet  
Hear, thro' all taunt and scornful laughter,  
Through all defeat and all regret,  
The stronger swimmers coming after.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Hail, Guest, And Enter Freely!

HAIL, guest, and enter freely! All you see  
Is, for your momentary visit, yours; and we  
Who welcome you are but the guests of God,  
And know not our departure.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Happy Thought

The world is so full of a number of things,  
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Heather Ale: A Galloway Legend

From the bonny bells of heather  
They brewed a drink long-syne,  
Was sweeter far than honey,  
Was stronger far than wine.  
They brewed it and they drank it,  
And lay in a blessed swound  
For days and days together  
In their dwellings underground.

There rose a king in Scotland,  
A fell man to his foes,  
He smote the Picts in battle,  
He hunted them like roes.  
Over miles of the red mountain  
He hunted as they fled,  
And strewed the dwarfish bodies  
Of the dying and the dead.

Summer came in the country,  
Red was the heather bell;  
But the manner of the brewing  
Was none alive to tell.  
In graves that were like children's  
On many a mountain head,  
The Brewsters of the Heather  
Lay numbered with the dead.

The king in the red moorland  
Rode on a summer's day;  
And the bees hummed, and the curlews  
Cried beside the way.  
The king rode, and was angry;  
Black was his brow and pale,  
To rule in a land of heather  
And lack the Heather Ale.

It fortune'd that his vassals,  
Riding free on the heath,  
Came on a stone that was fallen

And vermin hid beneath.  
Rudely plucked from their hiding,  
Never a word they spoke:  
A son and his aged father—  
Last of the dwarfish folk.

The king sat high on his charger,  
He looked on the little men;  
And the dwarfish and swarthy couple  
Looked at the king again.  
Down by the shore he had them;  
And there on the giddy brink—  
“I will give you life, ye vermin,  
For the secret of the drink.”

There stood the son and father  
And they looked high and low;  
The heather was red around them,  
The sea rumbled below.  
And up and spoke the father,  
Shrill was his voice to hear:  
“I have a word in private,  
A word for the royal ear.

“Life is dear to the aged,  
And honor a little thing;  
I would gladly sell the secret,”  
Quoth the Pict to the King.  
His voice was small as a sparrow’s,  
And shrill and wonderful clear:  
“I would gladly sell my secret,  
Only my son I fear.

“For life is a little matter,  
And death is nought to the young;  
And I dare not sell my honor  
Under the eye of my son.  
Take him, O king, and bind him,  
And cast him far in the deep;  
And it ’s I will tell the secret  
That I have sworn to keep.”

They took the son and bound him,  
Neck and heels in a thong,  
And a lad took him and swung him,  
And flung him far and strong,  
And the sea swallowed his body,  
Like that of a child of ten;—  
And there on the cliff stood the father,  
Last of the dwarfish men.

“True was the word I told you:  
Only my son I feared;  
For I doubt the sapling courage  
That goes without the beard.  
But now in vain is the torture,  
Fire shall never avail:  
Here dies in my bosom  
The secret of Heather Ale.”

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Henry James

Who comes to-night? We open the doors in vain.  
Who comes? My bursting walls, can you contain  
The presences that now together throng  
Your narrow entry, as with flowers and song,  
As with the air of life, the breath of talk?  
Lo, how these fair immaculate women walk  
Behind their jocund maker; and we see  
Slighted De Mauves, and that far different she,  
Gressie, the trivial sphynx; and to our feast  
Daisy and Barb and Chancellor (she not least!)  
With all their silken, all their airy kin,  
Do like unbidden angels enter in.  
But he, attended by these shining names,  
Comes (best of all) himself—our welcome James.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Historical Associations

Dear Uncle Jim. this garden ground  
That now you smoke your pipe around,  
has seen immortal actions done  
And valiant battles lost and won.

Here we had best on tip-toe tread,  
While I for safety march ahead,  
For this is that enchanted ground  
Where all who loiter slumber sound.

Here is the sea, here is the sand,  
Here is the simple Shepherd's Land,  
Here are the fairy hollyhocks,  
And there are Ali Baba's rocks.  
But yonder, see! apart and high,  
Frozen Siberia lies; where I,  
With Robert Bruce William Tell,  
Was bound by an enchanter's spell.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Home, My Little Children, Hear Are Songs For You

COME, my little children, here are songs for you;  
Some are short and some are long, and all, all are new.  
You must learn to sing them very small and clear,  
Very true to time and tune and pleasing to the ear.

Mark the note that rises, mark the notes that fall,  
Mark the time when broken, and the swing of it all.  
So when night is come, and you have gone to bed,  
All the songs you love to sing shall echo in your head.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# I Am Like One That For Long Days Had Sate

I AM like one that for long days had sate,  
With seaward eyes set keen against the gale,  
On some lone foreland, watching sail by sail,  
The portbound ships for one ship that was late;  
And sail by sail, his heart burned up with joy,  
And cruelly was quenched, until at last  
One ship, the looked-for pennant at its mast,  
Bore gaily, and dropt safely past the buoy;  
And lo! the loved one was not there - was dead.  
Then would he watch no more; no more the sea  
With myriad vessels, sail by sail, perplex  
His eyes and mock his longing. Weary head,  
Take now thy rest; eyes, close; for no more me  
Shall hopes untried elate, or ruined vex.

For thus on love I waited; thus for love  
Strained all my senses eagerly and long;  
Thus for her coming ever trimmed my song;  
Till in the far skies coloured as a dove,  
A bird gold-coloured flickered far and fled  
Over the pathless waterwaste for me;  
And with spread hands I watched the bright bird flee  
And waited, till before me she dropped dead.  
O golden bird in these dove-coloured skies  
How long I sought, how long with wearied eyes  
I sought, O bird, the promise of thy flight!  
And now the morn has dawned, the morn has died,  
The day has come and gone; and once more night  
About my lone life settles, wild and wide.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# I Do Not Fear To Own Me Kin

I DO not fear to own me kin  
To the glad clods in which spring flowers begin;  
Or to my brothers, the great trees,  
That speak with pleasant voices in the breeze,  
Loud talkers with the winds that pass;  
Or to my sister, the deep grass.

Of such I am, of such my body is,  
That thrills to reach its lips to kiss.  
That gives and takes with wind and sun and rain  
And feels keen pleasure to the point of pain.

Of such are these,  
The brotherhood of stalwart trees,  
The humble family of flowers,  
That make a light of shadowy bowers  
Or star the edges of the bent:  
They give and take sweet colour and sweet scent;  
They joy to shed themselves abroad;  
And tree and flower and grass and sod  
Thrill and leap and live and sing  
With silent voices in the Spring.

Hence I not fear to yield my breath,  
Since all is still unchanged by death;  
Since in some pleasant valley I may be,  
Clod beside clod, or tree by tree,  
Long ages hence, with her I love this hour;  
And feel a lively joy to share  
With her the sun and rain and air,  
To taste her quiet neighbourhood  
As the dumb things of field and wood,  
The clod, the tree, and starry flower,  
Alone of all things have the power.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# I Dreamed Of Forest Alleys Fair

I.

I DREAMED of forest alleys fair  
And fields of gray-flowered grass,  
Where by the yellow summer moon  
My Jenny seemed to pass.

I dreamed the yellow summer moon,  
Behind a cedar wood,  
Lay white on fields of rippling grass  
Where I and Jenny stood.

I dreamed - but fallen through my dream,  
In a rainy land I lie  
Where wan wet morning crowns the hills  
Of grim reality.

II.

I am as one that keeps awake  
All night in the month of June,  
That lies awake in bed to watch  
The trees and great white moon.

For memories of love are more  
Than the white moon there above,  
And dearer than quiet moonshine  
Are the thoughts of her I love.

III.

Last night I lingered long without  
My last of loves to see.  
Alas! the moon-white window-panes  
Stared blindly back on me.

To-day I hold her very hand,  
Her very waist embrace -  
Like clouds across a pool, I read

Her thoughts upon her face.

And yet, as now, through her clear eyes  
I seek the inner shrine -  
I stoop to read her virgin heart  
In doubt if it be mine -

O looking long and fondly thus,  
What vision should I see?  
No vision, but my own white face  
That grins and mimics me.

IV.

Once more upon the same old seat  
In the same sunshiny weather,  
The elm-trees' shadows at their feet  
And foliage move together.

The shadows shift upon the grass,  
The dial point creeps on;  
The clear sun shines, the loiterers pass,  
As then they passed and shone.

But now deep sleep is on my heart,  
Deep sleep and perfect rest.  
Hope's flutterings now disturb no more  
The quiet of my breast.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# I Know Not How, But As I Count

I KNOW not how, but as I count  
The beads of former years,  
Old laughter catches in my throat  
With the very feel of tears.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# I Love To Be Warm By The Red Fireside

I LOVE to be warm by the red fireside,  
I love to be wet with rain:  
I love to be welcome at lamplit doors,  
And leave the doors again.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# I Now, O Friend, Whom Noiselessly The Snows

I NOW, O friend, whom noiselessly the snows  
Settle around, and whose small chamber grows  
Dusk as the sloping window takes its load:

\* \* \* \* \*

The kindly hill, as to complete our hap,  
Has ta'en us in the shelter of her lap;  
Well sheltered in our slender grove of trees  
And ring of walls, we sit between her knees;  
A disused quarry, paved with rose plots, hung  
With clematis, the barren womb whence sprung  
The crow-stepped house itself, that now far seen  
Stands, like a bather, to the neck in green.  
A disused quarry, furnished with a seat  
Sacred to pipes and meditation meet  
For such a sunny and retired nook.  
There in the clear, warm mornings many a book  
Has vied with the fair prospect of the hills  
That, vale on vale, rough brae on brae, upfills  
Halfway to the zenith all the vacant sky  
To keep my loose attention. . . .  
Horace has sat with me whole mornings through:  
And Montaigne gossiped, fairly false and true;  
And chattering Pepys, and a few beside  
That suit the easy vein, the quiet tide,  
The calm and certain stay of garden-life,  
Far sunk from all the thunderous roar of strife.  
There is about the small secluded place  
A garnish of old times; a certain grace  
Of pensive memories lays about the braes:  
The old chestnuts gossip tales of bygone days.  
Here, where some wandering preacher, blest Lazil,  
Perhaps, or Peden, on the middle hill  
Had made his secret church, in rain or snow,  
He cheers the chosen residue from woe.  
All night the doors stood open, come who might,  
The hounded kebbock mat the mud all night.  
Nor are there wanting later tales; of how

Prince Charlie's Highlanders . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

I have had talents, too. In life's first hour  
God crowned with benefits my childish head.  
Flower after flower, I plucked them; flower by flower  
Cast them behind me, ruined, withered, dead.  
Full many a shining godhead disappeared.  
From the bright rank that once adorned her brow  
The old child's Olympus

\* \* \* \* \*

Gone are the fair old dreams, and one by one,  
As, one by one, the means to reach them went,  
As, one by one, the stars in riot and disgrace,  
I squandered what . . .

There shut the door, alas! on many a hope  
Too many;  
My face is set to the autumnal slope,  
Where the loud winds shall . . .

There shut the door, alas! on many a hope,  
And yet some hopes remain that shall decide  
My rest of years and down the autumnal slope.

\* \* \* \* \*

Gone are the quiet twilight dreams that I  
Loved, as all men have loved them; gone!  
I have great dreams, and still they stir my soul on high -  
Dreams of the knight's stout heart and tempered will.  
Not in Elysian lands they take their way;  
Not as of yore across the gay champaign,  
Towards some dream city, towered . . .  
and my . . .  
The path winds forth before me, sweet and plain,  
Not now; but though beneath a stone-grey sky  
November's russet woodlands toss and wail,  
Still the white road goes thro' them, still may I,

Strong in new purpose, God, may still prevail.

\* \* \* \* \*

I and my like, improvident sailors!

\* \* \* \* \*

At whose light fall awaking, all my heart  
Grew populous with gracious, favoured thought,  
And all night long thereafter, hour by hour,  
The pageant of dead love before my eyes  
Went proudly, and old hopes with downcast head  
Followed like Kings, subdued in Rome's imperial hour,  
Followed the car; and I . . .

Robert Louis Stevenson

# I Who All The Winter Through

I WHO all the winter through  
Cherished other loves than you,  
And kept hands with hoary policy in marriage-bed and pew;  
Now I know the false and true,  
For the earnest sun looks through,  
And my old love comes to meet me in the dawning and the dew.

Now the hedged meads renew  
Rustic odour, smiling hue,  
And the clean air shines and tinkles as the world goes wheeling through;  
And my heart springs up anew,  
Bright and confident and true,  
And my old love comes to meet me in the dawning and the dew.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# I Will Make You Brooches

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight  
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.  
I will make a palace fit for you and me  
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,  
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,  
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white  
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,  
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!  
That only I remember, that only you admire,  
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# I, Whom Apollo Sometime Visited

I, WHOM Apollo sometime visited,  
Or feigned to visit, now, my day being done,  
Do slumber wholly; nor shall know at all  
The weariness of changes; nor perceive  
Immeasurable sands of centuries  
Drink of the blanching ink, or the loud sound  
Of generations beat the music down.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## If This Were Faith

God, if this were enough,  
That I see things bare to the buff  
And up to the buttocks in mire;  
That I ask nor hope nor hire,  
Nur in the husk,  
Nor dawn beyond the dusk,  
Nor life beyond death:  
God, if this were faith!

Having felt thy wind in my face  
Spit sorrow and disgrace,  
Having seen thine evil doom  
In Golgotha and Khartoum,  
And the brutes, the work of thine hands,  
Fill with injustice lands  
And stain with blood the sea:  
If still in my veins the glee  
Of the black night and the sun  
And the lost battle, run:  
If, an adept,  
The iniquitous lists I still accept  
With joy, and joy to endure and be withstood,  
And still to battle and perish for a dream of good:  
God, if that were enough!

If to feel, in the ink of the slough,  
And the sink of the mire,  
Veins of glory and fire  
Run through and transpierce and transpire,  
And a secret purpose of glory in every part,  
And the answering glory of battle fill my heart;  
To thrill with the joy of girded men  
To go on for ever and fail and go on again,  
And be mauled to the earth and arise,  
And contend for the shade of a word and a thing  
not seen with the eyes:  
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night  
That somehow the right is the right  
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough:

Lord, if that were enough!

Robert Louis Stevenson



## In Charidemum

YOU, Charidemus, who my cradle swung,  
And watched me all the days that I was young;  
You, at whose step the laziest slaves awake,  
And both the bailiff and the butler quake;  
The barber's suds now blacken with my beard,  
And my rough kisses make the maids afeared;  
But with reproach your awful eyebrows twitch,  
And for the cane, I see, your fingers itch.  
If something daintily attired I go,  
Straight you exclaim: "Your father did not so."  
And fuming, count the bottles on the board  
As though my cellar were your private hoard.  
Enough, at last: I have done all I can,  
And your own mistress hails me for a man.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## In Lupum

BEYOND the gates thou gav'st a field to till;  
I have a larger on my window-sill.  
A farm, d'ye say? Is this a farm to you,  
Where for all woods I spay one tuft of rue,  
And that so rusty, and so small a thing,  
One shrill cicada hides it with a wing;  
Where one cucumber covers all the plain;  
And where one serpent rings himself in vain  
To enter wholly; and a single snail  
Eats all and exit fasting to the pool?  
Here shall my gardener be the dusty mole.  
My only ploughman the . . . mole.  
Here shall I wait in vain till figs be set,  
And till the spring disclose the violet.  
Through all my wilds a tameless mouse careers,  
And in that narrow boundary appears,  
Huge as the stalking lion of Algiers,  
Huge as the fabled boar of Calydon.  
And all my hay is at one swoop impresst  
By one low-flying swallow for her nest,  
Strip god Priapus of each attribute  
Here finds he scarce a pedestal to foot.  
The gathered harvest scarcely brims a spoon;  
And all my vintage drips in a cocoon.  
Generous are you, but I more generous still:  
Take back your farm and stand me half a gill!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# In Maximum

WOULDST thou be free? I think it not, indeed;  
But if thou wouldst, attend this simple rede:  
When quite contented }thou canst dine at home  
Thou shall be free when }  
And drink a small wine of the march of Rome;  
When thou canst see unmoved thy neighbour's plate,  
And wear my threadbare toga in the gate;  
When thou hast learned to love a small abode,  
And not to choose a mistress A LA MODE:  
When thus contained and bridled thou shalt be,  
Then, Maximus, then first shalt thou be free.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## In Port

Last, to the chamber where I lie  
My fearful footsteps patter nigh,  
And come out from the cold and gloom  
Into my warm and cheerful room.

There, safe arrived, we turn about  
To keep the coming shadows out,  
And close the happy door at last  
On all the perils that we past.

Then, when mamma goes by to bed,  
She shall come in with tip-toe tread,  
And see me lying warm and fast  
And in the land of Nod at last.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# In The Green And Gallant Spring

IN the green and gallant Spring,  
Love and the lyre I thought to sing,  
And kisses sweet to give and take  
By the flowery hawthorn brake.

Now is russet Autumn here,  
Death and the grave and winter drear,  
And I must ponder here aloof  
While the rain is on the roof.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## In The Highlands

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

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

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

Robert Louis Stevenson

## In The States

With half a heart I wander here  
As from an age gone by  
A brother yet— though young in years,  
An elder brother, I.

You speak another tongue than mine,  
Though both were English born.  
I towards the night of time decline,  
You mount into the morn.

You shall grow great and strong and free,  
But age must still decay:  
To-morrow for the States— for me,  
England and Yesterday.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# It Blows A Snowing Gale

IT blows a snowing gale in the winter of the year;  
The boats are on the sea and the crews are on the pier.  
The needle of the vane, it is veering to and fro,  
A flash of sun is on the veering of the vane.  
Autumn leaves and rain,  
The passion of the gale.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# It's Forth Across The Roaring Foam

IT'S forth across the roaring foam, and on towards the west,  
It's many a lonely league from home, o'er many a mountain crest,  
From where the dogs of Scotland call the sheep around the fold,  
To where the flags are flying beside the Gates of Gold.

Where all the deep-sea galleons ride that come to bring the corn,  
Where falls the fog at eventide and blows the breeze at morn;  
It's there that I was sick and sad, alone and poor and cold,  
In yon distressful city beside the Gates of Gold.

I slept as one that nothing knows; but far along my way,  
Before the morning God rose and planned the coming day;  
Afar before me forth he went, as through the sands of old,  
And chose the friends to help me beside the Gates of Gold.

I have been near, I have been far, my back's been at the wall,  
Yet aye and ever shone the star to guide me through it all:  
The love of God, the help of man, they both shall make me bold  
Against the gates of darkness as beside the Gates of Gold.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Katherine

We see you as we see a face  
That trembles in a forest place  
Upon the mirror of a pool  
Forever quiet, clear and cool;  
And in the wayward glass, appears  
To hover between smiles and tears,  
Elfin and human, airy and true,  
And backed by the reflected blue.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Keepsake Mill

Over the borders, a sin without pardon,  
Breaking the branches and crawling below,  
Out through the breach in the wall of the garden,  
Down by the banks of the river we go.

Here is a mill with the humming of thunder,  
Here is the weir with the wonder of foam,  
Here is the sluice with the race running under--  
Marvellous places, though handy to home!

Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,  
Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;  
Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,  
Deaf are his ears with the moil of the mill.

Years may go by, and the wheel in the river  
Wheel as it wheels for us, children, to-day,  
Wheel and keep roaring and foaming for ever  
Long after all of the boys are away.

Home for the Indies and home from the ocean,  
Heroes and soldiers we all will come home;  
Still we shall find the old mill wheel in motion,  
Turning and churning that river to foam.

You with the bean that I gave when we quarrelled,  
I with your marble of Saturday last,  
Honoured and old and all gaily apparelled,  
Here we shall meet and remember the past.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Know You The River Near To Grez

KNOW you the river near to Grez,  
A river deep and clear?  
Among the lilies all the way,  
That ancient river runs to-day  
From snowy weir to weir.

Old as the Rhine of great renown,  
She hurries clear and fast,  
She runs amain by field and town  
From south to north, from up to down,  
To present on from past.

The love I hold was borne by her;  
And now, though far away,  
My lonely spirit hears the stir  
Of water round the starling spur  
Beside the bridge at Grez.

So may that love forever hold  
In life an equal pace;  
So may that love grow never old,  
But, clear and pure and fountain-cold,  
Go on from grace to grace.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Late, O Miller

LATE, O miller,  
The birds are silent,  
The darkness falls.  
In the house the lights are lighted.  
See, in the valley they twinkle,  
The lights of home.  
Late, O lovers,  
The night is at hand;  
Silence and darkness  
Clothe the land.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Let Love Go, If Go She Will

LET love go, if go she will.  
Seek not, O fool, her wanton flight to stay.  
Of all she gives and takes away  
The best remains behind her still.

The best remains behind; in vain  
Joy she may give and take again,  
Joy she may take and leave us pain,  
If yet she leave behind  
The constant mind  
To meet all fortunes nobly, to endure  
All things with a good heart, and still be pure,  
Still to be foremost in the foremost cause,  
And still be worthy of the love that was.  
Love coming is omnipotent indeed,  
But not Love going. Let her go. The seed  
Springs in the favouring Summer air, and grows,  
And waxes strong; and when the Summer goes,  
Remains, a perfect tree.

Joy she may give and take again,  
Joy she may take and leave us pain.  
O Love, and what care we?  
For one thing thou hast given, O Love, one thing  
Is ours that nothing can remove;  
And as the King discrowned is still a King,  
The unhappy lover still preserves his love.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Light As The Linnet On My Way I Start

LIGHT as the linnet on my way I start,  
For all my pack I bear a chartered heart.  
Forth on the world without a guide or chart,  
Content to know, through all man's varying fates,  
The eternal woman by the wayside waits.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Lo! In Thine Honest Eyes I Read

LO! in thine honest eyes I read  
The auspicious beacon that shall lead,  
After long sailing in deep seas,  
To quiet havens in June ease.

Thy voice sings like an inland bird  
First by the seaworn sailor heard;  
And like road sheltered from life's sea  
Thine honest heart is unto me.

Robert Louis Stevenson



## Lo, Now, My Guest

LO, now, my guest, if aught amiss were said,  
Forgive it and dismiss it from your head.  
For me, for you, for all, to close the date,  
Pass now the ev'ning sponge across the slate;  
And to that spirit of forgiveness keep  
Which is the parent and the child of sleep.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Long Time I Lay In Little Ease

LONG TIME I LAY IN LITTLE EASE

LONG time I lay in little ease  
Where, placed by the Turanian,  
Marseilles, the many-masted, sees  
The blue Mediterranean.

Now songful in the hour of sport,  
Now riotous for wages,  
She camps around her ancient port,  
As ancient of the ages.

Algerian airs through all the place  
Unconquerably sally;  
Incomparable women pace  
The shadows of the alley.

And high o'er dark and graving yard  
And where the sky is paler,  
The golden virgin of the guard  
Shines, beckoning the sailor.

She hears the city roar on high,  
Thief, prostitute, and banker;  
She sees the masted vessels lie  
Immovably at anchor.

She sees the snowy islets dot  
The sea's immortal azure,  
And If, that castellated spot,  
Tower, turret, and embrasure.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Looking Forward

When I am grown to man's estate  
I shall be very proud and great,  
And tell the other girls and boys  
Not to meddle with my toys.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Looking-Glass River

Smooth it glides upon its travel,  
Here a wimple, there a gleam--  
O the clean gravel!  
O the smooth stream!

Sailing blossoms, silver fishes,  
Pave pools as clear as air--  
How a child wishes  
To live down there!

We can see our colored faces  
Floating on the shaken pool  
Down in cool places,  
Dim and very cool;

Till a wind or water wrinkle,  
Dipping marten, plumping trout,  
Spreads in a twinkle  
And blots all out.

See the rings pursue each other;  
All below grows black as night,  
Just as if mother  
Had blown out the light!

Patience, children, just a minute--  
See the spreading circles die;  
The stream and all in it  
Will clear by-and-by.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Loud And Low In The Chimney

LOUD and low in the chimney  
The squalls suspire;  
Then like an answer dwindles  
And glows the fire,  
And the chamber reddens and darkens  
In time like taken breath.  
Near by the sounding chimney  
The youth apart  
Hearkens with changing colour  
And leaping heart,  
And hears in the coil of the tempest  
The voice of love and death.  
Love on high in the flute-like  
And tender notes  
Sounds as from April meadows  
And hillside cotes;  
But the deep wood wind in the chimney  
Utters the slogan of death.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Love, What Is Love

LOVE - what is love? A great and aching heart;  
Wrung hands; and silence; and a long despair.  
Life - what is life? Upon a moorland bare  
To see love coming and see love depart.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Love's Vicissitudes

AS Love and Hope together  
Walk by me for a while,  
Link-armed the ways they travel  
For many a pleasant mile -  
Link-armed and dumb they travel,  
They sing not, but they smile.

Hope leaving, Love commences  
To practise on the lute;  
And as he sings and travels  
With lingering, laggard foot,  
Despair plays obligato  
The sentimental flute.

Until in singing garments  
Comes royally, at call -  
Comes limber-hipped Indiff'rence  
Free stepping, straight and tall -  
Comes singing and lamenting,  
The sweetest pipe of all.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Man Sails The Deep Awhile

MAN sails the deep awhile;  
Loud runs the roaring tide;  
The seas are wild and wide;  
O'er many a salt, o'er many a desert mile,  
The unchained breakers ride,  
The quivering stars beguile.

Hope bears the sole command;  
Hope, with unshaken eyes,  
Sees flaw and storm arise;  
Hope, the good steersman, with unwearying hand,  
Steers, under changing skies,  
Unchanged toward the land.

O wind that bravely blows!  
O hope that sails with all  
Where stars and voices call!  
O ship undaunted that forever goes  
Where God, her admiral,  
His battle signal shows!

What though the seas and wind  
Far on the deep should whelm  
Colours and sails and helm?  
There, too, you touch that port that you designed -  
There, in the mid-seas' realm,  
Shall you that haven find.

Well hast thou sailed: now die,  
To die is not to sleep.  
Still your true course you keep,  
O sailor soul, still sailing for the sky;  
And fifty fathom deep  
Your colours still shall fly.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Marching Song

Bring the comb and play upon it!  
Marching, here we come!  
Willie cocks his highland bonnet,  
Johnnie beats the drum.

Mary Jane commands the party,  
Peter leads the rear;  
Feet in time, alert and hearty,  
Each a Grenadier!

All in the most martial manner  
Marching double-quick;  
While the napkin, like a banner,  
Waves upon the stick!

Here's enough of fame and pillage,  
Great commander Jane!  
Now that we've been round the village,  
Let's go home again.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Men Are Heaven's Piers

MEN are Heaven's piers; they evermore  
Unwearying bear the skyey floor;  
Man's theatre they bear with ease,  
Unfrowning cariatides!  
I, for my wife, the sun uphold,  
Or, dozing, strike the seasons cold.  
She, on her side, in fairy-wise  
Deals in diviner mysteries,  
By spells to make the fuel burn  
And keep the parlour warm, to turn  
Water to wine, and stones to bread,  
By her unconquered hero-head.  
A naked Adam, naked Eve,  
Alone the primal bower we weave;  
Sequestered in the seas of life,  
A Crusoe couple, man and wife,  
With all our good, with all our will,  
Our unfrequented isle we fill;  
And victor in day's petty wars,  
Each for the other lights the stars.  
Come then, my Eve, and to and fro  
Let us about our garden go;  
And, grateful-hearted, hand in hand  
Revisit all our tillage land,  
And marvel at our strange estate,  
For hooded ruin at the gate  
Sits watchful, and the angels fear  
To see us tread so boldly here.  
Meanwhile, my Eve, with flower and grass  
Our perishable days we pass;  
Far more the thorn observe - and see  
How our enormous sins go free -  
Nor less admire, beside the rose,  
How far a little virtue goes.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Mine Eyes Were Swift To Know Thee

MINE eyes were swift to know thee, and my heart  
As swift to love. I did become at once  
Thine wholly, thine unalterably, thine  
In honourable service, pure intent,  
Steadfast excess of love and laughing care:  
And as she was, so am, and so shall be.  
I knew thee helpful, knew thee true, knew thee  
And Pity bedfellows: I heard thy talk  
With answerable throbbings. On the stream,  
Deep, swift, and clear, the lilies floated; fish  
Through the shadows ran. There, thou and I  
Read Kindness in our eyes and closed the match.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Music At The Villa Marina

FOR some abiding central source of power,  
Strong-smitten steady chords, ye seem to flow  
And, flowing, carry virtue. Far below,  
The vain tumultuous passions of the hour  
Fleet fast and disappear; and as the sun  
Shines on the wake of tempests, there is cast  
O'er all the shattered ruins of my past  
A strong contentment as of battles won.

And yet I cry in anguish, as I hear  
The long drawn pageant of your passage roll  
Magnificently forth into the night.  
To yon fair land ye come from, to yon sphere  
Of strength and love where now ye shape your flight,  
O even wings of music, bear my soul!

Ye have the power, if but ye had the will,  
Strong-smitten steady chords in sequence grand,  
To bear me forth into that tranquil land  
Where good is no more ravelled up with ill;  
Where she and I, remote upon some hill  
Or by some quiet river's windless strand,  
May live, and love, and wander hand in hand,  
And follow nature simply, and be still.

From this grim world, where, sadly, prisoned, we  
Sit bound with others' heart-strings as with chains,  
And, if one moves, all suffer, - to that Goal,  
If such a land, if such a sphere, there be,  
Thither, from life and all life's joys and pains,  
O even wings of music, bear my soul!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Bed Is A Boat

My bed is like a little boat;  
Nurse helps me in when I embark;  
She girds me in my sailor's coat  
And starts me in the dark.

At night I go on board and say  
Good-night to all my friends on shore;  
I shut my eyes and sail away  
And see and hear no more.

And sometimes things to bed I take,  
As prudent sailors have to do;  
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,  
Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer;  
But when the day returns at last,  
Safe in my room beside the pier,  
I find my vessel fast.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Body, Which My Dungeon Is

My body which my dungeon is,  
And yet my parks and palaces: -  
Which is so great that there I go  
All the day long to and fro,  
And when the night begins to fall  
Throw down my bed and sleep, while all  
The buildings hum with wakefulness -  
Even as a child of savages  
When evening takes her on her way,  
(She having roamed a summer's day  
Along the mountain-sides and scalp)  
Sleeps in an antre of that alp: -  
Which is so broad and high that there,  
As in the topless fields of air  
My fancy soars like to a kite  
And faints in the blue infinite: -  
Which is so strong, my strongest throes  
And the rough world's besieging blows  
Not break it, and so weak withal,  
Death ebbs and flows in its loose wall  
As the green sea in fishers' nets,  
And tops its topmost parapets: -  
Which is so wholly mine that I  
Can wield its whole artillery,  
And mine so little, that my soul  
Dwells in perpetual control,  
And I but think and speak and do  
As my dead fathers move me to: -  
If this born body of my bones  
The beggared soul so barely owns,  
What money passed from hand to hand,  
What creeping custom of the land,  
What deed of author or assign,  
Can make a house a thing of mine?

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Heart, When First The Black-Bird Sings

MY heart, when first the blackbird sings,  
My heart drinks in the song:  
Cool pleasure fills my bosom through  
And spreads each nerve along.

My bosom eddies quietly,  
My heart is stirred and cool  
As when a wind-moved briar sweeps  
A stone into a pool

But unto thee, when thee I meet,  
My pulses thicken fast,  
As when the maddened lake grows black  
And ruffles in the blast.

Robert Louis Stevenson

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Robert Louis Stevenson



# My House, I Say

My house, I say. But hark to the sunny doves  
That make my roof the arena of their loves,  
That gyre about the gable all day long  
And fill the chimneys with their murmurous song:  
Our house, they say; and mine, the cat declares  
And spreads his golden fleece upon the chairs;  
And mine the dog, and rises stiff with wrath  
If any alien foot profane the path.  
So, too, the buck that trimmed my terraces,  
Our whilom gardener, called the garden his;  
Who now, deposed, surveys my plain abode  
And his late kingdom, only from the road.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Kingdom

Down by a shining water well  
I found a very little dell,  
No higher than my head.  
The heather and the gorse about  
In summer bloom were coming out,  
Some yellow and some red.

I called the little pool a sea;  
The little hills were big to me;  
For I am very small.  
I made a boat, I made a town,  
I searched the caverns up and down,  
And named them one and all.

And all about was mine, I said,  
The little sparrows overhead,  
The little minnows too.  
This was the world and I was king;  
For me the bees came by to sing,  
For me the swallows flew.

I played there were no deeper seas,  
Nor any wider plains than these,  
Nor other kings than me.  
At last I heard my mother call  
Out from the house at evenfall,  
To call me home to tea.

And I must rise and leave my dell,  
And leave my dimpled water well,  
And leave my heather blooms.  
Alas! and as my home I neared,  
How very big my nurse appeared.  
How great and cool the rooms!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Love Was Warm

MY love was warm; for that I crossed  
The mountains and the sea,  
Nor counted that endeavour lost  
That gave my love to me.

If that indeed were love at all,  
As still, my love, I trow,  
By what dear name am I to call  
The bond that holds me now

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Shadow

From Child's Garden of Verses

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.  
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;  
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow--  
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;  
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,  
And he sometimes goes so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,  
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.  
He stays so close behind me, he's a coward you can see;  
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,  
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;  
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,  
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Ship And I

O it's I that am the captain of a tidy little ship,  
Of a ship that goes a sailing on the pond;  
And my ship it keeps a-turning all around and all about;  
But when I'm a little older, I shall find the secret out  
How to send my vessel sailing on beyond.

For I mean to grow a little as the dolly at the helm,  
And the dolly I intend to come alive;  
And with him beside to help me, it's a-sailing I shall go,  
It's a-sailing on the water, when the jolly breezes blow  
And the vessel goes a dive-dive-dive.

O it's then you'll see me sailing through the rushes and the reeds,  
And you'll hear the water singing at the prow;  
For beside the dolly sailor, I'm to voyage and explore,  
To land upon the island where no dolly was before,  
And to fire the penny cannon in the bow.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Treasures

These nuts, that I keep in the back of the nest,  
Where all my tin soldiers are lying at rest,  
Were gathered in Autumn by nursie and me  
In a wood with a well by the side of the sea.

This whistle we made (and how clearly it sounds!)  
By the side of a field at the end of the grounds.  
Of a branch of a plane, with a knife of my own,  
It was nursie who made it, and nursie alone!

The stone, with the white and the yellow and grey,  
We discovered I cannot tell HOW far away;  
And I carried it back although weary and cold,  
For though father denies it, I'm sure it is gold.

But of all my treasures the last is the king,  
For there's very few children possess such a thing;  
And that is a chisel, both handle and blade,  
Which a man who was really a carpenter made.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# My Wife

Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,  
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,  
Steel-true and blade-straight,  
The great artificer  
Made my mate.

Honour, anger, valour, fire;  
A love that life could never tire,  
Death quench or evil stir,  
The mighty master  
Gave to her.

Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,  
A fellow-farer true through life,  
Heart-whole and soul-free  
The august father  
Gave to me.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Ne Sit Ancillae Tibi Amor Pudor

THERE'S just a twinkle in your eye  
That seems to say I MIGHT, if I  
Were only bold enough to try  
An arm about your waist.  
I hear, too, as you come and go,  
That pretty nervous laugh, you know;  
And then your cap is always so  
Coquettishly displaced.

Your cap! the word's profanely said.  
That little top-knot, white and red,  
That quaintly crowns your graceful head,  
No bigger than a flower,  
Is set with such a witching art,  
Is so provocatively smart,  
I'd like to wear it on my heart,  
An order for an hour!

O graceful housemaid, tall and fair,  
I love your shy imperial air,  
And always loiter on the stair  
When you are going by.  
A strict reserve the fates demand;  
But, when to let you pass I stand,  
Sometimes by chance I touch your hand  
And sometimes catch your eye.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Nest Eggs

Birds all the summer day  
Flutter and quarrel  
Here in the arbour-like  
Tent of the laurel.

Here in the fork  
The brown nest is seated;  
For little blue eggs  
The mother keeps heated.

While we stand watching her  
Staring like gabies,  
Safe in each egg are the  
Bird's little babies.

Soon the frail eggs they shall  
Chip, and upspringing  
Make all the April woods  
Merry with singing.

Younger than we are,  
O children, and frailer,  
Soon in the blue air they'll be,  
Singer and sailor.

We, so much older,  
Taller and stronger,  
We shall look down on the  
Birdies no longer.

They shall go flying  
With musical speeches  
High overhead in the  
Tops of the beeches.

In spite of our wisdom  
And sensible talking,  
We on our feet must go  
Plodding and walking.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Night And Day

When the golden day is done,  
Through the closing portal,  
Child and garden, Flower and sun,  
Vanish all things mortal.

As the blinding shadows fall  
As the rays diminish,  
Under evening's cloak they all  
Roll away and vanish.

Garden darkened, daisy shut,  
Child in bed, they slumber--  
Glow-worm in the hallway rut,  
Mice among the lumber.

In the darkness houses shine,  
Parents move the candles;  
Till on all the night divine  
Turns the bedroom handles.

Till at last the day begins  
In the east a-breaking,  
In the hedges and the whins  
Sleeping birds a-waking.

In the darkness shapes of things,  
Houses, trees and hedges,  
Clearer grow; and sparrow's wings  
Beat on window ledges.

These shall wake the yawning maid;  
She the door shall open--  
Finding dew on garden glade  
And the morning broken.

There my garden grows again  
Green and rosy painted,  
As at eve behind the pane  
From my eyes it fainted.

Just as it was shut away,  
Toy-like, in the even,  
Here I see it glow with day  
Under glowing heaven.

Every path and every plot,  
Every blush of roses,  
Every blue forget-me-not  
Where the dew reposes,

"Up!" they cry, "the day is come  
On the smiling valleys:  
We have beat the morning drum;  
Playmate, join your allies!"

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Now Bare To The Beholder's Eye

NOW bare to the beholder's eye  
Your late denuded bindings lie,  
Subsiding slowly where they fell,  
A disinvested citadel;  
The obdurate corset, Cupid's foe,  
The Dutchman's breeches frilled below.  
Those that the lover notes to note,  
And white and crackling petticoat.

From these, that on the ground repose,  
Their lady lately re-arose;  
And laying by the lady's name,  
A living woman re-became.  
Of her, that from the public eye  
They do enclose and fortify,  
Now, lying scattered as they fell,  
An indiscreeter tale they tell:  
Of that more soft and secret her  
Whose daylong fortresses they were,  
By fading warmth, by lingering print,  
These now discarded scabbards hint.

A twofold change the ladies know:  
First, in the morn the bugles blow,  
And they, with floral hues and scents,  
Man their beribboned battlements.  
But let the stars appear, and they  
Shed inhumanities away;  
And from the changeling fashion see,  
Through comic and through sweet degree,  
In nature's toilet unsurpassed,  
Forth leaps the laughing girl at last.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Now When The Number Of My Years

NOW when the number of my years  
Is all fulfilled, and I  
From sedentary life  
Shall rouse me up to die,  
Bury me low and let me lie  
Under the wide and starry sky.  
Joying to live, I joyed to die,  
Bury me low and let me lie.

Clear was my soul, my deeds were free,  
Honour was called my name,  
I fell not back from fear  
Nor followed after fame.  
Bury me low and let me lie  
Under the wide and starry sky.  
Joying to live, I joyed to die,  
Bury me low and let me lie.

Bury me low in valleys green  
And where the milder breeze  
Blows fresh along the stream,  
Sings roundly in the trees -  
Bury me low and let me lie  
Under the wide and starry sky.  
Joying to live, I joyed to die,  
Bury me low and let me lie.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# O Dull Cold Northern Sky

O DULL cold northern sky,  
O brawling sabbath bells,  
O feebly twittering Autumn bird that tells  
The year is like to die!

O still, spoiled trees, O city ways,  
O sun desired in vain,  
O dread presentiment of coming rain  
That cloys the sullen days!

Thee, heart of mine, I greet.  
In what hard mountain pass  
Striv'st thou? In what importunate morass  
Sink now thy weary feet?

Thou run'st a hopeless race  
To win despair. No crown  
Awaits success, but leaden gods look down  
On thee, with evil face.

And those that would befriend  
And cherish thy defeat,  
With angry welcome shall turn sour the sweet  
Home-coming of the end.

Yea, those that offer praise  
To idleness, shall yet  
Insult thee, coming glorious in the sweat  
Of honourable ways.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# On Now, Although The Year Be Done

ON now, although the year be done,  
Now, although the love be dead,  
Dead and gone;  
Hear me, O loved and cherished one,  
Give me still the hand that led,  
Led me on.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Over The Land Is April

OVER the land is April,  
Over my heart a rose;  
Over the high, brown mountain  
The sound of singing goes.  
Say, love, do you hear me,  
Hear my sonnets ring?  
Over the high, brown mountain,  
Love, do you hear me sing?

By highway, love, and byway  
The snows succeed the rose.  
Over the high, brown mountain  
The wind of winter blows.  
Say, love, do you hear me,  
Hear my sonnets ring?  
Over the high, brown mountain  
I sound the song of spring,  
I throw the flowers of spring.  
Do you hear the song of spring?  
Hear you the songs of spring?

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Picture-Books In Winter

Summer fading, winter comes--  
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,  
Window robins, winter rooks,  
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone  
Nurse and I can walk upon;  
Still we find the flowing brooks  
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by,  
Wait upon the children's eye,  
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,  
In the picture story-books.

We may see how all things are  
Seas and cities, near and far,  
And the flying fairies' looks,  
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,  
Happy chimney-corner days,  
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,  
Reading picture story-books?

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Pirate Story

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,  
Three of us abroad in the basket on the lea.  
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,  
And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,  
Wary of the weather and steering by a star?  
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,  
To Providence, or Babylon or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea--  
Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!  
Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,  
The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Prayer

I ASK good things that I detest,  
With speeches fair;  
Heed not, I pray Thee, Lord, my breast,  
But hear my prayer.

I say ill things I would not say -  
Things unaware:  
Regard my breast, Lord, in Thy day,  
And not my prayer.

My heart is evil in Thy sight:  
My good thoughts flee:  
O Lord, I cannot wish aright -  
Wish Thou for me.

O bend my words and acts to Thee,  
However ill,  
That I, whate'er I say or be,  
May serve Thee still.

O let my thoughts abide in Thee  
Lest I should fall:  
Show me Thyself in all I see,  
Thou Lord of all.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Prelude

BY sunny market-place and street  
Wherever I go my drum I beat,  
And wherever I go in my coat of red  
The ribbons flutter about my head.

I seek recruits for wars to come -  
For slaughterless wars I beat the drum,  
And the shilling I give to each new ally  
Is hope to live and courage to die.

I know that new recruits shall come  
Wherever I beat the sounding drum,  
Till the roar of the march by country and town  
Shall shake the tottering Dagon's down.

For I was objectless as they  
And loitering idly day by day;  
But whenever I heard the recruiters come,  
I left my all to follow the drum.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Rain

The rain is raining all around,  
It falls on field and tree,  
It rains on the umbrellas here,  
And on the ships at sea.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Requiem

Under the wide and starry sky  
Dig the grave and let me lie.  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me;  
"Here he lies where he longed to be,  
Home is the sailor, home from sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill."

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Romance

I WILL make you brooches and toys for your delight  
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.  
I will make a palace fit for you and me,  
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,  
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,  
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white  
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,  
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!  
That only I remember, that only you admire,  
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Shadow March

All around the house is the jet-black night;  
It stares through the window-pane;  
It crawls in the corners, hiding from the light,  
And it moves with the moving flame.

Now my little heart goes a beating like a drum,  
With the breath of the Bogies in my hair;  
And all around the candle and the crooked shadows come,  
And go marching along up the stair.

The shadow of the balusters, the shadow of the lamp,  
The shadow of the child that goes to bed--  
All the wicked shadows coming tramp, tramp, tramp,  
With the black night overhead.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Since Thou Hast Given Me This Good Hope, O God

SINCE thou hast given me this good hope, O God,  
That while my footsteps tread the flowery sod  
And the great woods embower me, and white dawn  
And purple even sweetly lead me on  
From day to day, and night to night, O God,  
My life shall no wise miss the light of love;  
But ever climbing, climb above  
Man's one poor star, man's supine lands,  
Into the azure steadfastness of death,  
My life shall no wise lack the light of love,  
My hands not lack the loving touch of hands;  
But day by day, while yet I draw my breath,  
And day by day, unto my last of years,  
I shall be one that has a perfect friend.  
Her heart shall taste my laughter and my tears,  
And her kind eyes shall lead me to the end.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Since Years Ago For Evermore

SINCE years ago for evermore  
My cedar ship I drew to shore;  
And to the road and riverbed  
And the green, nodding reeds, I said  
Mine ignorant and last farewell:  
Now with content at home I dwell,  
And now divide my sluggish life  
Betwixt my verses and my wife:  
In vain; for when the lamp is lit  
And by the laughing fire I sit,  
Still with the tattered atlas spread  
Interminable roads I tread.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Singing

Of speckled eggs the birdie sings  
And nests among the trees;  
The sailor sings of ropes and things  
In ships upon the seas.

The children sing in far Japan,  
The children sing in Spain;  
The organ with the organ man  
Is singing in the rain.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Small Is The Trust When Love Is Green

SMALL is the trust when love is green  
In sap of early years;  
A little thing steps in between  
And kisses turn to tears.

Awhile - and see how love be grown  
In loveliness and power!  
Awhile, it loves the sweets alone,  
But next it loves the sour.

A little love is none at all  
That wanders or that fears;  
A hearty love dwells still at call  
To kisses or to tears.

Such then be mine, my love to give,  
And such be yours to take:-  
A faith to hold, a life to live,  
For lovingkindness' sake:

Should you be sad, should you be gay,  
Or should you prove unkind,  
A love to hold the growing way  
And keep the helping mind:-

A love to turn the laugh on care  
When wrinkled care appears,  
And, with an equal will, to share  
Your losses and your tears.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# So Live, So Love, So Use That Fragile Hour

SO live, so love, so use that fragile hour,  
That when the dark hand of the shining power  
Shall one from other, wife or husband, take,  
The poor survivor may not weep and wake.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Sonet Vi

As in the hostel by the bridge I sate,  
Nailed with indifference fondly deemed complete,  
And (O strange chance, more sorrowful than sweet)  
The counterfeit of her that was my fate,  
Dressed in like vesture, graceful and sedate,  
Went quietly up the vacant village street,  
The still small sound of her most dainty feet  
Shook, like a trumpet blast, my soul's estate.  
Instant revolt ran riot through my brain,  
And all night long, thereafter, hour by hour,  
The pageant of dead love before my eyes  
Went proudly; and old hopes, broke loose again  
From the restraint of wisely temperate power,  
With ineffectual ardour sought to rise.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Sonnet I

NOR judge me light, tho' light at times I seem,  
And lightly in the stress of fortune bear  
The innumerable flaws of changeful care -  
Nor judge me light for this, nor rashly deem  
(Office forbid to mortals, kept supreme  
And separate the prerogative of God!)  
That seaman idle who is borne abroad  
To the far haven by the favouring stream.  
Not he alone that to contrarious seas  
Opposes, all night long, the unwearied oar,  
Not he alone, by high success endeared,  
Shall reach the Port; but, winged, with some light breeze  
Shall they, with upright keels, pass in before  
Whom easy Taste, the golden pilot, steered.

Robert Louis Stevenson



## Sonnet II

So shall this book wax like unto a well,  
Fairy with mirrored flowers about the brim,  
Or like some tarn that wailing curlews skim,  
Glassing the fallow uplands or brown fell;  
And so, as men go down into a dell  
(Weary with noon) to find relief and shade,  
When on the uneasy sick-bed we are laid,  
We shall go down into thy book, and tell  
The leaves, once blank, to build again for us  
Old summer dead and ruined, and the time  
Of later autumn with the corn in stook.  
So shalt thou stint the meagre winter thus  
Of his projected triumph, and the rime  
Shall melt before the sunshine in thy book.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Sonnet Iii

I have a hoard of treasure in my breast;  
The grange of memory steams against the door,  
Full of my bygone lifetime's garnered store -  
Old pleasures crowned with sorrow for a zest,  
Old sorrow grown a joy, old penance blest,  
Chastened remembrance of the sins of yore  
That, like a new evangel, more and more  
Supports our halting will toward the best.  
Ah! what to us the barren after years  
May bring of joy or sorrow, who can tell?  
O, knowing not, who cares? It may be well  
That we shall find old pleasures and old fears,  
And our remembered childhood seen thro' tears,  
The best of Heaven and the worst of Hell.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Sonnet V

Not undelightful, friend, our rustic ease  
To grateful hearts; for by especial hap,  
Deep nested in the hill's enormous lap,  
With its own ring of walls and grove of trees,  
Sits, in deep shelter, our small cottage - nor  
Far-off is seen, rose carpeted and hung  
With clematis, the quarry whence she sprung,  
O mater pulchra filia pulchrior,  
Whither in early spring, unharnessed folk,  
We join the pairing swallows, glad to stay  
Where, loosened in the hills, remote, unseen,  
From its tall trees, it breathes a slender smoke  
To heaven, and in the noon of sultry day  
Stands, coolly buried, to the neck in green.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Sonnet VII

The strong man's hand, the snow-cool head of age,  
The certain-footed sympathies of youth -  
These, and that lofty passion after truth,  
Hunger unsatisfied in priest or sage  
Or the great men of former years, he needs  
That not unworthily would dare to sing  
(Hard task!) black care's inevitable ring  
Settling with years upon the heart that feeds  
Incessantly on glory. Year by year  
The narrowing toil grows closer round his feet;  
With disenchanting touch rude-handed time  
The unlovely web discloses, and strange fear  
Leads him at last to eld's inclement seat,  
The bitter north of life - a frozen clime.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Sonnet Viii

As Daniel, bird-alone, in that far land,  
Kneeling in fervent prayer, with heart-sick eyes  
Turned thro' the casement toward the westering skies;  
Or as untamed Elijah, that red brand  
Among the starry prophets; or that band  
And company of Faithful sanctities  
Who in all times, when persecutions rise,  
Cherish forgotten creeds with fostering hand:  
Such do ye seem to me, light-hearted crew,  
O turned to friendly arts with all your will,  
That keep a little chapel sacred still,  
One rood of Holy-land in this bleak earth  
Sequestered still (our homage surely due!)  
To the twin Gods of mirthful wine and mirth.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Soon Our Friends Perish

SOON our friends perish,  
Soon all we cherish  
Fades as days darken - goes as flowers go.  
Soon in December  
Over an ember,  
Lonely we hearken, as loud winds blow.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Spring Carol

WHEN loud by landside streamlets gush,  
And clear in the greenwood quires the thrush,  
With sun on the meadows  
And songs in the shadows  
Comes again to me  
The gift of the tongues of the lea,  
The gift of the tongues of meadows.

Straightway my olden heart returns  
And dances with the dancing burns;  
It sings with the sparrows;  
To the rain and the (grimy) barrows  
Sings my heart aloud -  
To the silver-bellied cloud,  
To the silver rainy arrows.

It bears the song of the skylark down,  
And it hears the singing of the town;  
And youth on the highways  
And lovers in byways  
Follows and sees:  
And hearkens the song of the leas  
And sings the songs of the highways.

So when the earth is alive with gods,  
And the lusty ploughman breaks the sod,  
And the grass sings in the meadows,  
And the flowers smile in the shadows,  
Sits my heart at ease,  
Hearing the song of the leas,  
Singing the songs of the meadows.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Spring Song

THE air was full of sun and birds,  
The fresh air sparkled clearly.  
Remembrance wakened in my heart  
And I knew I loved her dearly.

The fallows and the leafless trees  
And all my spirit tingled.  
My earliest thought of love, and Spring's  
First puff of perfume mingled.

In my still heart the thoughts awoke,  
Came lone by lone together -  
Say, birds and Sun and Spring, is Love  
A mere affair of weather?

Robert Louis Stevenson



# St. Martin's Summer

AS swallows turning backward  
When half-way o'er the sea,  
At one word's trumpet summons  
They came again to me -  
The hopes I had forgotten  
Came back again to me.

I know not which to credit,  
O lady of my heart!  
Your eyes that bade me linger,  
Your words that bade us part -  
I know not which to credit,  
My reason or my heart.

But be my hopes rewarded,  
Or be they but in vain,  
I have dreamed a golden vision,  
I have gathered in the grain -  
I have dreamed a golden vision,  
I have not lived in vain.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Still I Love To Rhyme

STILL I love to rhyme, and still more, rhyming, to wander  
Far from the commoner way;  
Old-time trills and falls by the brook-side still do I ponder,  
Dreaming to-morrow to-day.

Come here, come, revive me, Sun-God, teach me, Apollo,  
Measures descanted before;  
Since I ancient verses, I emulous follow,  
Prints in the marbles of yore.

Still strange, strange, they sound in old-young raiment invested,  
Songs for the brain to forget -  
Young song-birds elate to grave old temples benested  
Piping and chirruping yet.

Thoughts? No thought has yet unskilled attempted to flutter  
Trammelled so vilely in verse;  
He who writes but aims at fame and his bread and his butter,  
Won with a groan and a curse.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Stout Marches Lead To Certain Ends

STOUT marches lead to certain ends,  
We seek no Holy Grail, my friends -  
That dawn should find us every day  
Some fraction farther on our way.

The dumb lands sleep from east to west,  
They stretch and turn and take their rest.  
The cock has crown in the steading-yard,  
But priest and people slumber hard.

We two are early forth, and hear  
The nations snoring far and near.  
So peacefully their rest they take,  
It seems we are the first awake!

- Strong heart! this is no royal way,  
A thousand cross-roads seek the day;  
And, hid from us, to left and right,  
A thousand seekers seek the light.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Strange Are The Ways Of Men

STRANGE are the ways of men,  
And strange the ways of God!  
We tread the mazy paths  
That all our fathers trod.

We tread them undismayed,  
And undismayed behold  
The portents of the sky,  
The things that were of old.

The fiery stars pursue  
Their course in heav'n on high;  
And round the 'leaguered town,  
Crest-tossing heroes cry.

Crest-tossing heroes cry;  
And martial fifes declare  
How small, to mortal minds,  
Is merely mortal care.

And to the clang of steel  
And cry of piercing flute  
Upon the azure peaks  
A God shall plant his foot:

A God in arms shall stand,  
And seeing wide and far  
The green and golden earth,  
The killing tide of war,

He, with uplifted arm,  
Shall to the skies proclaim  
The gleeful fate of man,  
The noble road to fame!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Summer Sun

Great is the sun, and wide he goes  
Through empty heaven with repose;  
And in the blue and glowing days  
More thick than rain he showers his rays.

Though closer still the blinds we pull  
To keep the shady parlour cool,  
Yet he will find a chink or two  
To slip his golden fingers through.

The dusty attic spider-clad  
He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;  
And through the broken edge of tiles  
Into the laddered hay-loft smiles.

Meantime his golden face around  
He bares to all the garden ground,  
And sheds a warm and glittering look  
Among the ivy's inmost nook.

Above the hills, along the blue,  
Round the bright air with footing true,  
To please the child, to paint the rose,  
The gardener of the World, he goes.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Swallows Travel To And Fro

SWALLOWS travel to and fro,  
And the great winds come and go,  
And the steady breezes blow,  
Bearing perfume, bearing love.  
Breezes hasten, swallows fly,  
Towered clouds forever ply,  
And at noonday, you and I  
See the same sunshine above.

Dew and rain fall everywhere,  
Harvests ripen, flowers are fair,  
And the whole round earth is bare  
To the moonshine and the sun;  
And the live air, fanned with wings,  
Bright with breeze and sunshine, brings  
Into contact distant things,  
And makes all the countries one.

Let us wander where we will,  
Something kindred greets us still;  
Something seen on vale or hill  
Falls familiar on the heart;  
So, at scent or sound or sight,  
Severed souls by day and night  
Tremble with the same delight -  
Tremble, half the world apart.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# System

Every night my prayers I say,  
And get my dinner every day;  
And every day that I've been good,  
I get an orange after food.

The child that is not clean and neat,  
With lots of toys and things to eat,  
He is a naughty child, I'm sure--  
Or else his dear papa is poor.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Tales Of Arabia

YES, friend, I own these tales of Arabia  
Smile not, as smiled their flawless originals,  
Age-old but yet untamed, for ages  
Pass and the magic is undiminished.

Thus, friend, the tales of the old Camaralzaman,  
Ayoub, the Slave of Love, or the Calendars,  
Blind-eyed and ill-starred royal scions,  
Charm us in age as they charmed in childhood.

Fair ones, beyond all numerability,  
Beam from the palace, beam on humanity,  
Bright-eyed, in truth, yet soul-less houris  
Offering pleasure and only pleasure.

Thus they, the venal Muses Arabian,  
Unlike, indeed, the nobler divinities,  
Greek Gods or old time-honoured muses,  
Easily proffer unloved caresses.

Lost, lost, the man who mindeth the minstrelsy;  
Since still, in sandy, glittering pleasancess,  
Cold, stony fruits, gem-like but quite in-  
Edible, flatter and wholly starve him.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Tempest Tossed And Sore Afflicted

TEMPEST tossed and sore afflicted, sin defiled and care oppressed,  
Come to me, all ye that labour; come, and I will give ye rest.  
Fear no more, O doubting hearted; weep no more, O weeping eye!  
Lo, the voice of your redeemer; lo, the songful morning near.

Here one hour you toil and combat, sin and suffer, bleed and die;  
In my father's quiet mansion soon to lay your burden by.  
Bear a moment, heavy laden, weary hand and weeping eye.  
Lo, the feet of your deliverer; lo, the hour of freedom here.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Angler Rose, He Took His Rod

THE angler rose, he took his rod,  
He kneeled and made his prayers to God.  
The living God sat overhead:  
The angler tripped, the eels were fed

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Bour-Tree Den

CLINKUM-CLANK in the rain they ride,  
Down by the braes and the grey sea-side;  
Clinkum-clank by stane and cairn,  
Weary fa' their horse-shoe-airn!

Loud on the causey, saft on the sand,  
Round they rade by the tail of the land;  
Round and up by the Bour-Tree Den,  
Weary fa' the red-coat men!

Aft hae I gane where they hae rade  
And straigled in the gowden brooms -  
Aft hae I gane, a saikless maid,  
And O! sae bonny as the bour-tree blooms!

Wi' swords and guns they wanton there,  
Wi' red, red coats and braw, braw plumes.  
But I gaed wi' my gowden hair,  
And O! sae bonny as the bour-tree blooms!

I ran, a little hempie lass,  
In the sand and the bent grass,  
Or took and kilted my small coats  
To play in the beached fisher-boats.

I waded deep and I ran fast,  
I was as lean as a lugger's mast,  
I was as brown as a fisher's creel,  
And I liked my life unco weel.

They blew a trumpet at the cross,  
Some forty men, both foot and horse.  
A'body cam to hear and see,  
And wha, among the rest, but me.  
My lips were saut wi' the saut air,  
My face was brown, my feet were bare  
The wind had ravelled my tautit hair,  
And I thought shame to be standing there.

Ae man there in the thick of the throng  
Sat in his saddle, straight and strong.  
I looked at him and he at me,  
And he was a master-man to see.  
. . . And who is this yin? and who is yon  
That has the bonny lendings on?  
That sits and looks sae braw and crouse?  
. . . Mister Frank o' the Big House!

I gaed my lane beside the sea;  
The wind it blew in bush and tree,  
The wind blew in bush and bent:  
Muckle I saw, and muckle kent!

Between the beach and the sea-hill  
I sat my lane and grat my fill -  
I was sae clarty and hard and dark,  
And like the kye in the cow park!

There fell a battle far in the north;  
The evil news gaed back and forth,  
And back and forth by brae and bent  
Hider and hunter cam and went:  
The hunter clattered horse-shoe-airn  
By causey-crest and hill-top cairn;  
The hider, in by shag and shench,  
Crept on his wame and little lench.

The eastland wind blew shrill and snell,  
The stars arose, the gloaming fell,  
The firelight shone in window and door  
When Mr. Frank cam here to shore.  
He hirpled up by the links and the lane,  
And chappit laigh in the back-door-stane.  
My faither gaed, and up wi' his han'!  
. . . Is this Mr. Frank, or a beggarman?

I have mistrusted sair, he said,  
But let me into fire and bed;  
Let me in, for auld lang syne,  
And give me a dram of the brandy wine.

They hid him in the Bour-Tree Den,  
And I thought it strange to gang my lane;  
I thought it strange, I thought it sweet,  
To gang there on my naked feet.  
In the mirk night, when the boats were at sea,  
I passed the burn abune the knee;  
In the mirk night, when the folks were asleep,  
I had a tryst in the den to keep.

Late and air', when the folks were asleep,  
I had a tryst, a tryst to keep,  
I had a lad that lippeden to me,  
And bour-tree blossom is fair to see!

O' the bour-tree leaves I busked his bed,  
The mune was siller, the dawn was red:  
Was nae man there but him and me -  
And bour-tree blossom is fair to see!

Unco weather hae we been through:  
The mune glowered, and the wind blew,  
And the rain it rained on him and me,  
And bour-tree blossom is fair to see!

Dwelling his lane but house or hauld,  
Aft he was wet and aft was cauld;  
I warmed him wi' my briest and knee -  
And bour-tree blossom is fair to see!

There was nae voice of beast ae man,  
But the tree soughed and the burn ran,  
And we heard the ae voice of the sea:  
Bour-tree blossom is fair to see!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Celestial Surgeon

IF I have faltered more or less  
In my great task of happiness;  
If I have moved among my race  
And shown no glorious morning face;  
If beams from happy human eyes  
Have moved me not; if morning skies,  
Books, and my food, and summer rain  
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:—  
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take  
And stab my spirit broad awake;  
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,  
Choose thou, before that spirit die,  
A piercing pain, a killing sin,  
And to my dead heart run them in.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Clock's Clear Voice Into The Clearer Air

THE cock's clear voice into the clearer air  
Where westward far I roam,  
Mounts with a thrill of hope,  
Falls with a sigh of home.

A rural sentry, he from farm and field  
The coming morn descries,  
And, mankind's bugler, wakes  
The camp of enterprise.

He sings the morn upon the westward hills  
Strange and remote and wild;  
He sings it in the land  
Where once I was a child.

He brings to me dear voices of the past,  
The old land and the years:  
My father calls for me,  
My weeping spirit hears.

Fife, fife, into the golden air, O bird,  
And sing the morning in;  
For the old days are past  
And new days begin.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Cow

The friendly cow all red and white,  
I love with all my heart:  
She gives me cream with all her might,  
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,  
And yet she cannot stray,  
All in the pleasant open air,  
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass  
And wet with all the showers,  
She walks among the meadow grass  
And eats the meadow flowers.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# The Dumb Soldier

When the grass was closely mown,  
Walking on the lawn alone,  
In the turf a hole I found  
And hid a soldier underground.

Spring and daisies came apace;  
Grasses hid my hiding-place;  
Grasses run like a green sea  
O'er the lawn up to my knee.

Under grass alone he lies,  
Looking up with leaden eyes,  
Scarlet coat and pointed gun,  
To the stars and to the sun.

When the grass is ripe like grain,  
When the scythe is stoned again,  
When the lawn is shaven clear,  
Then my hole shall reappear.

I shall find him, never fear,  
I shall find my grenadier;  
But, for all that's gone and come,  
I shall find my soldier dumb.

He has lived, a little thing,  
In the grassy woods of spring;  
Done, if he could tell me true,  
Just as I should like to do.

He has seen the starry hours  
And the springing of the flowers;  
And the fairy things that pass  
In the forests of the grass.

In the silence he has heard  
Talking bee and ladybird,  
And the butterfly has flown  
O'er him as he lay alone.

Not a word will he disclose,  
Not a word of all he knows.  
I must lay him on the shelf,  
And make up the tale myself.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Far-Farers

THE broad sun,  
The bright day:  
White sails  
On the blue bay:  
The far-farers  
Draw away.

Light the fires  
And close the door.  
To the old homes,  
To the loved shore,  
The far-farers  
Return no more.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Feast Of Famine

Marquesan Manners

## I. THE PRIEST'S VIGIL

In all the land of the tribe was neither fish nor fruit,  
And the deepest pit of popoi stood empty to the foot.  
The clans upon the left and the clans upon the right  
Now oiled their carven maces and scoured their daggers bright;  
They gat them to the thicket, to the deepest of the shade,  
And lay with sleepless eyes in the deadly ambushade.  
And oft in the starry even the song of morning rose,  
What time the oven smoked in the country of their foes;  
For oft to loving hearts, and waiting ears and sight,  
The lads that went to forage returned not with the night.  
Now first the children sickened, and then the women paled,  
And the great arms of the warrior no more for war availed.  
Hushed was the deep drum, discarded was the dance;  
And those that met the priest now glanced at him askance.  
The priest was a man of years, his eyes were ruby-red,  
He neither feared the dark nor the terrors of the dead,  
He knew the songs of races, the names of ancient date;  
And the beard upon his bosom would have bought the chief's estate.  
He dwelt in a high-built lodge, hard by the roaring shore,  
Raised on a noble terrace and with tikis at the door.  
Within it was full of riches, for he served his nation well,  
And full of the sound of breakers, like the hollow of a shell.  
For weeks he let them perish, gave never a helping sign,  
But sat on his oiled platform to commune with the divine,  
But sat on his high terrace, with the tikis by his side,  
And stared on the blue ocean, like a parrot, ruby-eyed.  
Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the mountain height:  
Out on the round of the sea the gems of the morning light,  
Up from the round of the sea the streamers of the sun; -  
But down in the depths of the valley the day was not begun.  
In the blue of the woody twilight burned red the cocoa-husk,  
And the women and men of the clan went forth to bathe in the dusk,  
A word that began to go round, a word, a whisper, a start:  
Hope that leaped in the bosom, fear that knocked on the heart:  
'See, the priest is not risen- look, for his door is fast!

He is going to name the victims; he is going to help us at last.'

Thrice rose the sun to noon; and ever, like one of the dead,  
The priest lay still in his house with the roar of the sea in his head;  
There was never a foot on the floor, there was never a whisper of speech;  
Only the leering tikis stared on the blinding beach.

Again were the mountains fired, again the morning broke;  
And all the houses lay still, but the house of the priest awoke.  
Close in their covering roofs lay and trembled the clan,  
But the aged, red-eyed priest ran forth like a lunatic man;  
And the village panted to see him in the jewels of death again,  
In the silver beards of the old and the hair of women slain.  
Frenzy shook in his limbs, frenzy shone in his eyes,  
And still and again as he ran, the valley rang with his cries.  
All day long in the land, by cliff and thicket and den,  
He ran his lunatic rounds, and howled for the flesh of men;  
All day long he ate not, nor ever drank of the brook;  
And all day long in their houses the people listened and shook -  
All day long in their houses they listened with bated breath,  
And never a soul went forth, for the sight of the priest was death.

Three were the days of his running, as the gods appointed of yore,  
Two the nights of his sleeping alone in the place of gore:  
The drunken slumber of frenzy twice he drank to the lees,  
On the sacred stones of the High-place under the sacred trees;  
With a lamp at his ashen head he lay in the place of the feast,  
And the sacred leaves of the banyan rustled around the priest.  
Last, when the stated even fell upon terrace and tree,  
And the shade of the lofty island lay leagues away to sea,  
And all the valleys of verdure were heavy with manna and musk,  
The wreck of the red-eyed priest came gasping home in the dusk.  
He reeled across the village, he staggered along the shore,  
And between the leering tikis crept groping through his door.

There went a stir through the lodges, the voice of speech awoke;  
Once more from the builded platforms arose the evening smoke.  
And those who were mighty in war, and those renowned for an art  
Sat in their stated seats and talked of the morrow apart.

## II. THE LOVERS

Hark! away in the woods- for the ears of love are sharp -  
Stealthily, quietly touched, the note of the one-stringed harp.  
In the lighted house of her father, why should Taheia start?  
Taheia heavy of hair, Taheia tender of heart,  
Taheia the well-descended, a bountiful dealer in love,  
Nimble of foot like the deer, and kind of eye like the dove?  
Sly and shy as a cat, with never a change of face,  
Taheia slips to the door, like one that would breathe a space;  
Saunters and pauses, and looks at the stars, and lists to the seas;  
Then sudden and swift as a cat, she plunges under the trees.  
Swift as a cat she runs, with her garment gathered high,  
Leaping, nimble of foot, running, certain of eye;  
And ever to guide her way over the smooth and the sharp,  
Ever nearer and nearer the note of the one-stringed harp;  
Till at length, in a glade of the wood, with a naked mountain above,  
The sound of the harp thrown down, and she in the arms of her love.  
'Rua,'- 'Taheia,' they cry- 'my heart, my soul, and my eyes,'  
And clasp and sunder and kiss, with lovely laughter and sighs,  
'Rua!'- 'Taheia, my love,'- 'Rua, star of my night,  
Clasp me, hold me, and love me, single spring of delight.'

And Rua folded her close, he folded her near and long,  
The living knit to the living, and sang the lover's song:

Night, night it is, night upon the palms.  
Night, night it is, the land wind has blown.  
Starry, starry night, over deep and height;  
Love, love in the valley, love all alone.

'Taheia, heavy of hair, a foolish thing have we done,  
To bind what gods have sundered unkindly into one.  
Why should a lowly lover have touched Taheia's skirt,  
Taheia the well-descended, and Rua child of the dirt?'

'- On high with the haka-ikis my father sits in state,  
Ten times fifty kinsmen salute him in the gate;  
Round all his martial body, and in bands across his face,  
The marks of the tattooer proclaim his lofty place.  
I too, in the hands of the cunning, in the sacred cabin of palm,  
Have shrunk like the mimosa, and bleated like the lamb;

Round half my tender body, that none shall clasp but you,  
For a crest and a fair adornment go dainty lines of blue.  
Love, love, beloved Rua, love levels all degrees,  
And the well-tattooed Taheia clings panting to your knees.'

'- Taheia, song of the morning, how long is the longest love?  
A cry, a clasp of the hands, a star that falls from above!  
Ever at morn in the blue, and at night when all is black,  
Ever it skulks and trembles with the hunter, Death, on its track.  
Hear me, Taheia, death! For to-morrow the priest shall awake,  
And the names be named of the victims to bleed for the nation's sake;  
And first of the numbered many that shall be slain ere noon,  
Rua the child of the dirt, Rua the kinless loon.  
For him shall the drum be beat, for him be raised the song,  
For him to the sacred High-place the chaunting people throng,  
For him the oven smoke as for a speechless beast,  
And the sire of my Taheia come greedy to the feast.'  
'Rua, be silent, spare me. Taheia closes her ears.  
Pity my yearning heart, pity my girlish years!  
Flee from the cruel hands, flee from the knife and coal,  
Lie hid in the deeps of the woods, Rua, sire of my soul!'

'Whither to flee, Taheia, whither in all of the land?  
The fires of the bloody kitchen are kindled on every hand;  
On every hand in the isle a hungry whetting of teeth,  
Eyes in the trees above, arms in the brush beneath.  
Patience to lie in wait, cunning to follow the sleuth,  
Abroad the foes I have fought, and at home the friends of my youth.'

'Love, love, beloved Rua, love has a clearer eye,  
Hence from the arms of love you go not forth to die.  
There, where the broken mountain drops sheer into the glen,  
There shall you find a hold from the boldest hunter of men;  
There, in the deep recess, where the sun falls only at noon,  
And only once in the night enters the light of the moon,  
Nor ever a sound but of birds, or the rain when it falls with a shout;  
For death and the fear of death beleaguer the valley about.  
Tapu it is, but the gods will surely pardon despair;  
Tapu, but what of that? If Rua can only dare.  
Tapu and tapu and tapu, I know they are every one right;  
But the god of every tapu is not always quick to smite.

Lie secret there, my Rua, in the arms of awful gods,  
Sleep in the shade of the trees on the couch of the kindly sods,  
Sleep and dream of Taheia, Taheia will wake for you;  
And whenever the land wind blows and the woods are heavy with dew,  
Alone through the horror of night, with food for the soul of her love,  
Taheia the undissuaded will hurry true as the dove.'

'Taheia, the pit of the night crawls with treacherous things,  
Spirits of ultimate air and the evil souls of things;  
The souls of the dead, the stranglers, that perch in the trees of the wood,  
Waiters for all things human, haters of evil and good.'

'Rua, behold me, kiss me, look in my eyes and read;  
Are these the eyes of a maid that would leave her lover in need?  
Brave in the eye of day, my father ruled in the fight;  
The child of his loins, Taheia, will play the man in the night.'

So it was spoken, and so agreed, and Taheia arose  
And smiled in the stars and was gone, swift as the swallow goes;  
And Rua stood on the hill, and sighed, and followed her flight,  
And there were the lodges below, each with its door alight;  
From folk that sat on the terrace and drew out the even long  
Sudden crowings of laughter, monotonous drone of song;  
The quiet passage of souls over his head in the trees;  
And from all around the haven the crumbling thunder of seas.  
'Farewell, my home,' said Rua. 'Farewell, O quiet seat!  
To-morrow in all your valleys the drum of death shall beat.'

### III. THE FEAST

Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the naked peak,  
And all the village was stirring, for now was the priest to speak.  
Forth on his terrace he came, and sat with the chief in talk;  
His lips were blackened with fever, his cheeks were whiter than chalk;  
Fever clutched at his hands, fever nodded his head,  
But, quiet and steady and cruel, his eyes shone ruby-red.  
In the earliest rays of the sun the chief rose up content;  
Braves were summoned, and drummers; messengers came and went;  
Braves ran to their lodges, weapons were snatched from the wall;  
The commons herded together, and fear was over them all.  
Festival dresses they wore, but the tongue was dry in their mouth,



And the blinking eyes in their faces skirted from north to south.

Now to the sacred enclosure gathered the greatest and least,  
And from under the shade of the banyan arose the voice of the feast,  
The frenzied roll of the drum, and a swift, monotonous song.  
Higher the sun swam up; the trade wind level and strong  
Awoke in the tops of the palms and rattled the fans aloud,  
And over the garlanded heads and shining robes of the crowd  
Tossed the spiders of shadow, scattered the jewels of sun.  
Forty the tale of the drums, and the forty throbbed like one;  
A thousand hearts in the crowd, and the even chorus of song,  
Swift as the feet of a runner, trampled a thousand strong.  
And the old men leered at the ovens and licked their lips for the food;  
And the women stared at the lads, and laughed and looked to the wood.  
As when the sweltering baker, at night, when the city is dead,  
Alone in the trough of labour treads and fashions the bread;  
So in the heat, and the reek, and the touch of woman and man,  
The naked spirit of evil kneaded the hearts of the clan.

Now cold was at many a heart, and shaking in many a seat;  
For there were the empty baskets, but who was to furnish the meat?  
For here was the nation assembled, and there were the ovens anigh,  
And out of a thousand singers nine were numbered to die.  
Till, of a sudden, a shock, a mace in the air, a yell,  
And, struck in the edge of the crowd, the first of the victims fell.  
Terror and horrible glee divided the shrinking clan,  
Terror of what was to follow, glee for a diet of man.  
Frenzy hurried the chaunt, frenzy rattled the drums;  
The nobles, high on the terrace, greedily mouthed their thumbs;  
And once and again and again, in the ignorant crowd below,  
Once and again and again descended the murderous blow.  
Now smoked the oven, and now, with the cutting lip of a shell,  
A butcher of ninety winters jointed the bodies well.  
Unto the carven lodge, silent, in order due,  
The grandees of the nation one after one withdrew;  
And a line of laden bearers brought to the terrace foot,  
On poles across their shoulders, the last reserve of fruit.  
The victims bled for the nobles in the old appointed way;  
The fruit was spread for the commons, for all should eat to-day.

And now was the kava brewed, and now the cocoa ran,  
Now was the hour of the dance for child and woman and man;

And mirth was in every heart, and a garland on every head,  
And all was well with the living and well with the eight who were dead.  
Only the chiefs and the priest talked and consulted awhile:  
'To-morrow,' they said, and 'To-morrow,' and nodded and seemed to smile:  
'Rua the child of dirt, the creature of common clay,  
Rua must die to-morrow, since Rua is gone to-day.'

Out of the groves of the valley, where clear the blackbirds sang.  
Sheer from the trees of the valley the face of the mountain sprang;  
Sheer and bare it rose, unscalable barricade,  
Beaten and blown against by the generous draught of the trade.  
Dawn on its fluted brow painted rainbow light,  
Close on its pinnacled crown trembled the stars at night.  
Here and there in a cleft clustered contorted trees,  
Or the silver beard of a stream hung and swung in the breeze.  
High overhead, with a cry, the torrents leaped for the main,  
And silently sprinkled below in thin perennial rain.  
Dark in the staring noon, dark was Rua's ravine,  
Damp and cold was the air, and the face of the cliffs was green.  
Here, in the rocky pit, accursed already of old,  
On a stone in the midst of a river, Rua sat and was cold.

'Valley of mid-day shadows, valley of silent falls,  
Rua sang, and his voice went hollow about the walls,  
'Valley of shadow and rock, a doleful prison to me,  
What is the life you can give to a child of the sun and the sea?'

And Rua arose and came to the open mouth of the glen,  
Whence he beheld the woods, and the sea, and houses of men.  
Wide blew the riotous trade, and smelt in his nostrils good;  
It bowed the boats on the bay, and tore and divided the wood;  
It smote and sundered the groves as Moses smote with the rod,  
And the streamers of all the trees blew like banners abroad;  
And ever and on, in a lull, the trade wind brought him along  
A far-off patter of drums and a far-off whisper of song.

Swift as the swallow's wings, the diligent hands on the drum  
Fluttered and hurried and throbbed. 'Ah, woe that I hear you come,'  
Rua cried in his grief, 'a sorrowful sound to me,  
Mounting far and faint from the resonant shore of the sea!  
Woe in the song! for the grave breathes in the singers' breath,  
And I hear in the tramp of the drums the beat of the heart of death.

Home of my youth! no more, through all the length of the years,  
No more to the place of the echoes of early laughter and tears,  
No more shall Rua return; no more as the evening ends,  
To crowded eyes of welcome, to the reaching hands of friends.'

All day long from the High-place the drums and the singing came,  
And the even fell, and the sun went down, a wheel of flame;  
And night came gleaning the shadows and hushing the sounds of the wood;  
And silence slept on all, where Rua sorrowed and stood.  
But still from the shore of the bay the sound of the festival rang,  
And still the crowd in the High-place danced and shouted and sang.

Now over all the isle terror was breathed abroad  
Of shadowy hands from the trees and shadowy snares in the sod;  
And before the nostrils of night, the shuddering hunter of men  
Hurried, with beard on shoulder, back to his lighted den.  
'Taheia, here to my side!'- 'Rua, my Rua, you!'  
And cold from the clutch of terror, cold with the damp of the dew,  
Taheia, heavy of hair, leaped through the dark to his arms;  
Taheia leaped to his clasp, and was folded in from alarms.

'Rua, beloved, here, see what your love has brought;  
Coming- alas! returning- swift as the shuttle of thought;  
Returning, alas! for to-night, with the beaten drum and the voice,  
In the shine of many torches must the sleepless clan rejoice;  
And Taheia the well-descended, the daughter of chief and priest,  
Taheia must sit in her place in the crowded bench of the feast.'  
So it was spoken; and she, girding her garment high,  
Fled and was swallowed of woods, swift as the sight of an eye.

Night over isle and sea rolled her curtain of stars,  
Then a trouble awoke in the air, the east was banded with bars;  
Dawn as yellow as sulphur leaped on the mountain height;  
Dawn, in the deepest glen, fell a wonder of light;  
High and clear stood the palms in the eye of the brightening east,  
And lo! from the sides of the sea the broken sound of the feast!  
As, when in days of summer, through open windows, the fly  
Swift as a breeze and loud as a trump goes by,  
But when frosts in the field have pinched the wintering mouse,  
Blindly noses and buzzes and hums in the firelit house:  
So the sound of the feast gallantly trampled at night,  
So it staggered and drooped, and droned in the morning light.

#### IV. THE RAID

It chanced that as Rua sat in the valley of silent falls,  
He heard a calling of doves from high on the cliffy walls.  
Fire had fashioned of yore, and time had broken, the rocks;  
There were rooting crannies for trees and nesting-places for flocks;  
And he saw on the top of the cliffs, looking up from the pit of the shade,  
A flicker of wings and sunshine, and trees that swung in the trade.  
'The trees swing in the trade,' quoth Rua, doubtful of words,  
'And the sun stares from the sky, but what should trouble the birds?'  
Up from the shade he gazed, where high the parapet shone,  
And he was aware of a ledge and of things that moved thereon.  
'What manner of things are these? Are they spirits abroad by day?  
Or the foes of my clan that are come, bringing death by a perilous way?'

The valley was gouged like a vessel, and round like the vessel's lip,  
With a cape of the side of the hill thrust forth like the bows of a ship.  
On the top of the face of the cape a volley of sun struck fair,  
And the cape overhung like a chin a gulph of sunless air.  
'Silence, heart! What is that?- that, that flickered and shone,  
Into the sun for an instant, and in an instant gone?  
Was it a warrior's plume, a warrior's girdle of hair?  
Swung in the loop of a rope, is he making a bridge of the air?'

Once and again Rua saw, in the trenchant edge of the sky,  
The giddy conjuring done. And then, in the blink of an eye,  
A scream caught in with the breath, a whirling packet of limbs,  
A lump that dived in the gulph, more swift than a dolphin swims;  
And there was the lump at his feet, and eyes were alive in the lump.  
Sick was the soul of Rua, ambushed close in a clump;  
Sick of soul he drew near, making his courage stout;  
And he looked in the face of the thing, and the life of the thing went out.  
And he gazed on the tattooed limbs, and, behold, he knew the man:  
Hoka, a chief of the Vais, the truculent foe of his clan:  
Hoka a moment since that stepped in the loop of the rope,  
Filled with the lust of war, and alive with courage and hope.

Again to the giddy cornice Rua lifted his eyes,  
And again beheld men passing in the armpit of the skies.

'Foes of my race!' cried Rua, 'the mouth of Rua is true:  
Never a shark in the deep is nobler of soul than you.  
There was never a nobler foray, never a bolder plan;  
Never a dizzier path was trod by the children of man;  
And Rua, your evil-dealer through all the days of his years,  
'Counts it honour to hate you, honour to fall by your spears.'  
And Rua straightened his back. 'O Vais, a scheme for a scheme!'  
Cried Rua and turned and descended the turbulent stair of the stream,  
Leaping from rock to rock as the water-wagtail at home  
Flits through resonant valleys and skims by boulder and foam.  
And Rua burst from the glen and leaped on the shore of the brook,  
And straight for the roofs of the clan his vigorous way he took.  
Swift were the heels of his flight, and loud behind as he went  
Rattled the leaping stones on the line of his long descent.  
And ever he thought as he ran, and caught at his gasping breath,  
'O the fool of a Rua, Rua that runs to his death!  
But the right is the right,' thought Rua, and ran like the wind on the foam,  
'The right is the right for ever, and home for ever home.  
For what though the oven smoke? And what though I die ere morn?  
There was I nourished and tended, and there was Taheia born.'  
Noon was high on the High-place, the second noon of the feast;  
And heat and shameful slumber weighed on people and priest;  
And the heart drudged slow in bodies heavy with monstrous meals;  
And the senseless limbs were scattered abroad like spokes of wheels;  
And crapulous women sat and stared at the stones anigh  
With a bestial droop of the lip and a swinish rheum in the eye.  
As about the dome of the bees in the time for the drones to fall,  
The dead and the maimed are scattered, and lie, and stagger, and crawl;  
So on the grades of the terrace, in the ardent eye of the day,  
The half-awake and the sleepers clustered and crawled and lay;  
And loud as the dome of the bees, in the time of a swarming horde,  
A horror of many insects hung in the air and roared.

Rua looked and wondered; he said to himself in his heart:  
'Poor are the pleasures of life, and death is the better part.'  
But lo! on the higher benches a cluster of tranquil folk  
Sat by themselves, nor raised their serious eyes, nor spoke:  
Women with robes unruffled and garlands duly arranged,  
Gazing far from the feast with faces of people estranged;  
And quiet amongst the quiet, and fairer than all the fair,  
Taheia, the well-descended, Taheia, heavy of hair.  
And the soul of Rua awoke, courage enlightened his eyes,

And he uttered a summoning shout and called on the clan to rise.  
Over against him at once, in the spotted shade of the trees,  
Owlish and blinking creatures scrambled to hands and knees;  
On the grades of the sacred terrace, the driveller woke to fear,  
And the hand of the ham-drooped warrior brandished a wavering spear.  
And Rua folded his arms, and scorn discovered his teeth;  
Above the war-crowd gibbered, and Rua stood smiling beneath.  
Thick, like leaves in the autumn, faint, like April sleet,  
Missiles from tremulous hands quivered around his feet;  
And Taheia leaped from her place; and the priest, the ruby-eyed,  
Ran to the front of the terrace, and brandished his arms, and cried:  
'Hold, O fools, he brings tidings!' and 'Hold, 'tis the love of my heart!'  
Till lo! in front of the terrace, Rua pierced with a dart.

Taheia cherished his head, and the aged priest stood by,  
And gazed with eyes of ruby at Rua's darkening eye.  
'Taheia, here is the end, I die a death for a man.  
I have given the life of my soul to save an unsavable clan.  
See them, the drooping of hams! behold me the blinking crew:  
Fifty spears they cast, and one of fifty true!  
And you, O priest, the foreteller, foretell for yourself if you can,  
Foretell the hour of the day when the Vais shall burst on your clan!  
By the head of the tapu cleft, with death and fire in their hand,  
Thick and silent like ants, the warriors swarm in the land.'

And they tell that when next the sun had climbed to the noonday skies,  
It shone on the smoke of feasting in the country of the Vais.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Flowers

All the names I know from nurse:  
Gardener's garters, Shepherd's purse,  
Bachelor's buttons, Lady's smock,  
And the Lady Hollyhock.

Fairy places, fairy things,  
Fairy woods where the wild bee wings,  
Tiny trees for tiny dames--  
These must all be fairy names!

Tiny woods below whose boughs  
Shady fairies weave a house;  
Tiny tree-tops, rose or thyme,  
Where the braver fairies climb!

Fair are grown-up people's trees,  
But the fairest woods are these;  
Where, if I were not so tall,  
I should live for good and all.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Gardener

The gardener does not love to talk,  
He makes me keep the gravel walk;  
And when he puts his tools away,  
He locks the door and takes the key.

Away behind the currant row  
Where no one else but cook may go,  
Far in the plots, I see him dig  
Old and serious, brown and big.

He digs the flowers, green, red and blue,  
Nor wishes to be spoken to.  
He digs the flowers and cuts the hay,  
And never seems to want to play.

Silly gardener! summer goes,  
And winter comes with pinching toes,  
When in the garden bare and brown  
You must lay your barrow down.

Well now, and while the summer stays  
To profit by these garden days  
O how much wiser you would be  
To play at Indian wars with me!

Robert Louis Stevenson



# The Hayloft

Through all the pleasant meadow-side  
The grass grew shoulder-high,  
Till the shining scythes went far and wide  
And cut it down to dry.

Those green and sweetly smelling crops  
They led the waggons home;  
And they piled them here in mountain tops  
For mountaineers to roam.

Here is Mount Clear, Mount Rusty-Nail,  
Mount Eagle and Mount High;--  
The mice that in these mountains dwell,  
No happier are than I!

Oh, what a joy to clamber there,  
Oh, what a place for play,  
With the sweet, the dim, the dusty air,  
The happy hills of hay!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Lamplighter

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky.  
It's time to take the window to see Leerie going by;  
For every night at teatime and before you take your seat,  
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,  
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be;  
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I'm to do,  
O Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you!

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,  
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;  
And oh! before you hurry by with ladder and with light;  
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him to-night!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Land Of Counterpane

When I was sick and lay a-bed,  
I had two pillows at my head,  
And all my toys beside me lay,  
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so  
I watched my leaden soldiers go,  
With different uniforms and drills,  
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets  
All up and down among the sheets;  
Or brought my trees and houses out,  
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still  
That sits upon the pillow-hill,  
And sees before him, dale and plain,  
The pleasant land of counterpane.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Land Of Nod

From breakfast on through all the day  
At home among my friends I stay,  
But every night I go abroad  
Afar into the land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,  
With none to tell me what to do --  
All alone beside the streams  
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,  
Both things to eat and things to see,  
And many frightening sights abroad  
Till morning in the land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,  
I never can get back by day,  
Nor can remember plain and clear  
The curious music that I hear.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Land Of Story-Books

At evening when the lamp is lit,  
Around the fire my parents sit;  
They sit at home and talk and sing,  
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl  
All in the dark along the wall,  
And follow round the forest track  
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,  
All in my hunter's camp I lie,  
And play at books that I have read  
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,  
These are my starry solitudes;  
And there the river by whose brink  
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away  
As if in firelit camp they lay,  
And I, like to an Indian scout,  
Around their party prowled about.

So when my nurse comes in for me,  
Home I return across the sea,  
And go to bed with backward looks  
At my dear land of Story-books.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Light Keeper

The brilliant kernel of the night,  
The flaming lightroom circles me:  
I sit within a blaze of light

Held high above the dusky sea.  
Far off the surf doth break and roar  
Along bleak miles of moonlit shore,

Where through the tides the tumbling wave  
Falls in an avalanche of foam  
And drives its churned waters home  
Up many an undercliff and cave.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Little Land

When at home alone I sit  
And am very tired of it,  
I have just to shut my eyes  
To go sailing through the skies--  
To go sailing far away  
To the pleasant Land of Play;  
To the fairy land afar  
Where the Little People are;  
Where the clover-tops are trees,  
And the rain-pools are the seas,  
And the leaves, like little ships,  
Sail about on tiny trips;  
And above the Daisy tree  
Through the grasses,  
High o'erhead the Bumble Bee  
Hums and passes.

In that forest to and fro  
I can wander, I can go;  
See the spider and the fly,  
And the ants go marching by,  
Carrying parcels with their feet  
Down the green and grassy street.  
I can in the sorrel sit  
Where the ladybird alit.  
I can climb the jointed grass  
And on high  
See the greater swallows pass  
In the sky,  
And the round sun rolling by  
Heeding no such things as I.

Through that forest I can pass  
Till, as in a looking-glass,  
Humming fly and daisy tree  
And my tiny self I see,  
Painted very clear and neat  
On the rain-pool at my feet.  
Should a leaflet come to land

Drifting near to where I stand,  
Straight I'll board that tiny boat  
Round the rain-pool sea to float.

Little thoughtful creatures sit  
On the grassy coasts of it;  
Little things with lovely eyes  
See me sailing with surprise.  
Some are clad in armour green--  
(These have sure to battle been!)--  
Some are pied with ev'ry hue,  
Black and crimson, gold and blue;  
Some have wings and swift are gone;--  
But they all look kindly on.

When my eyes I once again  
Open, and see all things plain:  
High bare walls, great bare floor;  
Great big knobs on drawer and door;  
Great big people perched on chairs,  
Stitching tucks and mending tears,  
Each a hill that I could climb,  
And talking nonsense all the time--  
O dear me,  
That I could be  
A sailor on a the rain-pool sea,  
A climber in the clover tree,  
And just come back a sleepy-head,  
Late at night to go to bed.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# The Mirror Speaks

Where the bells peal far at sea  
Cunning fingers fashioned me.  
There on palace walls I hung  
While that Consuelo sung;  
But I heard, though I listened well,  
Never a note, never a trill,  
Never a beat of the chiming bell.  
There I hung and looked, and there  
In my grey face, faces fair  
Shone from under shining hair.  
Well, I saw the poising head,  
But the lips moved and nothing said;  
And when lights were in the hall,  
Silent moved the dancers all.  
So awhile I glowed, and then  
Fell on dusty days and men;  
Long I slumbered packed in straw,  
Long I none but dealers saw;  
Till before my silent eye  
On that sees came passing by.  
Now with an outlandish grace,  
To the sparkling fire I face  
In the blue room at Skerryvore;  
Where I wait until the door  
Open, and the Prince of Men,  
Henry James, shall come again.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Moon

The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;  
She shines on thieves on the garden wall,  
On streets and fields and harbour quays,  
And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.

The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,  
The howling dog by the door of the house,  
The bat that lies in bed at noon,  
All love to be out by the light of the moon.

But all of the things that belong to the day  
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;  
And flowers and children close their eyes  
Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Old Chimaeras. Old Receipts

THE old Chimaeras, old receipts  
For making "happy land,"  
The old political beliefs  
Swam close before my hand.

The grand old communistic myths  
In a middle state of grace,  
Quite dead, but not yet gone to Hell,  
And walking for a space,

Quite dead, and looking it, and yet  
All eagerness to show  
The Social-Contract forgeries  
By Chatterton - Rousseau -

A hundred such as these I tried,  
And hundreds after that,  
I fitted Social Theories  
As one would fit a hat!

Full many a marsh-fire lured me on,  
I reached at many a star,  
I reached and grasped them and behold -  
The stump of a cigar!

All through the sultry sweltering day  
The sweat ran down my brow,  
The still plains heard my distant strokes  
That have been silenced now.

This way and that, now up, now down,  
I hailed full many a blow.  
Alas! beneath my weary arm  
The thicket seemed to grow.

I take the lesson, wipe my brow  
And throw my axe aside,  
And, sorely wearied, I go home  
In the tranquil eventide.

And soon the rising moon, that lights  
The eve of my defeat,  
Shall see me sitting as of yore  
By my old master's feet.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Piper

AGAIN I hear you piping, for I know the tune so well, -  
You rouse the heart to wander and be free,  
Tho' where you learned your music, not the God of song can tell,  
For you pipe the open highway and the sea.  
O piper, lightly footing, lightly piping on your way,  
Tho' your music thrills and pierces far and near,  
I tell you you had better pipe to someone else to-day,  
For you cannot pipe my fancy from my dear.

You sound the note of travel through the hamlet and the town;  
You would lure the holy angels from on high;  
And not a man can hear you, but he throws the hammer down  
And is off to see the countries ere he die.  
But now no more I wander, now unchanging here I stay;  
By my love, you find me safely sitting here:  
And pipe you ne'er so sweetly, till you pipe the hills away,  
You can never pipe my fancy from my dear.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Relic Taken, What Avails The Shrine?

THE relic taken, what avails the shrine?  
The locket, pictureless? O heart of mine,  
Art thou not worse than that,  
Still warm, a vacant nest where love once sat?

Her image nestled closer at my heart  
Than cherished memories, healed every smart  
And warmed it more than wine  
Or the full summer sun in noon-day shine.

This was the little weather gleam that lit  
The cloudy promontories - the real charm was  
That gilded hills and woods  
And walked beside me thro' the solitudes.

The sun is set. My heart is widowed now  
Of that companion-thought. Alone I plough  
The seas of life, and trace  
A separate furrow far from her and grace.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Sick Child

CHILD.

O Mother, lay your hand on my brow!  
O mother, mother, where am I now?  
Why is the room so gaunt and great?  
Why am I lying awake so late?

MOTHER.

Fear not at all: the night is still.  
Nothing is here that means you ill -  
Nothing but lamps the whole town through,  
And never a child awake but you.

CHILD.

Mother, mother, speak low in my ear,  
Some of the things are so great and near,  
Some are so small and far away,  
I have a fear that I cannot say,  
What have I done, and what do I fear,  
And why are you crying, mother dear?

MOTHER.

Out in the city, sounds begin  
Thank the kind God, the carts come in!  
An hour or two more, and God is so kind,  
The day shall be blue in the window-blind,  
Then shall my child go sweetly asleep,  
And dream of the birds and the hills of sheep.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Spaewife

OH, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
Why chops are guid to brander and nane sae guid to fry.  
An' siller, that 's sae braw to keep, is brawer still to gi'e.  
It 's gey an' easy spierin', says the beggar-wife to me.

Oh, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
Hoo a'things come to be whaur we find them when we try,  
The lasses in their claes an' the fishes in the sea.  
It 's gey an' easy spierin', says the beggar-wife to me.

Oh, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
Why lads are a' to sell an' lasses a' to buy;  
An' naebody for dacency but barely twa or three.  
It 's gey an' easy spierin', says the beggar-wife to me.

Oh, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
Gin death's as shure to men as killin' is to kye,  
Why God has filled the yearth sae fu' o' tasty things to pree.  
It 's gey an' easy spierin', says the beggar-wife to me.

Oh, I wad like to ken—to the beggar-wife says I—  
The reason o' the cause an' the wherefore o' the why,  
Wi' mony anither riddle brings the tear into my e'e.  
It 's gey an' easy spierin', says the beggar-wife to me.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# The Summer Sun Shone Round Me

THE summer sun shone round me,  
The folded valley lay  
In a stream of sun and odour,  
That sultry summer day.

The tall trees stood in the sunlight  
As still as still could be,  
But the deep grass sighed and rustled  
And bowed and beckoned me.

The deep grass moved and whispered  
And bowed and brushed my face.  
It whispered in the sunshine:  
"The winter comes apace."

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Sun Travels

The sun is not a-bed, when I  
At night upon my pillow lie;  
Still round the earth his way he takes,  
And morning after morning makes.

While here at home, in shining day,  
We round the sunny garden play,  
Each little Indian sleepy-head  
Is being kissed and put to bed.

And when at eve I rise from tea,  
Day dawns beyond the Atlantic Sea;  
And all the children in the west  
Are getting up and being dressed.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Swing

How do you like to go up in a swing,  
Up in the air so blue?  
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing  
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,  
Till I can see so wide,  
River and trees and cattle and all  
Over the countryside--

Till I look down on the garden green,  
Down on the roof so brown--  
Up in the air I go flying again,  
Up in the air and down!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Unseen Playmate

When children are playing alone on the green,  
In comes the playmate that never was seen.  
When children are happy and lonely and good,  
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.

Nobody heard him, and nobody saw,  
His is a picture you never could draw,  
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,  
When children are happy and playing alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,  
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;  
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,  
The Friend of the Children is sure to be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,  
'T is he that inhabits the caves that you dig;  
'T is he when you play with your soldiers of tin  
That sides with the Frenchmen and never can win.

'T is he, when at night you go off to your bed,  
Bids you go to sleep and not trouble your head;  
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or shelf,  
'T is he will take care of your playthings himself!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Vagabond

Give to me the life I love,  
Let the lave go by me,  
Give the jolly heaven above  
And the byway nigh me.  
Bed in the bush with stars to see,  
Bread I dip in the river -  
There's the life for a man like me,  
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me;  
Give the face of earth around  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I seek, the heaven above  
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me  
Where afield I linger,  
Silencing the bird on tree,  
Biting the blue finger.  
White as meal the frosty field -  
Warm the fireside haven -  
Not to autumn will I yield,  
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late,  
Let what will be o'er me;  
Give the face of earth around,  
And the road before me.  
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,  
Nor a friend to know me;  
All I ask, the heaven above  
And the road below me.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Vanquished Knight

I HAVE left all upon the shameful field,  
Honour and Hope, my God, and all but life;  
Spurless, with sword reversed and dented shield,  
Degraded and disgraced, I leave the strife.

From him that hath not, shall there not be taken  
E'en that he hath, when he deserts the strife?  
Life left by all life's benefits forsaken,  
O keep the promise, Lord, and take the life.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Wind

I saw you toss the kites on high  
And blow the birds about the sky;  
And all around I heard you pass,  
Like ladies' skirts across the grass--  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,  
But always you yourself you hid.  
I felt you push, I heard you call,  
I could not see yourself at all--  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,  
O blower, are you young or old?  
Are you a beast of field and tree,  
Or just a stronger child than me?  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# The Wind Blew Shrill And Smart

THE wind blew shrill and smart,  
And the wind awoke my heart  
Again to go a-sailing o'er the sea,  
To hear the cordage moan  
And the straining timbers groan,  
And to see the flying pennon lie a-lee.

O sailor of the fleet,  
It is time to stir the feet!  
It's time to man the dingy and to row!  
It's lay your hand in mine  
And it's empty down the wine,  
And it's drain a health to death before we go!

To death, my lads, we sail;  
And it's death that blows the gale  
And death that holds the tiller as we ride.  
For he's the king of all  
In the tempest and the squall,  
And the ruler of the Ocean wild and wide!

Robert Louis Stevenson



# The Wind Is Without There And Howls In The Trees

THE wind is without there and howls in the trees,  
And the rain-flurries drum on the glass:  
Alone by the fireside with elbows on knees  
I can number the hours as they pass.  
Yet now, when to cheer me the crickets begin,  
And my pipe is just happily lit,  
Believe me, my friend, tho' the evening draws in,  
That not all uncontested I sit.

Alone, did I say? O no, nowise alone  
With the Past sitting warm on my knee,  
To gossip of days that are over and gone,  
But still charming to her and to me.  
With much to be glad of and much to deplore,  
Yet, as these days with those we compare,  
Believe me, my friend, tho' the sorrows seem more  
They are somehow more easy to bear.

And thou, faded Future, uncertain and frail,  
As I cherish thy light in each draught,  
His lamp is not more to the miner - their sail  
Is not more to the crew on the raft.  
For Hope can make feeble ones earnest and brave,  
And, as forth thro' the years I look on,  
Believe me, my friend, between this and the grave,  
I see wonderful things to be done.

To do or to try; and, believe me, my friend,  
If the call should come early for me,  
I can leave these foundations uprooted, and tend  
For some new city over the sea.  
To do or to try; and if failure be mine,  
And if Fortune go cross to my plan,  
Believe me, my friend, tho' I mourn the design  
I shall never lament for the man.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# There Was An Old Man Of The Cape

There was an old man of the Cape  
Who made himself garments of crepe.  
When asked, &quot;Do they tear?&quot;  
He replied, &quot;Here and there,  
But they're perfectly splendid for shape!&quot;

Robert Louis Stevenson

# This Gloomy Northern Day

THIS gloomy northern day,  
Or this yet gloomier night,  
Has moved a something high  
In my cold heart; and I,  
That do not often pray,  
Would pray to-night.

And first on Thee I call  
For bread, O God of might!  
Enough of bread for all, -  
That through the famished town  
Cold hunger may lie down  
With none to-night.

I pray for hope no less,  
Strong-sinewed hope, O Lord,  
That to the struggling young  
May preach with brazen tongue  
Stout Labour, high success,  
And bright reward.

And last, O Lord, I pray  
For hearts resigned and bold  
To trudge the dusty way -  
Hearts stored with song and joke  
And warmer than a cloak  
Against the cold.

If nothing else he had,  
He who has this, has all.  
This comforts under pain;  
This, through the stinging rain,  
Keeps ragamuffin glad  
Behind the wall.

This makes the sanded inn  
A palace for a Prince,  
And this, when griefs begin  
And cruel fate annoys,

Can bring to mind the joys  
Of ages since.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Thou Strainest Through The Mountain Fern

THOU strainest through the mountain fern,  
A most exiguously thin Burn.  
For all thy foam, for all thy din,  
Thee shall the pallid lake inurn,  
With well-a-day for Mr. Swin-Burne!  
Take then this quarto in thy fin  
And, O thou stoker huge and stern,  
The whole affair, outside and in,  
Burn!  
But save the true poetic kin,  
The works of Mr. Robert Burn'  
And William Wordsworth upon Tin-Tern!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Though Deep Indifference Should Drowse

THOUGH deep indifference should drowse  
The sluggish life beneath my brows,  
And all the external things I see  
Grow snow-showers in the street to me,  
Yet inmost in my stormy sense  
Thy looks shall be an influence.

Though other loves may come and go  
And long years sever us below,  
Shall the thin ice that grows above  
Freeze the deep centre-well of love?  
No, still below light amours, thou  
Shalt rule me as thou rul'st me now.

Year following year shall only set  
Fresh gems upon thy coronet;  
And Time, grown lover, shall delight  
To beautify thee in my sight;  
And thou shalt ever rule in me  
Crowned with the light of memory.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Time To Rise

A birdie with a yellow bill  
Hopped upon my window sill,  
Cocked his shining eye and said:  
"Ain't you 'shamed, you sleepy-head!"

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Alison Cunningham, From Her Boy

For the long nights you lay awake  
And watched for my unworthy sake:  
For your most comfortable hand  
That led me through the uneven land:  
For all the story-books you read:  
For all the pains you comforted:

For all you pitied, all you bore,  
In sad and happy days of yore:-  
My second Mother, my first Wife,  
The angel of my infant life-  
From the sick child, now well and old,  
Take, nurse, the little book you hold!

And grant it, Heaven, that all who read  
May find as dear a nurse at need,  
And every child who lists my rhyme,  
In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,  
May hear it in as kind a voice  
As made my childish days rejoice!

Robert Louis Stevenson



# To All That Love The Far And Blue

TO all that love the far and blue:  
Whether, from dawn to eve, on foot  
The fleeing corners ye pursue,  
Nor weary of the vain pursuit;  
Or whether down the singing stream,  
Paddle in hand, jocund ye shoot,  
To splash beside the splashing bream  
Or anchor by the willow root:

Or, bolder, from the narrow shore  
Put forth, that cedar ark to steer,  
Among the seabirds and the roar  
Of the great sea, profound and clear;  
Or, lastly if in heart ye roam,  
Not caring to do else, and hear,  
Safe sitting by the fire at home,  
Footfalls in Utah or Pamere:

Though long the way, though hard to bear  
The sun and rain, the dust and dew;  
Though still attainment and despair  
Inter the old, despoil the new;  
There shall at length, be sure, O friends,  
Howe'er ye steer, whate'er ye do -  
At length, and at the end of ends,  
The golden city come in view.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## To Any Reader

As from the house your mother sees  
You playing round the garden trees,  
So you may see, if you will look  
Through the windows of this book,  
Another child, far, far away,  
And in another garden, play.  
But do not think you can at all,  
By knocking on the window, call  
That child to hear you. He intent  
Is all on his play-business bent.  
He does not hear; he will not look,  
Nor yet be lured out of this book.  
For, long ago, the truth to say,  
He has grown up and gone away,  
And it is but a child of air  
That lingers in the garden there.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Auntie

"Chief of our aunts"--not only I,  
But all your dozen of nurselings cry--  
"What did the other children do?  
And what were childhood, wanting you?"

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Charles Baxter

OUR Johnie's deid. The mair's the pity!  
He's deid, an' deid o' Aqua-vitae.  
O Embro', you're a shrunken city,  
Noo Johnie's deid!  
Tak hands, an' sing a burial ditty  
Ower Johnie's heid.

To see him was baith drink an' meat,  
Gaun linkin' glegly up the street.  
He but to rin or tak a seat,  
The wee bit body!  
Bein' aye unsicken on his feet  
Wi' whusky toddy.

To be aye tosh was Johnie's whim,  
There's nane was better teut than him,  
Though whiles his gravit-knot wad clim'  
Ahint his ear,  
An' whiles he'd buttons oot or in  
The less ae mair.

His hair a' lang about his bree,  
His tap-lip lang by inches three -  
A slockened sort 'mon,' to pree  
A' sensuality -  
A droutly glint was in his e'e  
An' personality.

An' day an' nicht, frae daw to daw,  
Dink an' perjink an' doucely braw,  
Wi' a kind o' Gospel ower a',  
May or October,  
Like Peden, followin' the Law  
An' no that sober.

Whusky an' he were pack thegether.  
Whate'er the hour, whate'er the weather,  
John kept himsel' wi' mistened leather  
An' kindled spunk.

Wi' him, there was nae askin' whether -  
John was aye drunk.

The auncient heroes gash an' bauld  
In the uncanny days of auld,  
The task ance fo(u)nd to which th'were called,  
Stack stenchly to it.  
His life sic noble lives recalled,  
Little's he knew it.

Single an' straucht, he went his way.  
He kept the faith an' played the play.  
Whusky an' he were man an' may  
Whate'er betided.  
Bonny in life - in death - this twae  
Were no' divided.

An' wow! but John was unco sport.  
Whiles he wad smile about the Court  
Malvolio-like - whiles snore an' snort  
Was heard afar.  
The idle winter lads' resort  
Was aye John's bar.

What's merely humorous or bonny  
The Worl' regards wi' cauld astony.  
Drunk men tak' aye mair place than ony;  
An' sae, ye see,  
The gate was aye ower thrang for Johnie -  
Or you an' me.

John nicht hae jingled cap an' bells,  
Been a braw fule in silks an' pells,  
In ane o' the auld worl's canty hells  
Paris or Sodom.  
I wadnae had him naething else  
But Johnie Adam.

He suffered - as have a' that wan  
Eternal memory frae man,  
Since e'er the weary worl' began -  
Mister or Madam,

Keats or Scots Burns, the Spanish Don  
Or Johnie Adam.

We leuch, an' Johnie deid. An' fegs!  
Hoo he had kept his stoiterin' legs  
Sae lang's he did's a fact that begs  
An explanation.  
He stachers fifty years - syne plegs  
To's destination.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Friends At Home

TO friends at home, the lone, the admired, the lost  
The gracious old, the lovely young, to May  
The fair, December the beloved,  
These from my blue horizon and green isles,  
These from this pinnacle of distances I,  
The unforgetful, dedicate.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Madame Garschine

WHAT is the face, the fairest face, till Care,  
Till Care the graver - Care with cunning hand,  
Etches content thereon and makes it fair,  
Or constancy, and love, and makes it grand?

Robert Louis Stevenson



## To Marcus

YOU have been far, and I  
Been farther yet,  
Since last, in foul or fair  
An impecunious pair,  
Below this northern sky  
Of ours, we met.

Now winter night shall see  
Again us two,  
While howls the tempest higher,  
Sit warmly by the fire  
And dream and plan, as we  
Were wont to do.

And, hand in hand, at large  
Our thoughts shall walk  
While storm and gusty rain,  
Again and yet again,  
Shall drive their noisy charge  
Across the talk.

The pleasant future still  
Shall smile to me,  
And hope with wooing hands  
Wave on to fairy lands  
All over dale and hill  
And earth and sea.

And you who doubt the sky  
And fear the sun -  
You - Christian with the pack -  
You shall not wander back  
For I am Hopeful - I  
Will cheer you on.

Come - where the great have trod,  
The great shall lead -  
Come, elbow through the press,  
Pluck Fortune by the dress -

By God, we must - by God,  
We shall succeed.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Mesdames Zassetsky And Garschine

THE wind may blaw the lee-gang way  
And aye the lift be mirk an' gray,  
An deep the moss and steigh the brae  
Where a' maun gang -  
There's still an hoor in ilka day  
For luve and sang.

And canty hearts are strangely steeled.  
By some dikeside they'll find a bield,  
Some couthy neuk by muir or field  
They're sure to hit,  
Where, frae the blatherin' wind concealed,  
They'll rest a bit.

An' weel for them if kindly fate  
Send ower the hills to them a mate;  
They'll crack a while o' kirk an' State,  
O' yowes an' rain:  
An' when it's time to take the gate,  
Tak' ilk his ain.

- Sic neuk beside the southern sea  
I soucht - sic place o' quiet lee  
Frae a' the winds o' life. To me,  
Fate, rarely fair,  
Had set a freendly company  
To meet me there.

Kindly by them they gart me sit,  
An' blythe was I to bide a bit.  
Licht as o' some hame fireside lit  
My life for me.  
- Ower early maun I rise an' quit  
This happy lee.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## To Minnie

The red room with the giant bed  
Where none but elders laid their head;  
The little room where you and I  
Did for awhile together lie  
And, simple, suitor, I your hand  
In decent marriage did demand;  
The great day nursery, best of all,  
With pictures pasted on the wall  
And leaves upon the blind--  
A pleasant room wherein to wake  
And hear the leafy garden shake  
And rustle in the wind--  
And pleasant there to lie in bed  
And see the pictures overhead--  
The wars about Sebastopol,  
The grinning guns along the wall,  
The daring escalade,  
The plunging ships, the bleating sheep,  
The happy children ankle-deep  
And laughing as they wade:  
All these are vanished clean away,  
And the old manse is changed to-day;  
It wears an altered face  
And shields a stranger race.  
The river, on from mill to mill,  
Flows past our childhood's garden still;  
But ah! we children never more  
Shall watch it from the water-door!  
Below the yew--it still is there--  
Our phantom voices haunt the air  
As we were still at play,  
And I can hear them call and say:  
"How far is it to Babylon?"

Ah, far enough, my dear,  
Far, far enough from here--  
Smiling and kind, you grace a shelf  
Too high for me to reach myself.  
Reach down a hand, my dear, and take

These rhymes for old acquaintance' sake!  
Yet you have farther gone!  
"Can I get there by candlelight?"  
So goes the old refrain.  
I do not know--perchance you might--  
But only, children, hear it right,  
Ah, never to return again!  
The eternal dawn, beyond a doubt,  
Shall break on hill and plain,  
And put all stars and candles out  
Ere we be young again.

To you in distant India, these  
I send across the seas,  
Nor count it far across.  
For which of us forget  
The Indian cabinets,  
The bones of antelope, the wings of albatross,  
The pied and painted birds and beans,  
The junks and bangles, beads and screens,  
The gods and sacred bells,  
And the load-humming, twisted shells!  
The level of the parlour floor  
Was honest, homely, Scottish shore;  
But when we climbed upon a chair,  
Behold the gorgeous East was there!  
Be this a fable; and behold  
Me in the parlour as of old,  
And Minnie just above me set  
In the quaint Indian cabinet!

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Miss Cornish

THEY tell me, lady, that to-day  
On that unknown Australian strand -  
Some time ago, so far away -  
Another lady joined the band.  
She joined the company of those  
Lovely dowered, nobly planned,  
Who, smiling, still forgive their foes  
And keep their friends in close command.

She, lady, as I learn, was one  
Among the many rarely good;  
And destined still to be a sun  
Through every dark and rainy mood:-  
She, as they told me, far had come,  
By sea and land, o'er many a rood:-  
Admired by all, beloved by some,  
She was yourself, I understood.

But, compliment apart and free  
From all constraint of verses, may  
Goodness and honour, grace and glee,  
Attend you ever on your way -  
Up to the measure of your will,  
Beyond all power of mine to say -  
As she and I desire you still,  
Miss Cornish, on your natal day.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Mrs. Macmarland

IN Schnee der Alpen - so it runs  
To those divine accords - and here  
We dwell in Alpine snows and suns,  
A motley crew, for half the year:  
A motley crew, we dwell to taste -  
A shivering band in hope and fear -  
That sun upon the snowy waste,  
That Alpine ether cold and clear.

Up from the laboured plains, and up  
From low sea-levels, we arise  
To drink of that diviner cup  
The rarer air, the clearer skies;  
For, as the great, old, godly King  
From mankind's turbid valley cries,  
So all we mountain-lovers sing:  
I to the hills will lift mine eyes.

The bells that ring, the peaks that climb,  
The frozen snow's unbroken curd  
Might yet revindicate in rhyme  
The pauseless stream, the absent bird.  
In vain - for to the deeps of life  
You, lady, you my heart have stirred;  
And since you say you love my life,  
Be sure I love you for the word.

Of kindness, here I nothing say -  
Such loveless kindnesses there are  
In that grimacing, common way,  
That old, unhonoured social war.  
Love but my dog and love my love,  
Adore with me a common star -  
I value not the rest above  
The ashes of a bad cigar.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## To Mrs. Will. H. Low.

Even in the bluest noonday of July,  
There could not run the smallest breath of wind  
But all the quarter sounded like a wood;  
And in the chequered silence and above  
The hum of city cabs that sought the Bois,  
Suburban ashes shivered into song.  
A patter and a chatter and a chirp  
And a long dying hiss - it was as though  
Starched old brocaded dames through all the house  
Had trailed a strident skirt, or her whole sky  
Even in a wink had over-brimmed in rain.  
Hark, in these shady parlours, how it talks  
Of the near autumn, how the smitten ash  
Trembles and augurs floods! O not too long  
In these inconstant latitudes delay,  
O not too late from the unbeloved north  
Trim your escape! For soon shall this low roof  
Resound indeed with rain, soon shall your eyes  
Search the foul garden, search the darkened rooms,  
Nor find one jewel but the blazing log.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# To My Mother

You too, my mother, read my rhymes  
For love of unforgotten times,  
And you may chance to hear once more  
The little feet along the floor.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To My Name-Child

1

Some day soon this rhyming volume, if you learn with proper speed,  
Little Louis Sanchez, will be given you to read.  
Then you shall discover, that your name was printed down  
By the English printers, long before, in London town.

In the great and busy city where the East and West are met,  
All the little letters did the English printer set;  
While you thought of nothing, and were still too young to play,  
Foreign people thought of you in places far away.

Ay, and when you slept, a baby, over all the English lands  
Other little children took the volume in their hands;  
Other children questioned, in their homes across the seas:  
Who was little Louis, won't you tell us, mother, please?

2

Now that you have spelt your lesson, lay it down and go and play,  
Seeking shells and seaweed on the sands of Monterey,  
Watching all the mighty whalebones, lying buried by the breeze,  
Tiny sandpipers, and the huge Pacific seas.

And remember in your playing, as the sea-fog rolls to you,  
Long ere you could read it, how I told you what to do;  
And that while you thought of no one, nearly half the world away  
Some one thought of Louis on the beach of Monterey!

Robert Louis Stevenson

## To N. V. De G. S.

THE UNFATHOMABLE sea, and time, and tears,  
The deeds of heroes and the crimes of kings  
Dispart us; and the river of events  
Has, for an age of years, to east and west  
More widely borne our cradles. Thou to me  
Art foreign, as when seamen at the dawn  
Descry a land far off and know not which.  
So I approach uncertain; so I cruise  
Round thy mysterious islet, and behold  
Surf and great mountains and loud river-bars,  
And from the shore hear inland voices call.  
Strange is the seaman's heart; he hopes, he fears;  
Draws closer and sweeps wider from that coast;  
Last, his rent sail refits, and to the deep  
His shattered prow uncomforted puts back.  
Yet as he goes he ponders at the helm  
Of that bright island; where he feared to touch,  
His spirit readventures; and for years,  
Where by his wife he slumbers safe at home,  
Thoughts of that land revisit him; he sees  
The eternal mountains beckon, and awakes  
Yearning for that far home that might have been.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## To Otilie

YOU remember, I suppose,  
How the August sun arose,  
And how his face  
Woke to trill and carollette  
All the cages that were set  
About the place.

In the tender morning light  
All around lay strange and bright  
And still and sweet,  
And the gray doves unafraid  
Went their morning promenade  
Along the street.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## To Rosabelle

WHEN my young lady has grown great and staid,  
And in long raiment wondrously arrayed,  
She may take pleasure with a smile to know  
How she delighted men-folk long ago.  
For her long after, then, this tale I tell  
Of the two fans and fairy Rosabelle.  
Hot was the day; her weary sire and I  
Sat in our chairs companionably nigh,  
Each with a headache sat her sire and I.

Instant the hostess waked: she viewed the scene,  
Divined the giants' languor by their mien,  
And with hospitable care  
Tackled at once an Atlantean chair.  
Her pigmy stature scarce attained the seat -  
She dragged it where she would, and with her feet  
Surmounted; thence, a Phaeton launched, she crowned  
The vast plateau of the piano, found  
And culled a pair of fans; wherewith equipped,  
Our mountaineer back to the level slipped;  
And being landed, with considerate eyes,  
Betwixt her elders dealt her double prize;  
The small to me, the greater to her sire.  
As painters now advance and now retire  
Before the growing canvas, and anon  
Once more approach and put the climax on:  
So she awhile withdrew, her piece she viewed -  
For half a moment half supposed it good -  
Spied her mistake, nor sooner spied than ran  
To remedy; and with the greater fan,  
In gracious better thought, equipped the guest.

From ill to well, from better on to best,  
Arts move; the homely, like the plastic kind;  
And high ideals fired that infant mind.  
Once more she backed, once more a space apart  
Considered and reviewed her work of art:  
Doubtful at first, and gravely yet awhile;  
Till all her features blossomed in a smile.

And the child, waking at the call of bliss,  
To each she ran, and took and gave a kiss.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Sydney

NOT thine where marble-still and white  
Old statues share the tempered light  
And mock the uneven modern flight,  
But in the stream  
Of daily sorrow and delight  
To seek a theme.

I too, O friend, have steeled my heart  
Boldly to choose the better part,  
To leave the beaten ways of art,  
And wholly free  
To dare, beyond the scanty chart,  
The deeper sea.

All vain restrictions left behind,  
Frail bark! I loose my anchored mind  
And large, before the prosperous wind  
Desert the strand -  
A new Columbus sworn to find  
The morning land.

Nor too ambitious, friend. To thee  
I own my weakness. Not for me  
To sing the enfranchised nations' glee,  
Or count the cost  
Of warships foundered far at sea  
And battles lost.

High on the far-seen, sunny hills,  
Morning-content my bosom fills;  
Well-pleased, I trace the wandering rills  
And learn their birth.  
Far off, the clash of sovereign wills  
May shake the earth.

The nimble circuit of the wheel,  
The uncertain poise of merchant weal,  
Heaven of famine, fire and steel  
When nations fall;

These, heedful, from afar I feel -  
I mark them all.

But not, my friend, not these I sing,  
My voice shall fill a narrower ring.  
Tired souls, that flag upon the wing,  
I seek to cheer:  
Brave wines to strengthen hope I bring,  
Life's cantineer!

Some song that shall be suppling oil  
To weary muscles strained with toil,  
Shall hearten for the daily moil,  
Or widely read  
Make sweet for him that tills the soil  
His daily bread.

Such songs in my flushed hours I dream  
(High thought) instead of armour gleam  
Or warrior cantos ream by ream  
To load the shelves -  
Songs with a lilt of words, that seem  
To sing themselves.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# To The Commissioners Of Northern Lights

I SEND to you, commissioners,  
A paper that may please ye, sirs  
(For troth they say it might be worse  
An' I believe't)  
And on your business lay my curse  
Before I leav't.

I thocht I'd serve wi' you, sirs, yince,  
But I've thocht better of it since;  
The maitter I will nowise mince,  
But tell ye true:  
I'll service wi' some ither prince,  
An' no wi' you.

I've no been very deep, ye'll think,  
Cam' delicately to the brink  
An' when the water gart me shrink  
Straucht took the rue,  
An' didna stoop my fill to drink -  
I own it true.

I kent on cape and isle, a light  
Burnt fair an' clearly ilka night;  
But at the service I took fright,  
As sune's I saw,  
An' being still a neophite  
Gaed straucht awa'.

Anither course I now begin,  
The weeg I'll cairry for my sin,  
The court my voice shall echo in,  
An' - wha can tell? -  
Some ither day I may be yin  
O' you mysel'.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To The Muse

Resign the rhapsody, the dream,  
To men of larger reach;  
Be ours the quest of a plain theme,  
The piety of speech.

As monkish scribes from morning break  
Toiled till the close of light,  
Nor thought a day too long to make  
One line or letter bright:

We also with an ardent mind,  
Time, wealth, and fame forgot,  
Our glory in our patience find  
And skim, and skim the pot:

Till last, when round the house we hear  
The evensong of birds,  
One corner of blue heaven appear  
In our clear well of words.

Leave, leave it then, muse of my heart!  
Sans finish and sans frame,  
Leave unadorned by needless art  
The picture as it came.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To What Shall I Compare Her?

TO what shall I compare her,  
That is as fair as she?  
For she is fairer - fairer  
Than the sea.

What shall be likened to her,  
The sainted of my youth?  
For she is truer - truer  
Than the truth.

As the stars are from the sleeper,  
Her heart is hid from me;  
For she is deeper - deeper  
Than the sea.  
Yet in my dreams I view her  
Flush rosy with new ruth -  
Dreams! Ah, may these prove truer  
Than the truth.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## To Will H. Low

Youth now flees on feathered foot  
Faint and fainter sounds the flute,  
Rarer songs of gods; and still  
Somewhere on the sunny hill,  
Or along the winding stream,  
Through the willows, flits a dream;  
Flits but shows a smiling face,  
Flees but with so quaint a grace,  
None can choose to stay at home,  
All must follow, all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she  
Now in air floats high and free,  
Takes the sun and breaks the blue;--  
Late with stooping pinion flew

Raking hedgerow trees, and wet  
Her wing in silver streams, and set  
Shining foot on temple roof:  
Now again she flies aloof,  
Coasting mountain clouds and kiss't  
By the evening's amethyst.

In wet wood and miry lane,  
Still we pant and pound in vain;  
Still with leaden foot we chase  
Waning pinion, fainting face;  
Still with gray hair we stumble on,  
Till, behold, the vision gone!  
Where hath fleeting beauty led?  
To the doorway of the dead.  
Life is over, life was gay:  
We have come the primrose way.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# To Willie And Henrietta

If two may read aright  
These rhymes of old delight  
And house and garden play,  
You too, my cousins, and you only, may.

You in a garden green  
With me were king and queen,  
Were hunter, soldier, tar,  
And all the thousand things that children are.

Now in the elders' seat  
We rest with quiet feet,  
And from the window-bay  
We watch the children, our successors, play.

"Time was," the golden head  
Irrevocably said;  
But time which one can bind,  
While flowing fast away, leaves love behind.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Travel

I should like to rise and go  
Where the golden apples grow;--  
Where below another sky  
Parrot islands anchored lie,  
And, watched by cockatoos and goats,  
Lonely Crusoes building boats;--  
Where in sunshine reaching out  
Eastern cities, miles about,  
Are with mosque and minaret  
Among sandy gardens set,  
And the rich goods from near and far  
Hang for sale in the bazaar;--  
Where the Great Wall round China goes,  
And on one side the desert blows,  
And with the voice and bell and drum,  
Cities on the other hum;--  
Where are forests hot as fire,  
Wide as England, tall as a spire,  
Full of apes and cocoa-nuts  
And the negro hunters' huts;--  
Where the knotty crocodile  
Lies and blinks in the Nile,  
And the red flamingo flies  
Hunting fish before his eyes;--  
Where in jungles near and far,  
Man-devouring tigers are,  
Lying close and giving ear  
Lest the hunt be drawing near,  
Or a comer-by be seen  
Swinging in the palanquin;--  
Where among the desert sands  
Some deserted city stands,  
All its children, sweep and prince,  
Grown to manhood ages since,  
Not a foot in street or house,  
Not a stir of child or mouse,  
And when kindly falls the night,  
In all the town no spark of light.  
There I'll come when I'm a man

With a camel caravan;  
Light a fire in the gloom  
Of some dusty dining-room;  
See the pictures on the walls,  
Heroes fights and festivals;  
And in a corner find the toys  
Of the old Egyptian boys.

Robert Louis Stevenson

## Underwoods: Epigram

Of all my verse, like not a single line;  
But like my title, for it is not mine.  
That title from a better man I stole:  
Ah, how much better, had I stol'n the whole.

Robert Louis Stevenson



## Variant Form Of The Preceding Poem

COME to me, all ye that labour; I will give your spirits rest;  
Here apart in starry quiet I will give you rest.  
Come to me, ye heavy laden, sin defiled and care opprest,  
In your father's quiet mansions, soon to prove a welcome guest.  
But an hour you bear your trial, sin and suffer, bleed and die;  
But an hour you toil and combat here in day's inspiring eye.  
See the feet of your deliverer; lo, the hour of freedom nigh.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Voluntary

HERE in the quiet eve  
My thankful eyes receive  
The quiet light.  
I see the trees stand fair  
Against the faded air,  
And star by star prepare  
The perfect night.

And in my bosom, lo!  
Content and quiet grow  
Toward perfect peace.  
And now when day is done,  
Brief day of wind and sun,  
The pure stars, one by one,  
Their troop increase.

Keen pleasure and keen grief  
Give place to great relief:  
Farewell my tears!  
Still sounds toward me float;  
I hear the bird's small note,  
Sheep from the far sheepcote,  
And lowing steers.

For lo! the war is done,  
Lo, now the battle won,  
The trumpets still.  
The shepherd's slender strain,  
The country sounds again  
Awake in wood and plain,  
On haugh and hill.

Loud wars and loud loves cease.  
I welcome my release;  
And hail once more  
Free foot and way world-wide.  
And oft at eventide  
Light love to talk beside  
The hostel door.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Wedding Prayer

Lord, behold our family here assembled.  
We thank you for this place in which we dwell,  
for the love that unites us,  
for the peace accorded us this day,  
for the hope with which we expect the morrow,  
for the health, the work, the food,  
and the bright skies that make our lives delightful;  
for our friends in all parts of the earth.  
Amen

Robert Louis Stevenson

# What Man May Learn, What Man May Do

WHAT man may learn, what man may do,  
Of right or wrong of false or true,  
While, skipper-like, his course he steers  
Through nine and twenty mingled years,  
Half misconceived and half forgot,  
So much I know and practise not.

Old are the words of wisdom, old  
The counsels of the wise and bold:  
To close the ears, to check the tongue,  
To keep the pining spirit young;  
To act the right, to say the true,  
And to be kind whate'er you do.

Thus we across the modern stage  
Follow the wise of every age;  
And, as oaks grow and rivers run  
Unchanged in the unchanging sun,  
So the eternal march of man  
Goes forth on an eternal plan.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# When The Sun Come After Rain

WHEN the sun comes after rain  
And the bird is in the blue,  
The girls go down the lane  
Two by two.

When the sun comes after shadow  
And the singing of the showers,  
The girls go up the meadow,  
Fair as flowers.

When the eve comes dusky red  
And the moon succeeds the sun,  
The girls go home to bed  
One by one.

And when life draws to its even  
And the day of man is past,  
They shall all go home to heaven,  
Home at last.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Where Go The Boats?

Dark brown is the river,  
Golden is the sand.  
It flows along for ever,  
With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,  
Castles of the foam,  
Boats of mine a-boating -  
Where will all come home?

On goes the river  
And out past the mill,  
Away down the valley,  
Away down the hill.

Away down the river,  
A hundred miles or more,  
Other little children  
Shall bring my boats ashore.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Whole Duty Of Children

A child should always say what's true  
And speak when he is spoken to,  
And behave mannerly at table;  
At least as far as he is able.

Robert Louis Stevenson



# Windy Nights

Whenever the moon and stars are set,  
Whenever the wind is high,  
All night long in the dark and wet,  
A man goes riding by.  
Late in the night when the fires are out,  
Why does he gallop and gallop about?  
Whenever the trees are crying aloud,  
And ships are tossed at sea,  
By, on the highway, low and loud,  
By at the gallop goes he.  
By at the gallop he goes, and then  
By he comes back at the gallop again.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Winter-Time

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,  
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;  
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,  
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,  
At morning in the dark I rise;  
And shivering in my nakedness,  
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit  
To warm my frozen bones a bit;  
Or with a reindeer-sled, explore  
The colder countries round the door.

When to go out, my nurse doth wrap  
Me in my comforter and cap;  
The cold wind burns my face, and blows  
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;  
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;  
And tree and house, and hill and lake,  
Are frosted like a wedding cake.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# You Looked So Tempting In The Pew

YOU looked so tempting in the pew,  
You looked so sly and calm -  
My trembling fingers played with yours  
As both looked out the Psalm.

Your heart beat hard against my arm,  
My foot to yours was set,  
Your loosened ringlet burned my cheek  
Whenever they two met.

O little, little we hearkened, dear,  
And little, little cared,  
Although the parson sermonised,  
The congregation stared.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Young Night-Thought

All night long and every night,  
When my mama puts out the light,  
I see the people marching by,  
As plain as day before my eye.

Armies and emperor and kings,  
All carrying different kinds of things,  
And marching in so grand a way,  
You never saw the like by day.

So fine a show was never seen  
At the great circus on the green;  
For every kind of beast and man  
Is marching in that caravan.

As first they move a little slow,  
But still the faster on they go,  
And still beside me close I keep  
Until we reach the town of Sleep.

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Youth And Love

To the heart of youth the world is a highwyside.  
Passing for ever, he fares; and on either hand,  
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,  
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land  
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

Thick as the stars at night when the moon is down,  
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate  
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,  
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,  
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

Robert Louis Stevenson