Classic Poetry Series

Christopher Morley

- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Christopher Morley (5 May 1890 – 28 March 1957)

Christopher Morley was an American journalist, novelist, essayist and poet. He also produced stage productions for a few years and gave college lectures.

Biography

Christopher Morley was born in Haverford, Pennsylvania. His father, Frank Morley, was a mathematics professor at Haverford College; his mother, Lilian Janet Bird, was a poet and musician who provided Christopher with much of his later love for literature and poetry.

In 1900 the family moved to Baltimore, Maryland. In 1906 Christopher entered Haverford College, graduating in 1910 as valedictorian. He then went to New College, Oxford, for three years on a Rhodes scholarship, studying modern history.

In 1913 Morley completed his Oxford studies and moved to Garden City, New York. On 14 June 1914 he married Helen Booth Fairchild (with whom he would have four children). They first lived in Hempstead, and then in Queens Village. They then moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and in 1920 they made their final move, to a house they called "Green Escape" in Roslyn Estates, New York. They remained there for the rest of his life. In 1936 he built a cabin at the rear of the property (The Knothole), which he maintained as his writing study from then on.

In 1951 Morley suffered a series of strokes, which greatly reduced his voluminous literary output. He died on Mar 28 1957 and was buried in the Roslyn Cemetery in Nassau County, New York. After his death, two New York newspapers published his last message to his friends:

Read, every day, something no one else is reading. Think, every day, something no one else is thinking. Do, every day, something no one else would be silly enough to do. It is bad for the mind to continually be part of unanimity.

Career

Morley began writing while still in college. He edited The Haverfordian and contributed articles to that college publication. He provided scripts for and acted in the university's drama program (he also played on the cricket and soccer teams).

In Oxford a volume of his poems, The Eighth Sin (1912), was published.

After graduating from Oxford, Morley began his literary career at Doubleday, working as publicist and publisher's reader. In 1917 he got his start as a newspaper reporter and then as a newspaper columnist in Philadelphia. He also edited the Ladies' Home Journal (1917–1918) and the Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger.

Morley's first novel, Parnassus on Wheels, appeared in 1917. The protagonist, traveling bookseller Roger Mifflin, appeared again in his second novel, The Haunted Bookshop in 1919.

In 1920 he returned to New York City to write a column (The Bowling Green) for the New York Evening Post.

He was one of the founders and a longtime contributing editor of the Saturday Review of Literature. A highly gregarious man, he was the mainstay of what he dubbed the "Three Hours for Lunch Club". Out of enthusiasm for the Sherlock Holmes stories, he helped to found the Baker Street Irregulars and wrote the introduction to the standard omnibus edition of The Complete Sherlock Holmes. He also wrote an introduction to standard omnibus edition of The Complete Works of Shakespeare in 1936, although Morley called it an "Introduction to Yourself as a Reader of Shakespeare". That year, he was appointed to revise and enlarge Bartlett's Familiar Quotations (11th edition in 1937 and 12th edition in 1948). He was one of the first judges for the Book of the Month Club, serving in that position until the early 1950s.

Author of more than 100 novels, books of essays, and volumes of poetry, Morley is probably best known for his 1939 novel Kitty Foyle, which was made into an Academy Award-winning movie. Another well-known work is Thunder on the Left (1925).

From 1928 to 1930, Morley co-produced theater productions (dramas) at his theater in Hoboken, New Jersey, which he had "deemed the last seacoast in Bohemia".

For most of his life, he lived in Roslyn Estates, Nassau County, Long Island, commuting to the city on the Long Island Rail Road, about which he wrote affectionately. In 1961, a 98-acre (40-hectare) park was named in his honor on Searingtown Road in Nassau County. This park preserves as a publicly available point of interest his studio, the "Knothole" (which was moved to the site after his death), along with his furniture and bookcases.

Literary Connections

Morley was a close friend of Don Marquis, author of the Archy and Mehitabel stories featuring the antics and commentary of a New York cockroach and a cat. In 1924 Morley and Marquis co-authored Pandora Lifts The Lid, a light novel about the well-to-do in contemporary Hamptons. They are said to have written alternate chapters, each taking the plot forward from where the other had left off.

Morley's widow sold a collection of his personal papers and books to the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin after his death.

Morley helped to found the Baker Street Irregulars, dedicated to the study of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

Morley edited two editions of Bartlett's Familiar Quotations: 1937 (11th) and 1948 (12th.)

Morley's 1939 novel Kitty Foyle was unusual for its time, as it openly discussed abortion. It became an instant best-seller, selling over one million copies.

Morley's brothers Felix and Frank were also Rhodes Scholars. Felix became President of Haverford College.

In 1942 Morley wrote his own obituary for the biographical dictionary Twentieth Century Authors.

Eserleri:

Parnassus on Wheels (novel, 1917)
Shandygaff (book of essays, 1918)
The Haunted Bookshop (novel, 1919)
Pipefuls (collection of humorous essays, 1920)
Where the Blue Begins (satirical novel, 1922)
The Powder of Sympathy (collection of humorous essays, 1923, illustrated by Walter Jack Duncan)
Thunder on the Left (novel, 1925)
Off the Deep End (collection of essays, 1928, illustrated by John Alan Maxwell)
Born in a Beer Garden, or She Troupes to Conquer (co-author with Ogden Nash, 1930)
Seacoast of Bohemia ("history of four infatuated adventurers, Morley, Cleon Throckmorton, Conrad Milliken and Harry Wagstaff Gribble, who rediscovered the Old Rialto Theatre in Hoboken, and refurnished it", 1929, illustrated by John Alan Maxwell)
John Mistletoe (autobiographical novel, 1931)
Ex Libris Carissimis (non-fiction writing based on lectures he presented at University of Pennsylvania, 1932)
Shakespeare and Hawaii (non-fiction writing based on lectures he presented at University of Hawaii, 1933)
Human Being (novel, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Garden City NY, 1934)[13]
The Trojan Horse (novel, 1937)
Kitty Foyle (novel, 1939)
Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: A Textbook of Friendship (analysis of Arthur Conan Doyle's writings, 1944)
The Old Mandarin (book of poetry, 1947)
The Man Who Made Friends with Himself (his last novel, 1949

Animal Crackers

Animal crackers and cocoa to drink,
That is the finest of suppers I think;
When I'm grown up and can have what I please
I think I shall always insist upon these.
What do YOU choose when you're offered a treat?
When Mother says, 'What would you like best to eat?'
Is it waffles and syrup, or cinnamon toast?
It's cocoa and animals that I love most!

The kitchen's the cosiest place that I know;
The kettle is singing, the stove is aglow,
And there in the twilight, how jolly to see
The cocoa and animals waiting for me.

Daddy and Mother dine later in state,
With Mary to cook for them, Susan to wait;
But they don't have nearly as much fun as I
Who eat in the kitchen with Nurse standing by;
And Daddy once said, he would like to be me
Having cocoa and animals once more for tea.

Christopher Morley

At the Mermaid Caffeteria

TRUTH is enough for prose:
Calmly it goes
To tell just what it knows.

For verse, skill will suffice-
Delicate, nice
Casting of verbal dice.

Poetry, men attain
By subtler pain
More flagrant in the brain-

An honesty unfeigned,
A heart unchained,
A madness well restrained.

Christopher Morley

Burning Leaves in Spring

WHEN withered leaves are lost in flame
Their eddying gosts, a thin blue haze,
Blow through the thickets whence they came
On amberlucent autumn days.

The cool green woodland heart receives
Their dim, dissolving, phantom breath;
In young hereditaty leaves
They see their happy life-in-death.

My minutes perish as they glow-
Time burns my crazy bonfire through;
But ghosts of blackened hours still blow,
Eternal Beauty, back to you!

Christopher Morley

Burning Leaves, November

THESE are the folios of April,
All the library of spring,
Missals gilt and rubricated
With the frost's illumining.

Ruthless, we destroy these treasures,
Set the torch with hand profane-
Gone, like Alexandrian vellums,
Like the books of burnt Louvain!

Yet these classics are immortal:
O collectors, have no fear,
For the publisher will issue
New editions every year.

Christopher Morley

Caught in the Undertow

COLIN, worshipping some frail,
By self-deception sways her:
Calls himself unworthy male,
Hardly even fit to praise her.

But this tactic insincere
In the upshot greatly grieves him
When he finds the lovely dear
Quite implicitly believes him.

Christopher Morley

Dedication for a Fireplace

THIS hearth was built for thy delight,
For thee the logs were sawn,
For thee the largest chair, at night,
Is to the chimney drawn.

For thee, dear lass, the match was lit
To yield the ruddy blaze-
May Jack Frost give us joy of it
For many, many days.

Christopher Morley

Elegy Written in a Country Coal-Bin

THE furnace tolls the knell of falling steam,
The coal supply is virtually done,
And at this price, indeed it does not seem
As though we could afford another ton.

Now fades the glossy, cherished anthracite;
The radiators lose their temperature:
How ill avail, on such a frosty night,
The 'short and simple flannels of the poor.'

Though in the icebox, fresh and newly laid,
The rude forefathers of the omlet sleep,
No eggs for breakfast till the bill is paid:
We cannot cook again till coal is cheap.

Can Morris-chair or papier-mâché bust
Revivify the falling pressure-gage?
Chop up the grand piano if you must,
And burn the East Aurora parrot cage!

Full many a can of purest kerosene
The dark unfathomed tanks of Standard Oil
Shall furnish me, and with their aid I mean
To bring my morning coffee to a boil.

Christopher Morley

Hymn to the Dairymaids on Beacon Street

Sweetly solemn see them stand,
Spinning churns on either hand,
Neatly capped and aproned white
Airy fairy dairy sight.
Jersey priestesses they seem
Miracling milk to cream.
Cream solidifies to cheese
By Pasteural mysteries,
And they give, within their shrine,
Their communión in kine.
Incantations pure they mutter
O'er the golden minted butter
And (no layman hand can pen it)
See them gloat above their rennet.
By that hillside window pane
Rugged teamsters draw the rein.
Doff the battered hat and bow
To these acolytes of cow.
Genuflect, ye passersby!
Muse upon their ritual high-
Milk to cream, yea, cream to cheese
White lacteal mysteries!
Let adorers sing the word
Of the smoothly flowing curd.
Yea, we sing with bells and fife
This is the whey, this is the Life.

Christopher Morley

Inscription For A Grammar

There were two cheerful pronouns
  And nought did them disturb:
Until they met, out walking.
  A conjugative verb.

The pronouns, child, were You and I,
  We might as well confess;
But, ah, the mischief-making verb
  I leave to you to guess!

Christopher Morley

On Naming a House

WHEN I a householder became
I had to give my house a name.

I thought I'd call it 'Poplar Trees,'
Or 'Widdershins' or 'Velvet Bees,'
Or 'Just Beneath a Star.'
Or 'As You Like It,' 'If You Please,'
Or 'Nicotine' or 'Bread and Cheese,'
'Full Moon' or 'Doors Ajar.'

But still I sought some subtle charm,
Some rune to guard my roof from harm
And keep the devil far;
A thought of this, and I was saved!
I had my letter-heads engraved
The House Where Brown Eyes Are.

Christopher Morley

Only a Matter of Time

DOWN-SLIPPING Time, sweet, swift, and shallow stream,
Here, like a boulder, lies this afternoon
Across your eager flow. So you shall stay,
Deepened and dammed, to let me breathe and be.
Your troubled fluency, your running gleam
Shall pause, and circle idly, still and clear:
The while I lie and search your glassy pool
Where, gently coiling in their lazy round,
Unseparable minutes drift and swim,
Eddy and rise and brim. And I will see
How many crystal bubbles of slack Time
The mind can hold and cherish in one Now!

Now, for one concious vacancy of sense,
The stream is gathered in a depening pond,
Not a mere moving mirror. Through the sharp
Correct reflection of the standing scene
The mind can dip, and cleanse itself with rest,
And see, slow spinning in the lucid gold,
Your liquid notes, imperishable Time.

It cannot be. The runnel slips away:
The clear smooth downward sluice begins again,
More brightly slanting for that trembling pause,
Leaving the sense its conscious vague unease
As when a sonnet flashes on the mind,
Trembles and burns an instant, and is gone.

Christopher Morley

Our House

IT should be yours, if I could build
The quaint old dwelling I desire,
With books and pictures bravely filled
And chairs beside an open fire,
White-panelled rooms with candles lit-
I lie awake to think of it!

A dial for the sunny hours,
A garden of old-fashioned flowers-
Say marigolds and lavender
And mignonette and fever-few,
And Judas-tree and maidenhair
And candytuft and thyme and rue-
All these for you to wander in.

A Chinese carp (called Mandarin)
Waving a sluggish silver fin
Deep in the moat: so tame he comes
To lip your fingers offering crumbs.
Tall chimneys, like long listening ears,
White shutters, ivy green and thick,
And walls of ruddy Tudor brick
Grown mellow with the passing years.

And windows with small leaded panes,
Broad window-seats for when it rains;
A big blue bowl of pot pourri
And-yes, a Spanish chestnut tree
To coin the autumn's minted gold.
A summer house for drinking tea-
All these (just think!) for you and me.

A staircase of the old black wood
Cut in the days of Robin Hood,
And banisters worn smooth as glass
Down which your hand will lightly pass;
A piano with pale yellow keys
For wistful twilight melodies,
And dusty bottles in a bin-
All these for you to revel in!

But when? Ah well, until that time
We'll habit in this house of rhyme.

Christopher Morley

Reading Aloud

ONCE we read Tennyson aloud
In our great fireside chair;
Between the lines my lips could touch
Her April-scented hair.

How very fond I was, to think
The printed poems fair,
When close within my arms I held
A living lyric there!

Christopher Morley

Scuttle, Scuttle, Little Roach

SCUTTLE, scuttle, little roach—
How you run when I approach:
Up above the pantry shelf,
Hastening to secrete yourself.

Most adventurous of vermin,
How I wish I could determine
How you spend your hours of ease,
Perhaps reclining on the cheese.

Cook has gone, and all is dark—
Then the kitchen is your park:
In the garbage heap that she leaves
Do you browse among the tea leaves?

How delightful to suspect
All the places you have trekked:
Does your long antenna whisk its
Gentle tip across the biscuits?

Do you linger, little soul,
Drowsing in our sugar bowl?
Or, abandonment most utter,
Shake a shimmy on the butter?

Do you chant your simple tunes
Swimming in the baby's prunes?
Then, when dawn comes, do you slink
Homeward to the kitchen sink?

Timid roach, why be so shy?
We are brothers, thou and I.
In the midnight, like yourself,
I explore the pantry shelf!

Christopher Morley

Six Weeks Old

HE is so small he does not know
The summer sun, the winter snow;
The spring that ebbs and comes again,
All this is far beyond his ken.

A little world he feels and sees:
His mother's arms, his mother's knees;
He hides his face against her breast,
And does not care to learn the rest.

Christopher Morley

Smells

WHY is it that the poet tells
So little of the sense of smell?
These are the odors I love well:

The smell of coffee freshly ground;
Or rich plum pudding, holly crowned;
Or onions fried and deeply browned.

The fragrance of a fumy pipe;
The smell of apples, newly ripe;
And printer's ink on leaden type.

Woods by moonlight in September
Breathe most sweet, and I remember
Many a smoky camp-fire ember.

Camphor, turpentine, and tea,
The balsam of a Christmas tree,
These are whiffs of gramarye. . .
A ship smells best of all to me!

Christopher Morley

Song for a Little House

I'M glad our house is a little house,
Not too tall nor too wide:
I'm glad the hovering butterflies
Feel free to come inside.

Our little house is a friendly house.
It is not shy or vain;
It gossips with the talking trees,
And makes friends with the rain.

And quick leaves cast a shimmer of green
Against our whited walls,
And in the phlox, the dutious bees
Are paying duty calls.

Christopher Morley

Taking Title

TO make this little house my very own
Could not be done by law alone.
Though covenant and deed convey
Absolute fee, as lawyers say,
There are domestic rites beside
By which this house is sanctified.

By kindled fire upon the hearth,
By planted pansies in the garth,
By food, and by the quiet rest
Of those brown eyes that I love best,
And by a friends bright gift of wine,
I dedicate this house of mine.

When all but I are soft abed
I trail about my quiet stead
A wreath of blue tobacco smoke
(A charm that evil never broke)
And bring my ritual to an end
By giving shelter to a friend.

This done, O dwelling, you become
Not just a house, but truly Home!

Christopher Morley

The barren music of a word or phrase,

THE barren music of a word or phrase,
The futile arts of syllable and stress,
He sought. The poetry of common days
He did not guess.

The simplest, sweetest rhythms life affords-
Unselfish love, true effort truly done,
The tender themes that underlie all words-
He knew not one.

The human cadence and the subtle chime
Of little laughters, home and child and wife,
He knew not. Artist merely in his rhyme,
Not in his life.

Christopher Morley

The Church of Unbent Knees

AS I went by the church to-day
I heard the organ cry;
And goodly folk were on their knees,
But I went striding by.

My minister hath a roof more vast:
My aisles are oak-trees high;
My altar-cloth is on the hills,
My organ is the sky.

I see my rood upon the clouds,
The winds, my chanted choir;
My crystal windows, heaven-glazed,
Are stained with sunset fire.

The stars, the thunder, and the rain,
White sands and purple seas-
These are His pulpit and His pew,
My God of Unbent Knees!

Christopher Morley

The Commercial Traveler

AH very sweet! If news should come to you
Some afternoon while waiting for our eve,
That the great Manager had made me leave
To travel on some territory new;
And that, whatever homeward winds there blew,
I could not touch your hand again, nor heave
The logs upon our hearth and bid you weave
Some wistful tale before the flames that grew. . .

Then, when the sudden tears had ceased to blind
Your pansied eyes, I wonder if you could
Remember rightly, and forget aright?
Remember just your lad, uncouthly good,
Forgetting what he failed in spleen or spite?
Could you remember him as always kind?

Christopher Morley

The Intruder

AS I sat, to sift my dreaming
To the meet and needed word,
Came a merry Interruption
With insistence to be heard.

Smiling stood a maid beside me,
Half alluring and half shy;
Soft the white hint of her bosom-
Escapade was in her eye.

'I must not be so invaded,'
(IN anger then I cried)-
'Can't you see that I am busy?
Tempting creature, stay outside!

'Pearly rascal, I am writing:
I am now composing verse-
Fie on antic invitation:
Wanton, vanish-fly-disperse!

'Baggage, in my godlike moment
What have I to do with thee?'
And she laughed as she departed-
'I am Poetry,' said she.

Christopher Morley

The Milkman

EARLY in the morning, when the dawn is on the roofs,
You hear his wheels come rolling, you hear his horses hoofs;
You hear the bottles clinking, and then he drives away:
You yawn in bed, turn over, and begin another day!

The old-time dairy maids are dear to every poet's heart-
I'd rather be the dairy man and drive a little cart,
And bustle round the village in the early morning blue,
And hang my reigns upon a hook, as I've seen Casey do.

Christopher Morley

The Music Box

AT six-long ere the wintry dawn-
There sounded through the silent hall
To where I lay, with blankets drawn
Above my ears, a plaintive call.

The Urchin, in the eagerness
Of three years old, could not refrain;
Awake, he straightway yearned to dress
And frolic with his clockwork train.

I heard him with a sullen shock.
His sister, by her usual plan,
Had piped us aft at 3 o'clock-
I vowed to quench the little man.

I leaned above him, somewhat stern,
And spoke, I fear, with emphasis-
Ah, how much better, parents learn,
To seal one's sensure with a kiss!

Again the house was dark and still,
Again I lay in slumber's snare,
When down the hall I heard a trill,
A tiny, tinkling, tuneful air-

His music-box! His best-loved toy,
His crib companion every night;
And now he turned to it for joy
While waiting for the lagging light.

How clear, and how absurdly sad
Those tingling pricks of sound unrolled;
They chirped and quavered, as the lad
His lonely little heart consoled.

Columbia, the Ocean's Gem-
(Its only tune) shrilled sweet and faint.
He cranked the chimes, admiring them,
In vigil gay, without complaint.

The treble music piped and stirred,
The leaping air that was his bliss;
And, as I most contritely heard,
I thanked the all-unconscious Swiss!

The needled jets of melody
Rang slowlier and died away-
The Urchin slept; and it was I
Who lay and waited for the day.

Christopher Morley

The Old Swimmer

I OFTEN wander on the beach
Where once, so brown of limb,
The biting air, the roaring surf
Summoned me to swim.

I see my old abundant youth
Whee combers lean and spill,
And though I taste the foam no more
Other swimmers will.

Oh, good exultant strength to meet
The arching wall of green,
To break the crystal, swirl, emerge
Dripping, taut, and clean.

To climb the moving hilly blue,
To dive in ecstasy
And feel the salty chill embrace
Arm and rib and knee.

What brave and vanished laughter then
And tingling thighs to run,
What warm and comfortable sands
Dreaming in the sun.

The crumbling water spreads in snow,
The surf is hissing still,
And though I kiss the salt no more,
Other swimmers will.

Christopher Morley

The Secret

IT was the House of Quietness
To which I came at dusk;
The garth was lit with roses
And heavy with their musk.

The tremulous tall poplar trees
Stood whispering around,
The gentle flicker of their plumes
More quiet than no sound.

And as I wondered at the door
What magic might be there,
The Lady of Sweet Silences
Came softly down the stair.

Christopher Morley

The Wedded Lover

I READ in our old journals of the days
When our first love was April-sweet and new,
How fair it blossomed and deep-rooted grew
Despite the adverse time; and our amaze
At moon and stars and beauty beyond praise
That burgeoned all about us: gold and blue
The heaven arched us in, and all we knew
Was gentleness. We walked on happy ways.

They said by now the path would be more steep,
the sunsets paler and less mild the air;
Rightly we heeded not; it was not true.
We will not tell the secret-let it keep.
I know not how I thought those days so fair
These being so much fairer, spent with you

Christopher Morley

Tit for Tat

I OFTEN pass a gracious tree
Whose name I can't identify,
But still I bow, in courtesy
It waves a bough, in kind reply.

I do not know your name, O tree
(Are you a hemlock or a pine?)
But why should that embarrass me?
Quite probably you don't know mine.

Christopher Morley

To A Child

The greatest poem ever known
Is one all poets have outgrown:
The poetry, innate, untold,
Of being only four years old.

Still young enough to be a part
Of Nature's great impulsive heart,
Born comrade of bird, beast, and tree
And unselfconscious as the bee-

And yet with lovely reason skilled
Each day new paradise to build;
Elate explorer of each sense,
Without dismay, without pretense!

In your unstained transparent eyes
There is no conscience, no surprise:
Life's queer conundrums you accept,
Your strange divinity still kept.

Being, that now absorbs you, all
Harmonious, unit, integral,
Will shred into perplexing bits,-
Oh, contradictions of the wits!

And Life, that sets all things in rhyme,
may make you poet, too, in time-
But there were days, O tender elf,
When you were Poetry itself!

Christopher Morley

To a Post Office Inkwell

How many humble hearts have dipped
In you, and scrawled their manuscript!
Have shared their secrets, told their cares,
Their curious and quaint affairs!
Your pool of ink, your scratchy pen,
Have moved the lives of unborn men,
And watched young people, breathing hard,
Put Heaven on a postal card.

Christopher Morley

To You, Remembering the Past

WHEN we were parted, sweet, and darkness came,
I used to strike a match, and hold the flame
Before your picture and rould breathless mark
The answering glimmer of the tiny spark
That brought to life the magic of your eyes,
Their wistful tenderness, their glad surprise.

Holding that mimic torch before your shrine
I used to light your eyes and make them mine;
Watch them like stars set in a lonely sky,
Whisper my heart out, yearning for reply;
Summon your lips from far across the sea
Bidding them live a twilight hour with me.

Then, when the match was shriveller into gloom,
Lo-you were with me in the darkened room.

Christopher Morley

Two O'Clock

Night after night goes by: and clocks still chime
And stars are changing pattrns in the dark
And watches tick, and over-puissant Time
Benumbs the eager brain. The dogs that bark,
The trains that roar and rattle in the night,
The very cats that prowl, all quiet find
And leave the darkness empty, silent quite:
Sleep comes to chloroform the fretting mind.

So all things end: and what is left at last?
Some scribbled sonnets tossed upon the floor,
A memory of easy days gone past,
A run-down watch, a pipe, some clothes we wore-
And in the darkened room I lean to know
How her dreamless breath doth pause and flow.

Christopher Morley

Washing the Dishes

WHEN we on simple rations sup
How easy is the washing up!
But heavy feeding complicates
The task by soiling many plates.

And though I grant that I have prayed
That we might find a serving-maid,
I'd scullion all my days I think,
To see Her smile across the sink!

I wash, she wipes. In water hot
I souse each pan and dish and pot;
While taffy mutters, purrs, and begs,
And rubs himself against my legs.

The man who never in his life
Has washed the dishes with his wife
Or polished up the silver plate-
He still is largely celibate.

One warning: there is certain ware
That must be handled with all care:
The Lord Himself will give you up
If you should drop a willow cup!

Christopher Morley

When I a householder became

EARLY in the morning, when the dawn is on the roofs,
You hear his wheels come rolling, you hear his horses hoofs;
You hear the bottles clinking, and then he drives away:
You yawn in bed, turn over, and begin another day!

The old-time dairy maids are dear to every poet's heart-
I'd rather be the dairy man and drive a little cart,
And bustle round the village in the early morning blue,
And hang my reigns upon a hook, as I've seen Casey do.

Christopher Morley