

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Edward Young**

**- poems -**

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## Love of Fame, The Universal Passion (excerpt)

Man's rich with little, were his judgment true;  
Nature is frugal, and her wants are few;  
Those few wants answer'd, bring sincere delights;  
But fools create themselves new appetites:  
Fancy and pride seek things at vast expense,  
Which relish not to reason, nor to sense.  
When surfeit, or unthankfulness, destroys,  
In nature's narrow sphere, our solid joys,  
In fancy's airy land of noise and show,  
Where nought but dreams, no real pleasures grow;  
Like cats in air-pumps, to subsist we strive  
On joys too thin to keep the soul alive.  
Lemira's sick; make haste; the doctor call:  
He comes; but where's his patient? At the ball.  
The doctor stares; her woman curt'sies low,  
And cries, "My lady, sir, is always so:  
Diversions put her maladies to flight;  
True, she can't stand, but she can dance all night:  
I've known my lady (for she loves a tune)  
For fevers take an opera in June:  
And, though perhaps you'll think the practice bold,  
A midnight park is sovereign for a cold:  
With colics, breakfasts of green fruit agree;  
With indigestions, supper just at three."  
A strange alternative, replied Sir Hans,  
Must women have a doctor, or a dance?  
Though sick to death, abroad they safely roam,  
But droop and die, in perfect health, at home:  
For want--but not of health, are ladies ill;  
And tickets cure beyond the doctor's bill.

Edward Young

### **Ocean: An Ode. Concluding with A Wish.**

What do we see! Cato then become  
A greater name in Britain than in Rome?  
Does mankind now admire his virtues more,  
Though Lucan, Horace, Virgil, wrote before?  
How will posterity this truth explain?  
"Cato begins to live in Anna's reign."  
The world's great chiefs, in council or in arms,  
Rise in your lines with more exalted charms;  
Illustrious deeds in distant nations wrought,  
And virtues by departed heroes taught,  
Raise in your soul a pure immortal flame,  
Adorn your life, and consecrate your fame;  
To your renown all ages you subdue,  
And Caesar fought, and Cato bled for you.

Edward Young

**Ocean: An Ode. Concluding with A wish.\***

I.

Sweet rural scene!  
Of flocks and green!  
At careless ease my limbs are spread;  
All nature still  
But yonder rill;  
And listening pines not o'er my head:

II

In prospect wide,  
The boundless tide!  
Waves cease to foam, and winds to roar;  
Without a breeze,  
The curling seas  
Dance on, in measure, to the shore.

III

Who sings the source  
Of wealth and force?  
Vast field of commerce and big war:  
Where wonders dwell!  
Where terrors swell!  
And Neptune thunders from his car?

IV

Where? where are they,  
Whom Pean's ray  
Has touch'd, and bid divinely rave?  
What, none aspire?  
I snatch the lyre,  
And plunge into the foaming wave.

V

The wave resounds!  
The rock rebounds!  
The Nereids to my song reply!  
I lead the choir,  
And they conspire  
With voice and shell to lift it high;

VI

They spread in air  
Their bosoms fair;  
Their verdant tresses pour behind.  
The billows beat  
With nimble feet,  
With notes triumphant swell the wind.

VII

Who love the shore,  
And they conspire  
With voice and shell to lift it high;  
Let those adore  
The God Apollo, and his Nine,  
Parnassus' hill,  
And Orpheus' skill;  
But let Arion's harp be mine.

VIII

The main! the main!  
Is Britain's reign;  
Her strength, her glory, is her fleet;  
The main! the main!  
Be Briton's strain;  
As Triton's strong, as Syren's sweet.  
IX

Through nature wide,  
Is nought descry'd  
So rich in pleasure, or surprize;  
When all-serene  
How sweet the scene!  
How dreadful, when the billows rise.  
X

And storms deface  
The fluid glass  
In which ere-while Britannia fair  
Look'd down with pride,  
Like Ocean's bride,  
Adjusting her majestic air.  
XI

When tempests cease,  
And hush'd in peace  
The flatten'd surges smoothly spread  
Deep silence keep,  
And seem to sleep  
Recumbent on their oozy bed;  
XII

With what a trance  
The level glance,  
Unbroken, shoots along the seas!  
Whichtempt from shore  
the painted oar;  
And every canvas courts the breeze!  
XIII

When rushes forth  
The frowning North  
On blackening billows, with what dread  
My shuddering soul  
Beholds them roll,  
And hears their roarings o'er my head!  
XIV

With terror mark  
Yon flying bark!  
Now, center-deep descend the brave;  
Now, toss'd on high  
It takes the sky,  
A feather on the towering wave!  
XV

Now, spins around  
In whirls profound;  
Now, whelm'd; now, pendant near the clouds;

Now, stunn'd, it reels  
Midst thunder's peals;  
And, now, fierce lightening fires the shrouds.  
XVI

All aether burns!  
Chaos returns!  
And blends once more the seas and skies;  
No space between  
Thy bosom green,  
O Deep! and the blue concave, lies.  
XVII

The northern blast,  
The shatter'd mast,  
The fyrt, the whirlpool, and the rock,  
The breaking spout,  
the stars gone out,  
The boiling sreight, the monsters shock.  
XVIII

Let others fear;  
To Britain dear  
What'er promotes her daring claim;  
Those terrors charm,  
Which keep her warm  
In chace of honest gain or fame.  
XIX

The stars are bright  
To cheer the night,  
And shed, through shadows, temper'd fire;  
And Phoebus flames  
With burnish'd beams,  
Which some adore, and all admire.  
XX

Are then the seas  
Outshone by these?  
Bright Thetys! thou art not outshone;  
With kinder beams  
And softer gleams,  
Thy bosom wears them as thy own  
XXI

There, set in green,  
Gold-stars are seen,  
A mantle rich! thy charms to wrap;  
And when the sun  
His race has run  
He falls enamour'd in thy lap.  
XXII

Those clouds, whose dyes  
Adorn the skies,  
That silver snow, that pearly rain;  
Has Phoebus stole  
To grace the pole,  
The plunder of th' invaded main!

XXIII

The gaudy bow,  
Whose colours glow,  
Whose arch with so much skill is bent,  
To Phoebus' ray  
Which paints so gay,  
By thee the watery woof was lent.

XXIV

In chambers deep,  
Where waters sleep,  
What unknown treasures pave the floor!  
The pearl in rows  
Pale lustre throws;  
The wealth immense, which storms devour.  
XXV

From Indian mines,  
With proud designs,  
the merchant, swain, digs golden ore.  
The tempests rise,  
And seize the prize,  
And toss him breathless on the shore.

XXVI

His son complains  
In pious strains  
"Ah! cruel thirst of gold!" he cries;  
Then ploughs the main,  
In zeal for gain,  
The tears yet swelling in his eyes.

XXVII

Thou watery vast!  
What mounds are cast  
To bar thy dreadful flowings-o'er?  
Thy proudest foam  
Must know its home;  
But rage of gold disdains a shore.

XXVIII

Gold Pleasure buys;  
But Pleasure dies,  
Too soon the tross fruition cloy:  
Though raptures court,  
The sense is short;  
But Virtue kindles living joys;

XXIX

Joys felt alone!  
Joys ask'd of none!  
Which Time's and Fortune's arrows miss;  
Joys that subsist,  
Though Fates resist,  
And unprecarious endless bliss!

XXX

The soul refin'd  
Is most inclin'd

To every moral excellence;  
All Vice is dull,  
A knave's a fool;  
And Virtue is the child of Sense  
XXXI

The virtuous mind  
Nor wave, nor wind,  
Nor civil rage, nor tyrant's frown,  
The shaken ball  
Nor planets fall,  
From its firm basis can dethrone.  
XXXII

This Britain knows,  
And therefore glows  
With generous passions, and expends  
Her wealth and zeal  
On public weal,  
And brightens both by godlike ends.  
XXXIII

What end so great,  
As that which late  
Awoke the Genius of the main,  
Which towering rose  
With George to close,  
And rival great Eliza's reign?  
XXXIV

A voice has flown  
From Britain's throne  
To rekindle a grand design;  
That voice shall rear  
Yon fabric fair,<sup>1</sup>  
As Nature's rose at the divine.  
XXXV

When nature sprung,  
Blest angels sung,  
And shouted o'er the rising ball;  
For strains as high  
As main's can fly,  
These sea-devoted honours call.  
XXXVI

From boisterous seas,  
The lap of ease  
Receives our wounded and our old;  
High domes ascend!  
Stretc'd arches bend!  
Proud columns swell! wide gates unfold!  
XXXVII

So sleeps the grain,  
In fostering rain,  
And vital beams, till Jove descend;  
Then bursts the root!  
The verdur's shoot!

And earth enrich, adorn, defend!

XXXVIII

Here, soft-reclin'd  
From wave, from wind,

And Fortune's tempest safe ashore,  
To cheat their care,  
Of former war

They talk the pleasing shadows o'er.

XXXIX

In lengthen'd tales,  
Our fleet prevails;  
In tales the lenitives of age!  
And, o'er the bowl,  
They fire the soul  
Of listening youth, to martial rage.

XL

The story done,  
Their setting sun,  
Serenely smiling down the West,  
In soft decay,  
They drop away;  
And Honour leads them to their rest.

XLI

Unhappy they!  
And falsely gay!  
Who bask for ever in success;  
A constant feast  
Quite palls the taste,  
And long enjoyment is distress.

XLII

What charms us most,  
Our joy, our boast,  
Familiar, loses all its bliss;  
And gold refin'd  
The fated mind  
Fastidious turns to perfect dross.

XLIII

When, after toil,  
His native soil  
The panting mariner regains  
What transport flows  
From bare repose!  
We reap our pleasure from our pains.

XLIV

Ye warlike slain!  
Beneath the main,  
Wrapt in a watery winding sheet;  
Who bought with blood  
Your country's good,  
Your country's full-blown glories greet.

XLV

What powerful charm

Can death disarm?  
Your long, your iron slumbers break?  
By Jove, by Fame,  
By George's name,  
Awake! awake! awake!  
XLVI

Our joy so proud,  
Our shout so loud,  
Without a charm the dead might hear:  
And see, they rouze!  
Their awful brows,  
Deep-scar'd, fromm oozy pillows rear!  
XLVII

With spiral shell,  
Full-blasted, tell  
That all your watery realms should sing;  
Your pearl-alcoves,  
Your coral-groves,  
Should echo theirs, and Britain's king.  
XLVIII

As long as stars  
Guide mariners,  
As Carolina's virtues please,  
Or suns invite  
The ravish'd sight,  
The British flag shall sweep the seas.  
XLIX

Pecular both!  
Our soil's strong growth,  
And our bold natives hardy mind;  
Sure Heaven bespoke  
Our hearts, and oak,  
To give a master to mankind.  
L

That noblest birth  
Of teaming earth,  
Of forests fair that daughter proud,  
To foreign coasts  
Our grandeur boasts  
And Britain's pleasure speaks aloud.  
LI

Now big with war  
Sends Fate from far,  
If rebel realms their Fate demand;  
Now, sumptuous spoils  
Of foreign soils  
Pours in the bottom of our land.  
LII

Hence, Britain lays  
In scales, and weighs  
The fates of kingdoms and of kings;  
And as she frowns

Or smiles, on crown  
A night or day of glory springs.  
LIII

Thus Ocean swells  
The streams and rills,  
And to their borders lifts them high;  
Or else withdraws  
The mighty cause,  
And leaves their famish'd channels dry.  
LIV

How mixt, how frail,  
How sure to fail,  
Is every pleasure of mankind!  
A damp destroys  
My blooming joys,  
While Britain's glory fires my mind.  
LV

For who can gaze  
On restless seas,  
Unstruck with life's more restless state?  
Where all are toss'd,  
And most are lost  
By tides of passion, blasts of fate?  
LVI

The world's the main,  
How vext! how vain!  
Ambition swells, and Anger foams;  
May good men find,  
Beneath the wind,  
A noiseless shore, unruffled homes!  
LVII

The public scene  
Of harden'd men  
Teach me, O teach me to despise!  
The world few know  
But to their woe,  
Our crimes with our experience rise;  
LVIII

All tender sense  
Is banish'd thence,  
All maiden nature's first alarms;  
What shock'd before  
Disgusts no more,  
And what disgusted has its charms  
LIX

In landskips green  
True Bliss is seen,  
With Innocence, in shades, the sports;  
In wealthy towns  
Proud labour frowns,  
And painted Sorrow smiles in courts.  
LX

These scenes untry'd  
Seduc'd my pride,  
To Fortune's arrows bar'd my breast;  
Till Wisdom came,  
A hoary dame!  
And told me pleasure was in rest.  
LXI

"O may I steal  
"Along the vale  
"Of humble life, secure from foes!  
"My friend sincere!  
"My judgment clear!  
"And gentle business my repose!

Edward Young

## The Complaint: or Night Thoughts (excerpt)

By Nature's law, what may be, may be now;  
There's no prerogative in human hours.  
In human hearts what bolder thought can rise,  
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?  
Where is to-morrow? In another world.  
For numbers this is certain; the reverse  
Is sure to none; and yet on this perhaps,  
This peradventure, infamous for lies,  
As on a rock of adamant we build  
Our mountain hopes, spin out eternal schemes  
As we the Fatal Sisters could out-spin,  
And big with life's futurities, expire.  
Not ev'n Philander had bespoke his shroud,  
Nor had he cause; a warning was deny'd:  
How many fall as sudden, not as safe!  
As sudden, though for years admonish'd home.  
Of human ills the last extreme beware;  
Beware, Lorenzo, a slow-sudden death.  
How dreadful that deliberate surprise!  
Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;  
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;  
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.  
Procrastination is the thief of time;  
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,  
And to the mercies of a moment leaves  
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.  
If not so frequent, would not this be strange?  
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.  
Of man's miraculous mistakes this bears  
The palm, "That all men are about to live,"  
For ever on the brink of being born,  
All pay themselves the compliment to think  
They, one day, shall not drivel: and their pride  
On this reversion takes up ready praise;  
At least, their own; their future selves applauds;  
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead!  
Time lodg'd in their own hands is Folly's vails;  
That lodg'd in Fate's to Wisdom they consign.  
The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone.  
'Tis not in folly not to scorn a fool,  
And scarce in human wisdom to do more.  
All promise is poor dilatory man,  
And that through every stage; when young, indeed,  
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,  
Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish,  
As duteous sons our fathers were more wise.  
At thirty man suspects himself a fool,  
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;  
At fifty chides his infamous delay,  
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;  
In all the magnanimity of thought  
Resolves, and re-resolves, then dies the same.

Edward Young

## **The Last Day (excerpt)**

Sooner or later, in some future date,  
(A dreadful secret in the book of Fate)  
This hour, for aught all human wisdom knows,  
Or when ten thousand harvests more have rose;  
When scenes are chang'd on this revolving Earth,  
Old empires fall, and give new empires birth;  
While other Bourbons rule in other lands,  
And, (if man's sin forbids not) other Annes;  
While the still busy world is treading o'er  
The paths they trod five thousand years before,  
Thoughtless as those who now life's mazes run,  
Of earth dissolv'd, or an extinguish'd sun;  
(Ye sublunary worlds, awake, awake!  
Ye rulers of the nation, hear and shake)  
Thick clouds of darkness shall arise on day;  
In sudden night all Earth's dominions lay;  
Impetuous winds the scatter'd forests rend;  
Eternal mountains, like their cedars, bend;  
The valleys yawn, the troubled ocean roar  
And break the bondage of his wonted shore;  
A sanguine stain the silver moon o'erspread;  
Darkness the circle of the sun invade;  
From inmost Heaven incessant thunders roll  
And the strong echo bound from pole to pole.

Edward Young

## **The wind from the West**

Blow high, blow low,  
O wind from the West;  
You come from the country  
I love the best.

O say have the lilies  
Yet lifted their heads  
Above the lake-water  
That ripples and spreads?

Do the little sedges  
Still shake with delight,  
And whisper together  
All through the night?

Have the mountains the purple  
I used to love,  
And peace about them,  
Around and above?

Edward Young