

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **James Thomson**

**- poems -**

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## A Poem Sacred to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton

Shall the great soul of Newton quit this earth,  
To mingle with his stars; and every muse,  
Astonish'd into silence, shun the weight  
Of honours due to his illustrious name?  
But what can man?--Even now the sons of light,  
In strains high-warbled to seraphic lyre,  
Hail his arrival on the coast of bliss.  
Yet am not I deterr'd, though high the theme,  
And sung to harps of angels, for with you,  
Ethereal flames! ambitious, I aspire  
In Nature's general symphony to join.

And what new wonders can ye show your guest!  
Who, while on this dim spot, where mortals toil  
Clouded in dust, from motion's simple laws,  
Could trace the secret hand of Providence,  
Wide-working through this universal frame.

Have ye not listen'd while he bound the suns  
And planets to their spheres! th' unequal task  
Of humankind till then. Oft had they roll'd  
O'er erring man the year, and oft disgrac'd  
The pride of schools, before their course was known  
Full in its causes and effects to him,  
All-piercing sage! who sat not down and dream'd  
Romantic schemes, defended by the din  
Of specious words, and tyranny of names;  
But, bidding his amazing mind attend,  
And with heroic patience years on years  
Deep-searching, saw at last the system dawn,  
And shine, of all his race, on him alone.

What were his raptures then! how pure! how strong!  
And what the triumphs of old Greece and Rome,  
By his diminish'd, but the pride of boys  
In some small fray victorious! when instead  
Of shatter'd parcels of this earth usurp'd  
By violence unmanly, and sore deeds  
Of cruelty and blood, Nature herself  
Stood all subdu'd by him, and open laid  
Her every latent glory to his view.

All intellectual eye, our solar-round  
First gazing through, he by the blended power  
Of gravitation and projection saw  
The whole in silent harmony revolve.  
From unassisted vision hid, the moons  
To cheer remoter planets numerous pour'd,  
By him in all their mingled tracts were seen.  
He also fix'd the wandering Queen of Night,  
Whether she wanes into a scanty orb,  
Or, waxing broad, with her pale shadowy light,

In a soft deluge overflows the sky.  
Her every motion clear-discerning, he  
Adjusted to the mutual main, and taught  
Why now the mighty mass of water swells  
Resistless, heaving on the broken rocks,  
And the full river turning; till again  
The tide revertive, unattracted, leaves  
A yellow waste of idle sands behind.

Then breaking hence, he took his ardent flight  
Through the blue infinite; and every star,  
Which the clear concave of a winter's night  
Pours on the eye, or astronomic tube,  
Far-stretching, snatches from the dark abyss,  
Or such as farther in successive skies  
To fancy shine alone, at his approach  
Blaz'd into suns, the living centre each  
Of an harmonious system: all combin'd,  
And rul'd unerring by that single power,  
Which draws the stone projected to the ground.

O unprofuse magnificence divine!  
O wisdom truly perfect! thus to call  
From a few causes such a scheme of things,  
Effects so various, beautiful, and great,  
An universe complete! and O belov'd  
Of Heaven! whose well-purg'd penetrative eye,  
The mystic veil transpiercing, inly scann'd  
The rising, moving, wide-establish'd frame.

He, first of men, with awful wing pursu'd  
The comet through the long elliptic curve,  
As round innumerable worlds he wound his way,  
Till, to the forehead of our evening sky  
Return'd, the blazing wonder glares anew,  
And o'er the trembling nations shakes dismay.

The heavens are all his own, from the wild rule  
Of whirling vortices and circling spheres  
To their first great simplicity restor'd.  
The schools astonish'd stood; but found it vain  
To keep at odds with demonstration strong,  
And, unawaken'd, dream beneath the blaze  
Of truth. At once their pleasing visions fled,  
With the gay shadows of the morning mix'd,  
When Newton rose, our philosophic sun!  
Th' aërial flow of sound was known to him,  
From whence it first in wavy circles breaks,  
Till the touch'd organ takes the message in.  
Nor could the darting beam of speed immense  
Escape his swift pursuit and measuring eye.  
Ev'n Light itself, which every thing displays,

Shone undiscover'd, till his brighter mind  
Untwisted all the shining robe of day;  
And, from the whitening undistinguish'd blaze,  
Collecting every ray into his kind,  
To the charm'd eye educ'd the gorgeous train  
Of parent colours. First the flaming red  
Sprung vivid forth; the tawny orange next;  
And next delicious yellow; by whose side  
Fell the kind beams of all-refreshing green.  
Then the pure blue, that swells autumnal skies  
Ethereal played; and then, of sadder hue,  
Emerg'd the deepen'd indigo, as when  
The heavy-skirted evening droops with frost;  
While the last gleamings of refracted light  
Died in the fainting violet away.  
These, when the clouds distil the rosy shower,  
Shine out distinct adown the wat'ry bow;  
While o'er our heads the dewy vision bends  
Delightful, melting on the fields beneath.  
Myriads of mingling dyes from these result,  
And myriads still remain--infinite source  
Of beauty, ever flushing, ever new.

Did ever poet image aught so fair,  
Dreaming in whisp'ring groves by the hoarse brook?  
Or prophet, to whose rapture heaven descends?  
Ev'n now the setting sun and shifting clouds,  
Seen, Greenwich, from thy lovely heights, declare  
How just, how beauteous the refractive law.

The noiseless tide of time, all bearing down  
To vast eternity's unbounded sea,  
Where the green islands of the happy shine,  
He stemm'd alone; and, to the source (involv'd  
Deep in primeval gloom) ascending, rais'd  
His lights at equal distances, to guide  
Historian wilder'd on his darksome way.

But who can number up his labours? who  
His high discoveries sing? When but a few  
Of the deep-studying race can stretch their minds  
To what he knew--in fancy's lighter thought  
How shall the muse then grasp the mighty theme?

What wonder thence that his devotion swell'd  
Responsive to his knowledge? For could he,  
Whose piercing mental eye diffusive saw  
The finish'd university of things  
In all its order, magnitude, and parts,  
Forbear incessant to adore that Power  
Who fills, sustains, and actuates the whole?

Say, ye who best can tell, ye happy few,  
Who saw him in the softest lights of life,  
All unwithheld, indulging to his friends  
The vast unborrow'd treasures of his mind,  
oh, speak the wondrous man! how mild, how calm  
How greatly humble, how divinely good,  
How firm establish'd on eternal truth;  
Fervent in doing well, with every nerve  
Still pressing on, forgetful of the past,  
And panting for perfection; far above  
Those little cares and visionary joys  
That so perplex the fond impassion'd heart  
Of ever-cheated, ever-trusting man.  
This, Conduitt, from thy rural hours we hope;  
As through the pleasing shade where nature pours  
Her every sweet in studious ease you walk,  
The social passions smiling at thy heart  
That glows with all the recollected sage.

And you, ye hopeless gloomy-minded tribe,  
You who, unconscious of those nobler flights  
That reach impatient at immortal life,  
Against the prime endearing privilege  
Of being dare contend,--say, can a soul  
Of such extensive, deep, tremendous powers,  
Enlarging still, be but a finer breath  
Of spirits dancing through their tubes awhile,  
And then for ever lost in vacant air?

But hark! methinks I hear a warning voice,  
Solemn as when some awful change is come,  
Sound through the world--" 'Tis done!--the measure's full;  
And I resign my charge."--Ye mouldering stones  
That build the towering pyramid, the proud  
Triumphal arch, the monument effac'd  
By ruthless ruin, and whate'er supports  
The worship'd name of hoar antiquity--  
Down to the dust! What grandeur can ye boast  
While Newton lifts his column to the skies,  
Beyond the waste of time. Let no weak drop  
Be shed for him. The virgin in her bloom  
Cut off, the joyous youth, and darling child--  
These are the tombs that claim the tender tear  
And elegiac song. But Newton calls  
For other notes of gratulation high,  
That now he wanders through those endless worlds  
He here so well descried, and wondering talks,  
And hymns their Author with his glad compeers.

O Britain's boast! whether with angels thou  
Sittest in dread discourse, or fellow-blest,  
Who joy to see the honour of their kind;

Or whether, mounted on cherubic wing,  
Thy swift career is with the whirling orbs,  
Comparing things with things, in rapture lost,  
And grateful adoration for that light  
So plenteous ray'd into thy mind below  
From Light Himself; oh, look with pity down  
On humankind, a frail erroneous race!  
Exalt the spirit of a downward world!  
O'er thy dejected country chief preside,  
And be her Genius call'd! her studies raise,  
Correct her manners, and inspire her youth;  
For, though deprav'd and sunk, she brought thee forth,  
And glories in thy name! she points thee out  
To all her sons, and bids them eye thy star:  
While, in expectance of the second life,  
When time shall be no more, thy sacred dust  
Sleeps with her kings, and dignifies the scene.

James Thomson

## Fareweel, ye bughts

\*

1. Fareweel, ye bughts, an' all your ewes,  
An' fields whare bIoomin' heather grows;  
Nae mair the sportin' lambs I'll see  
Since my true love's forsaken me.

CHORUS.

Nae mair I'll hear wi' pleasure sing  
The cheerfu' lav'rock in the Spring,  
But sad in grief now I maun mourn,  
Far, far frae her, o'er Logan-burn.

2. Alas! nae mair we'll meetings keep  
At bughts, whan herds ca' in their sheep;  
Nae mair amang the threshes green  
We'll row, where we hae aften been.  
CHORUS

3. Nae mair for me , ye vi'lets blaw,  
Or lilies whiter than the snaw;  
Nae mair your pleasures I can bear,  
While I am absent frae my dear.  
CHORUS

4. I ken the cause of my hard fate;  
In courtin' her I was too blate;  
I never kiss'd my lass at a'  
But when we met an' gaed awa'.  
CHORUS

5. Oh could my tears again bring back  
The days now past, I'd no' be slack  
For ev'ry kiss she got before  
I wad gie to her now a score.  
CHORUS

6. O fortune I wad you favour me  
In some snug corner her to see.  
My heart I wad to her reveal,  
An' in her arms my pardon seal.  
CHORUS

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James Thomson

## Farewell to Ravelrig

\*

Sweet Ravelrig, I ne'er could part  
From thee, but wi' a dowie heart.  
When I think on the happy days  
I spent in youth about your braes,  
When innocence my steps did guide,  
Where murmuring streams did sweetly glide  
Beside the braes well stored wi' trees,  
And sweetest flow'rs that fend the bees:

And there the tuneful tribe doth sing,  
While lightly flitting on the wing;  
And conscious peace was ever found  
Within your mansion to abound.  
Sweet be thy former owner's rest,  
And peace to him that's now possess't  
Of all thy beauties great and small,  
Lang may he live to bruik them all!

\*

James Thomson

## Gifts

GIVE a man a horse he can ride,  
Give a man a boat he can sail;  
And his rank and wealth, his strength and health,  
On sea nor shore shall fail.

Give a man a pipe he can smoke,  
Give a man a book he can read:  
And his home is bright with a calm delight,  
Though the room be poor indeed.

Give a man a girl he can love,  
As I, O my love, love thee;  
And his heart is great with the pulse of Fate,  
At home, on land, on sea.

James Thomson

## Hymn on Solitude

Hail, mildly pleasing solitude,  
Companion of the wise and good;  
But, from whose holy, piercing eye,  
The herd of fools, and villains fly.  
Oh! how I love with thee to walk,  
And listen to thy whisper'd talk,  
Which innocence, and truth imparts,  
And melts the most obdurate hearts.

A thousand shapes you wear with ease,  
And still in every shape you please.  
Now wrapt in some mysterious dream,  
A lone philosopher you seem;  
Now quick from hill to vale you fly,  
And now you sweep the vaulted sky;  
A shepherd next, you haunt the plain,  
And warble forth your oaten strain;  
A lover now, with all the grace  
Of that sweet passion in your face:  
Then, calm'd to friendship, you assume  
The gentle-looking Hertford's bloom,  
As, with her Musidora, she,  
(Her Musidora fond of thee)  
Amid the long withdrawing vale,  
Awakes the rival'd nightingale.

Thine is the balmy breath of morn,  
Just as the dew-bent rose is born;  
And while meridian fervours beat,  
Thine is the woodland dumb retreat;  
But chief, when evening scenes decay,  
And the faint landskip swims away,  
Thine is the doubtful soft decline,  
And that best hour of musing thine.

Descending angels bless thy train,  
The virtues of the sage, and swain;  
Plain Innocence in white array'd,  
Before thee lifts her fearless head:  
Religion's beams around thee shine,  
And cheer thy glooms with light divine:  
About thee sports sweet Liberty;  
And rapt Urania sings to thee.

Oh, let me pierce thy secret cell!  
And in thy deep recesses dwell!  
Perhaps from Norwood's oak-clad hill,  
When meditation has her fill,  
I just may cast my careless eyes  
Where London's spiry turrets rise,  
Think of its crimes, its cares, its pain,  
Then shield me in the woods again.

James Thomson

## **In the Train**

AS we rush, as we rush in the Train,  
The trees and the houses go wheeling back,  
But the starry heavens above the plain  
Come flying on our track.

All the beautiful stars of the sky,  
The silver doves of the forest of Night,  
Over the dull earth swarm and fly,  
Companions of our flight.

We will rush ever on without fear;  
Let the goal be far, the flight be fleet!  
For we carry the Heavens with us, dear,  
While the Earth slips from our feet!

James Thomson

## Rule Britannia

When Britain first, at Heaven's command,  
Arose from out the azure main;  
This was the charter of the land,  
And guardian angels sung this strain:  
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;  
Britons never will be slaves."

The nations, not so blest as thee,  
Must, in their turns, to tyrants fall:  
While thou shalt flourish great and free,  
The dread and envy of them all.  
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;  
Britons never will be slaves."

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,  
More dreadful, from each foreign stroke:  
As the loud blast that tears the skies,  
Serves but to root thy native oak.  
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;  
Britons never will be slaves."

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame:  
All their attempts to bend thee down,  
Will but arouse thy generous flame;  
But work their woe, and thy renown.  
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;  
Britons never will be slaves."

To thee belongs the rural reign;  
Thy cities shall with commerce shine:  
All thine shall be the subject main,  
And every shore it circles thine.  
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;  
Britons never will be slaves."

The Muses, still with freedom found,  
Shall to thy happy coast repair:  
Blest isle! with matchless beauty crown'd,  
And manly hearts to guard the fair.  
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;  
Britons never will be slaves."

James Thomson

## **Sunday up the River**

MY love o'er the water bends dreaming;  
It glideth and glideth away:  
She sees there her own beauty, gleaming  
Through shadow and ripple and spray.

O tell her, thou murmuring river,  
As past her your light wavelets roll,  
How steadfast that image for ever  
Shines pure in pure depths of my soul.

James Thomson

## The Seasons: Winter

See! Winter comes, to rule the varied Year,  
Sullen, and sad; with all his rising Train,  
Vapours, and Clouds, and Storms: Be these my Theme,  
These, that exalt the Soul to solemn Thought,  
And heavenly musing. Welcome kindred Grooms!  
Wish'd, wint'ry, Horrors, hail! -- With frequent Foot,  
Pleas'd, have I, in my cheerful Morn of Life,  
When, nurs'd by careless Solitude, I liv'd,  
And sung of Nature with unceasing Joy,  
Pleas'd, have I wander'd thro' your rough Domains;  
Trode the pure, virgin, Snows, my self as pure:  
Heard the Winds roar, and the big Torrent burst:  
Or seen the deep, fermenting, Tempest brew'd,  
In the red, evening, Sky. -- Thus pass'd the Time,  
Till, thro' the opening Chambers of the South,  
Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out, and smil'd.  
THEE too, Inspirer of the toiling Swain!  
Fair AUTUMN, yellow rob'd! I'll sing of thee,  
Of thy last, temper'd, Days, and sunny Calms;  
When all the golden Hours are on the Wing,  
Attending thy Retreat, and round thy Wain,  
Slow-rolling, onward to the Southern Sky.

BEHOLD! the well-pois'd Hornet, hovering, hangs,  
With quivering Pinions, in the genial Blaze;  
Flies off, in airy Circles: then returns,  
And hums, and dances to the beating Ray.  
Nor shall the Man, that, musing, walks alone,  
And, heedless, strays within his radiant Lists,  
Go unchastis'd away. -- Sometimes, a Fleece  
Of Clouds, wide-scattering, with a lucid Veil,  
Soft, shadow o'er th'unruffled Face of Heaven;  
And, thro' their dewy Sluices, shed the Sun,  
With temper'd Influence down. Then is the Time,  
For those, whom Wisdom, and whom Nature charm,  
To steal themselves from the degenerate Croud,  
And soar above this little Scene of Things:  
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their Feet:  
To lay their Passions in a gentle Calm,  
And woo lone Quiet, in her silent Walks.

NOW, solitary, and in pensive Guise,  
Oft, let me wander o'er the russet Mead,  
Or thro' the pining Grove; where scarce is heard  
One dying Strain, to cheer the Woodman's Toil:  
Sad Philomel, perchance, pours forth her Plaint,  
Far, thro' the withering Copse. Mean while, the Leaves,  
That, late, the Forest clad with lively Green,  
Nipt by the drizzly Night, and Sallow-hu'd,  
Fall, wavering, thro' the Air; or shower amain,  
Urg'd by the Breeze, that sobs amid the Boughs.  
Then list'ning Hares forsake the rusling Woods,

And, starting at the frequent Noise, escape  
To the rough Stubble, and the rushy Fen.  
Then Woodcocks, o'er the fluctuating Main,  
That glimmers to the Glimpses of the Moon,  
Stretch their long Voyage to the woodland Glade:  
Where, wheeling with uncertain Flight, they mock  
The nimble Fowler's Aim. -- Now Nature droops;  
Languish the living Herbs, with pale Decay:  
And all the various Family of Flowers  
Their sunny Robes resign. The falling Fruits,  
Thro' the still Night, forsake the Parent-Bough,  
That, in the first, grey, Glances of the Dawn,  
Looks wild, and wonders at the wintry Waste.

THE Year, yet pleasing, but declining fast,  
Soft, o'er the secret Soul, in gentle Gales,  
A Philosophic Melancholly breathes,  
And bears the swelling Thought aloft to Heaven.  
Then forming Fancy rouses to conceive,  
What never mingled with the Vulgar's Dream:  
Then wake the tender Pang, the pitying Tear,  
The Sigh for suffering Worth, the Wish prefer'd  
For Humankind, the Joy to see them bless'd,  
And all the Social Off-spring of the Heart!

OH! bear me then to high, embowering, Shades;  
To twilight Groves, and visionary Vales;  
To weeping Grottos, and to hoary Caves;  
Where Angel-Forms are seen, and Voices heard,  
Sigh'd in low Whispers, that abstract the Soul,  
From outward Sense, far into Worlds remote.

NOW, when the Western Sun withdraws the Day,  
And humid Evening, gliding o'er the Sky,  
In her chill Progress, checks the straggling Beams,  
And robs them of their gather'd, vapoury, Prey,  
Where Marshes stagnate, and where Rivers wind,  
Cluster the rolling Fogs, and swim along  
The dusky-mantled Lawn: then slow descend,  
Once more to mingle with their Watry Friends.  
The vivid Stars shine out, in radiant Files;  
And boundless Ether glows, till the fair Moon  
Shows her broad Visage, in the crimson'd East;  
Now, stooping, seems to kiss the passing Cloud:  
Now, o'er the pure Cerulean, rides sublime.  
Wide the pale Deluge floats, with silver Waves,  
O'er the sky'd Mountain, to the low-laid Vale;  
From the white Rocks, with dim Reflexion, gleams,  
And faintly glitters thro' the waving Shades.

ALL Night, abundant Dews, unnoted, fall,  
And, at Return of Morning, silver o'er

The Face of Mother-Earth; from every Branch  
Depending, tremble the translucent Gems,  
And, quivering, seem to fall away, yet cling,  
And sparkle in the Sun, whose rising Eye,  
With Fogs bedim'd, portends a beauteous Day.

NOW, giddy Youth, whom headlong Passions fire,  
Rouse the wild Game, and stain the guiltless Grove,  
With Violence, and Death; yet call it Sport,  
To scatter Ruin thro' the Realms of Love,  
And Peace, that thinks no Ill: But These, the Muse,  
Whose Charity, unlimited, extends  
As wide as Nature works, disdains to sing,  
Returning to her nobler Theme in view --

FOR, see! where Winter comes, himself, confest,  
Striding the gloomy Blast. First Rains obscure  
Drive thro' the mingling Skies, with Tempest foul;  
Beat on the Mountain's Brow, and shake the Woods,  
That, sounding, wave below. The dreary Plain  
Lies overwhelm'd, and lost. The bellying Clouds  
Combine, and deepening into Night, shut up  
The Day's fair Face. The Wanderers of Heaven,  
Each to his Home, retire; save those that love  
To take their Pastime in the troubled Air,  
And, skimming, flutter round the dimply Flood.  
The Cattle, from th'untasted Fields, return,  
And ask, with Meaning low, their wonted Stalls;  
Or ruminates in the contiguous Shade:  
Thither, the household, feathery, People croud,  
The crested Cock, with all his female Train,  
Pensive, and wet. Mean while, the Cottage-Swain  
Hangs o'er th'enlivening Blaze, and, taleful, there,  
Recounts his simple Frolic: Much he talks,  
And much he laughs, nor reckes the Storm that blows  
Without, and rattles on his humble Roof.

AT last, the muddy Deluge pours along,  
Resistless, roaring; dreadful down it comes  
From the chapt Mountain, and the mossy Wild,  
Tumbling thro' Rocks abrupt, and sounding far:  
Then o'er the sanded Valley, floating, spreads,  
Calm, sluggish, silent; till again constrain'd,  
Betwixt two meeting Hills, it bursts a Way,  
Where Rocks, and Woods o'erhang the turbid Stream.  
There gathering triple Force, rapid, and deep,  
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders thro'.

NATURE! great Parent! whose directing Hand  
Rolls round the Seasons of the changeful Year,  
How mighty! how majestick are thy Works!  
With what a pleasing Dread they swell the Soul,

That sees, astonish'd! and, astonish'd sings!  
You too, ye Winds! that now begin to blow,  
With boisterous Sweep, I raise my Voice to you.  
Where are your Stores, ye viewless Beings! say?  
Where your aerial Magazines reserv'd,  
Against the Day of Tempest perilous?  
In what untravel'd Country of the Air,  
Hush'd in still Silence, sleep you, when 'tis calm?

LATE, in the louring Sky, red, fiery, Streaks  
Begin to flush about; the reeling Clouds  
Stagger with dizzy Aim, as doubting yet  
Which Master to obey: while rising, slow,  
Sad, in the Leaden-colour'd East, the Moon  
Wears a bleak Circle round her sully'd Orb.  
Then issues forth the Storm, with loud Control,  
And the thin Fabrick of the pillar'd Air  
O'erturns, at once. Prone, on th'uncertain Main,  
Descends th'Ethereal Force, and plows its Waves,  
With dreadful Rift: from the mid-Deep, appears,  
Surge after Surge, the rising, wat'ry, War.  
Whitening, the angry Billows rowl immense,  
And roar their Terrors, thro' the shuddering Soul  
Of feeble Man, amidst their Fury caught,  
And, dash'd upon his Fate: Then, o'er the Cliff,  
Where dwells the Sea-Mew, unconfin'd, they fly,  
And, hurrying, swallow up the steril Shore.

THE Mountain growls; and all its sturdy Sons  
Stoop to the Bottom of the Rocks they shade:  
Lone, on its Midnight-Side, and all aghast,  
The dark, way-faring, Stranger, breathless, toils,  
And climbs against the Blast --  
Low, waves the rooted Forest, vex'd, and sheds  
What of its leafy Honours yet remains.  
Thus, struggling thro' the dissipated Grove,  
The whirling Tempest raves along the Plain;  
And, on the Cottage thacht, or lordly Dome,  
Keen-fastening, shakes 'em to the solid Base.  
Sleep, frighted, flies; the hollow Chimney howls,  
The Windows rattle, and the Hinges creak.

THEN, too, they say, thro' all the burthen'd Air,  
Long Groans are heard, shrill Sounds, and distant Sighs,  
That, murmur'd by the Demon of the Night,  
Warn the devoted Wretch of Woe, and Death!  
Wild Uproar lords it wide: the Clouds commixt,  
With Stars, swift-gliding, sweep along the Sky.  
All Nature reels. -- But hark! the Almighty speaks:  
Instant, the chidden Storm begins to pant,  
And dies, at once, into a noiseless Calm.

AS yet, 'tis Midnight's Reign; the weary Clouds,  
Slow-meeting, mingle into solid Gloom:  
Now, while the drousy World lies lost in Sleep,  
Let me associate with the low-brow'd Night,  
And Contemplation, her sedate Compeer;  
Let me shake off th'intrusive Cares of Day,  
And lay the meddling Senses all aside.

AND now, ye lying Vanities of Life!  
You ever-tempting, ever-cheating Train!  
Where are you now? and what is your Amount?  
Vexation, Disappointment, and Remorse.  
Sad, sickening, Thought! and yet, deluded Man,  
A Scene of wild, disjointed, Visions past,  
And broken Slumbers, rises, still resolv'd,  
With new-flush'd Hopes, to run your giddy Round.

FATHER of Light, and Life! Thou Good Supreme!  
O! teach me what is Good! teach me thy self!  
Save me from Folly, Vanity and Vice,  
From every low Pursuit! and feed my Soul,  
With Knowledge, conscious Peace, and Vertue pure,  
Sacred, substantial, never-fading Bliss!

LO! from the livid East, or piercing North,  
Thick Clouds ascend, in whose capacious Womb,  
A vapoury Deluge lies, to Snow congeal'd:  
Heavy, they roll their fleecy World along;  
And the Sky saddens with th'impending Storm.  
Thro' the hush'd Air, the whitening Shower descends,  
At first, thin-wavering; till, at last, the Flakes  
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the Day,  
With a continual Flow. See! sudden, hoar'd,  
The Woods beneath the stainless Burden bow,  
Blackning, along the mazy Stream it melts;  
Earth's universal Face, deep-hid, and chill,  
Is all one, dazzling, Waste. The Labourer-Ox  
Stands cover'd o'er with Snow, and then demands  
The Fruit of all his Toil. The Fowls of Heaven,  
Tam'd by the cruel Season, croud around  
The winnowing Store, and claim the little Boon,  
That Providence allows. The foodless Wilds  
Pour forth their brown Inhabitants; the Hare,  
Tho' timorous of Heart, and hard beset  
By Death, in various Forms, dark Snares, and Dogs,  
And more unpitying Men, the Garden seeks,  
Urg'd on by fearless Want. The bleating Kind  
Eye the bleak Heavens, and next, the glistening Earth,  
With Looks of dumb Despair; then sad, dispers'd,  
Dig, for the wither'd Herb, thro' Heaps of Snow.

NOW, Shepherds, to your helpless Charge be kind;

Baffle the raging Year, and fill their Penns  
With Food, at will: lodge them below the Blast,  
And watch them strict; for from the bellowing East,  
In this dire Season, oft the Whirlwind's Wing  
Sweeps up the Burthen of whole wintry Plains,  
In one fierce Blast, and o'er th'unhappy Flocks,  
Lodg'd in the Hollow of two neighbouring Hills,  
The billowy Tempest whelms; till, upwards urg'd,  
The Valley to a shining Mountain swells,  
That curls its Wreaths amid the freezing Sky.

NOW, all amid the Rigours of the Year,  
In the wild Depth of Winter, while without  
The ceaseless Winds blow keen, be my Retreat  
A rural, shelter'd, solitary, Scene;  
Where ruddy Fire, and beaming Tapers join  
To chase the cheerless Gloom: there let me sit,  
And hold high Converse with the mighty Dead,  
Sages of ancient Time, as Gods rever'd,  
As Gods beneficent, who blest Mankind,  
With Arts, and Arms, and humaniz'd a World,  
Rous'd at th'inspiring Thought -- I throw aside  
The long-liv'd Volume, and, deep-musing, hail  
The sacred Shades, that, slowly-rising, pass  
Before my wondering Eyes -- First, Socrates,  
Truth's early Champion, Martyr for his God:  
Solon, the next, who built his Commonweal,  
On Equity's firm Base: Lycurgus, then,  
Severely good, and him of rugged Rome,  
Numa, who soften'd her rapacious Sons.  
Cimon sweet-soul'd, and Aristides just.  
Unconquer'd Cato, virtuous in Extreme;  
With that attemper'd Heroe, mild, and firm,  
Who wept the Brother, while the Tyrant bled.  
Scipio, the humane Warriour, gently brave,  
Fair Learning's Friend; who early sought the Shade,  
To dwell, with Innocence, and Truth, retir'd.  
And, equal to the best, the Theban, He  
Who, single, rais'd his Country into Fame.  
Thousands behind, the Boast of Greece and Rome,  
Whom Vertue owns, the Tribute of a Verse  
Demand, but who can count the Stars of Heaven?  
Who sing their Influence on this lower World?  
But see who yonder comes! nor comes alone,  
With sober State, and of majestic Mien,  
The Sister-Muses in his Train -- 'Tis He!  
Maro! the best of Poets, and of Men!  
Great Homer too appears, of daring Wing!  
Parent of Song! and, equal, by his Side,  
The British Muse, join'd Hand in Hand, they walk,  
Darkling, nor miss their Way to Fame's Ascent.

Society divine! Immortal Minds!  
Still visit thus my Nights, for you reserv'd,  
And mount my soaring Soul to Deeds like yours.  
Silence! thou lonely Power! the Door be thine:  
See, on the hallow'd Hour, that none intrude,  
Save Lycidas, the Friend, with Sense refin'd,  
Learning digested well, exalted Faith,  
Unstudy'd Wit, and Humour ever gay.

CLEAR Frost succeeds, and thro' the blew Serene,  
For Sight too fine, th'Ætherial Nitre flies,  
To bake the Glebe, and bind the slip'ry Flood.  
This of the wintry Season is the Prime;  
Pure are the Days, and lustrous are the Nights,  
Brighten'd with starry Worlds, till then unseen.  
Mean while, the Orient, darkly red, breathes forth  
An Icy Gale, that, in its mid Career,  
Arrests the bickering Stream. The nightly Sky,  
And all her glowing Constellations pour  
Their rigid Influence down: It freezes on  
Till Morn, late-rising, o'er the drooping World,  
Lifts her pale Eye, unjoyous: then appears  
The various Labour of the silent Night,  
The pendant Isicle, the Frost-Work fair,  
Where thousand Figures rise, the crusted Snow,  
Tho' white, made whiter, by the fining North.  
On blithsome Frolics bent, the youthful Swains,  
While every Work of Man is laid at Rest,  
Rush o'er the watry Plains, and, shuddering, view  
The fearful Deeps below: or with the Gun,  
And faithful Spaniel, range the ravag'd Fields,  
And, adding to the Ruins of the Year,  
Distress the Feathery, or the Footed Game.

BUT hark! the nightly Winds, with hollow Voice,  
Blow, blustering, from the South -- the Frost subdu'd,  
Gradual, resolves into a weeping Thaw.  
Spotted, the Mountains shine: loose Sleet descends,  
And floods the Country round: the Rivers swell,  
Impatient for the Day. -- Those sullen Seas,  
That wash th'ungenial Pole, will rest no more,  
Beneath the Shackles of the mighty North;  
But, rousing all their Waves, resistless heave, --  
And hark! -- the length'ning Roar, continuous, runs  
Athwart the rifted Main; at once, it bursts,  
And piles a thousand Mountains to the Clouds!  
Ill fares the Bark, the Wretches' last Resort,  
That, lost amid the floating Fragments, moors  
Beneath the Shelter of an Icy Isle;  
While Night o'erwhelms the Sea, and Horror looks  
More horrible. Can human Hearts endure  
Th'assembled Mischiefs, that besiege them round:

Unlist'ning Hunger, fainting Weariness,  
The Roar of Winds, and Waves, the Crush of Ice,  
Now, ceasing, now, renew'd, with louder Rage,  
And bellowing round the Main: Nations remote,  
Shook from their Midnight-Slumbers, deem they hear  
Portentous Thunder, in the troubled Sky.  
More to embroil the Deep, Leviathan,  
And his unweildy Train, in horrid Sport,  
Tempest the loosen'd Brine; while, thro' the Gloom,  
Far, from the dire, unhospitable Shore,  
The Lyon's Rage, the Wolf's sad Howl is heard,  
And all the fell Society of Night.  
Yet, Providence, that ever-waking Eye  
Looks down, with Pity, on the fruitless Toil  
Of Mortals, lost to Hope, and lights them safe,  
Thro' all this dreary Labyrinth of Fate.

'TIS done! -- Dread WINTER has subdu'd the Year,  
And reigns, tremendous, o'er the desert Plains!  
How dead the Vegetable Kingdom lies!  
How dumb the Tuneful! Horror wide extends  
His solitary Empire -- Now, fond Man!  
Behold thy pictur'd Life: pass some few Years,  
Thy flow'ring SPRING, thy short-liv'd SUMMER's Strength,  
Thy sober AUTUMN, fading into Age,  
And pale, concluding, WINTER shuts thy Scene,  
And shrouds Thee in the Grave -- where now, are fled  
Those Dreams of Greatness? those unsolid Hopes  
Of Happiness? those Longings after Fame?  
Those restless Cares? those busy, bustling Days?  
Those Nights of secret Guilt? those veering Thoughts,  
Flutt'ring 'twixt Good, and Ill, that shar'd thy Life?  
All, now, are vanish'd! Vertue, sole, survives,  
Immortal, Mankind's never-failing Friend,  
His Guide to Happiness on high -- and see!  
'Tis come, the Glorious Morn! the second Birth  
Of Heaven, and Earth! -- awakening Nature hears  
Th'Almighty Trumpet's Voice, and starts to Life,  
Renew'd, unfading. Now, th'Eternal Scheme,  
That Dark Perplexity, that Mystic Maze,  
Which Sight cou'd never trace, nor Heart conceive,  
To Reason's Eye, refin'd, clears up apace.  
Angels, and Men, astonish'd, pause -- and dread  
To travel thro' the Depths of Providence,  
Untry'd, unbounded. Ye vain Learned! see,  
And, prostrate in the Dust, adore that Power,  
And Goodness, oft arraign'd. See now the Cause,  
Why conscious Worth, oppress'd, in secret long  
Mourn'd, unregarded: Why the Good Man's Share  
In Life, was Gall, and Bitterness of Soul:  
Why the lone Widow, and her Orphans, pin'd,  
In starving Solitude; while Luxury,

In Palaces, lay prompting her low Thought,  
To form unreal Wants: why Heaven-born Faith,  
And Charity, prime Grace! wore the red Marks  
Of Persecution's Scourge: why licens'd Pain,  
That cruel Spoiler, that embosom'd Foe,  
Imbitter'd all our Bliss. Ye Good Distrest!  
Ye Noble Few! that, here, unbending, stand  
Beneath Life's Pressures -- yet a little while,  
And all your Woes are past. Time swiftly fleets,  
And wish'd Eternity, approaching, brings  
Life undecaying, Love without Allay,  
Pure flowing Joy, and Happiness sincere.

James Thomson

## **The Vine**

THE wine of Love is music,  
And the feast of Love is song:  
And when Love sits down to the banquet,  
Love sits long:

Sits long and arises drunken,  
But not with the feast and the wine;  
He reeleth with his own heart,  
That great, rich Vine.

James Thomson