

Classic Poetry Series

Thomas Chatterton

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

A Hymn for Christmas Day

Almighty Framers of the Skies!
O let our pure devotion rise,
Like Incense in thy Sight!
Wrapt in impenetrable Shade
The Texture of our Souls were made
Till thy Command gave light.
The Sun of Glory gleam'd the Ray,
Refin'd the Darkness into Day,
And bid the Vapours fly;
Impell'd by his eternal Love
He left his Palaces above
To cheer our gloomy Sky.

How shall we celebrate the day,
When God appeared in mortal clay,
The mark of worldly scorn;
When the Archangel's heavenly Lays,
Attempted the Redeemer's Praise
And hail'd Salvation's Morn!

A Humble Form the Godhead wore,
The Pains of Poverty he bore,
To gaudy Pomp unknown;
Tho' in a human walk he trod
Still was the Man Almighty God
In Glory all his own.

Despis'd, oppress'd, the Godhead bears
The Torments of this Vale of tears;
Nor bade his Vengeance rise;
He saw the Creatures he had made,
Revile his Power, his Peace invade;
He saw with Mercy's Eyes.

How shall we celebrate his Name,
Who groan'd beneath a Life of shame
In all Afflictions tried!
The Soul is raptur'd to conceive
A Truth, which Being must believe,
The God Eternal died.

My Soul exert thy Powers, adore,
Upon Devotion's plumage sar
To celebrate the Day;
The God from whom Creation sprung
Shall animate my grateful Tongue;
From him I'll catch the Lay!

Thomas Chatterton

A New Song

Ah blame me not, Catcott, if from the right way
My notions and actions run far.
How can my ideas do other but stray,
Deprived of their ruling North-Star?

A blame me not, Broderip, if mounted aloft,
I chatter and spoil the dull air;
How can I imagine thy foppery soft,
When discord's the voice of my fair?

If Turner remitted my bluster and rhymes,
If Hardind was girlish and cold,
If never an ogle was got from Miss Grimes,
If Flavia was blasted and old;

I chose without liking, and left without pain,
Nor welcomed the frown with a sigh;
I scorned, like a monkey, to dangle my chain,
And paint them new charms with a lie.

Once Cotton was handsome; I flam'd and I burn'd,
I died to obtain the bright queen;
But when I beheld my epistle return'd,
By Jesu it alter'd the scene.

She's damnable ugly, my Vanity cried,
You lie, says my Conscience, you lie;
Resolving to follow the dictates of Pride,
I'd view her a hag to my eye.

But should she regain her bright lustre again,
And shine in her natural charms,
'Tis but to accept of the works of my pen,
And permit me to use my own arms.

Thomas Chatterton

Ælla, a Tragical Interlude (excerpt)

FYRSTE MYNSTRELLE...

The boddynge flourettes bloshes atte the lyghte;
The mees be sprenge wyth the yellowe hue;
Ynn daiseyd mantels ys the mountayne dyghte;
The nesh yonge coveslepe bendethe wyth the dewe;
The trees enlefed, yntoe Heavenne straughte,
Whenn gentle wyndes doe blowe to whestlyng dynne ys broughte.

The evenynge commes, and brynges the dewe alonge;
The roddie welkynne sheeneth to the eyne;
Arounde the alestake Mynstrells synge the songe;
Yonge ivie rounde the doore poste do entwyne;
I laie mee onn the grasse; yette, to mie wylle,
Albeytte alle ys fayre, there lackethe somethynge styлле. SECONDE MYNSTRELLE

So Adam thoughtenne, whann, ynn Paradyse,
All Heavenn and Erthe dyd hommage to hys mynde;
Ynn Womman alleyne mannes pleasaunce lyes;
As Instruments of joie were made the kynde.
Go, take a wyfe untoe thie armes, and see
Wynter and brownie hylles wyll have a charme for thee. THYRDE MYNSTRELLE

Whanne Autumpne blake and sonne-brente doe appere,
With hys goulde honde guylteynge the falleynge lefe,
Bryngeynge oppe Wynterr to folfylle the yere,
Beerynge uponne hys backe the riped shefe;
Whan al the hyls wythe woddie sede ys whyte;
Whanne levynne-fyres and lemes do mete from far the syghte;

Whann the fayre apple, rudde as even skie,
Do bende the tree unto the fructyle grounde;
When joicie peres, and berries of blacke die,
Doe daunce yn ayre, and call the eyne arounde;
Thann, bee the even foule or even fayre,
Meethynckes mie hartys joie ys steynced wyth somme care.... MYNSTRELLES SONGE

O! synge untoe mie roundelaie,
O! droppe the brynne teare wythe mee,
Daunce ne moe atte hallie daie,
Lycke a reynynge ryver bee;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Black hys cryne as the wyntere nyghte,
Whyte hys rode as the sommer snowe,
Rodde hys face as the mornynge lyghte,

Cale he lyes ynne the grave belowe;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Swote hys tyngue as the throstles note,
Quycke ynn daunce as thoughte canne bee,
Defte hys taboure, codgelle stote,
O! hee lyes bie the wyllowe tree:
Mie love ys dedde,
Gone to hys deathe-bedde,
Alle underre the wyllowe tree.

Harke! the ravenne flappes hys wynges,
In the briered delle belowe;
Harke! the dethe-owle loude dothe synge,
To the nyghte-mares as heie goe;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

See! the whyte moone sheenes onne hie;
Whyterre ys mie true loves shroude;
Whyterre yanne the mornynge skie,
Whyterre yanne the evenynge cloude;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Heere, uponne mie true loves grave,
Schalle the baren fleurs be layde,
Nee one hallie Seyncte to save
Al the celness of a mayde.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gonne to hys death-bedde,
Alle under the wyllowe tree.

Wythe mie hondes I'lle dente the brieres
Rounde his hallie corse to gre,
Ouphante fairie, lyghte youre fyres,
Heere mie boddie style schall bee.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys deathe-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Comme, wythe acorne-coppe and thorne,
Drayne mie hartys blodde awaie;
Lyfe and all yttes goode I scorne,
Daunce bie nete, or feaste by daie.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Waterre wytches, crownede wythe reytes,
Bere mee to yer leathalle tyde.
I die; I comme; mie true love waytes.
Thos the damselle spake, and dyed.

Thomas Chatterton

An Excelente Balade of Charitie: As Wroten bie the Gode Pri

In Virgynë the sweltrie sun gan sheene,
And hotte upon the mees did caste his raie;
The apple rodded from its palie greene,
And the mole peare did bende the leafy spraie;
The peepe chelandri sunge the livelong daie;
'Twas nowe the pride, the manhode of the yeare,
And eke the grounde was dighte in its moste defte aumere.

The sun was glemeing in the midde of daie,
Deade still the aire, and eke the welken blue,
When from the sea arist in drear arraie
A hepe of cloudes of sable sullen hue,
The which full fast unto the woodlande drewe,
Hiltring attenes the sunnis fetive face,
And the blacke tempeste swolne and gatherd up apace.

Beneathe an holme, faste by a pathwaie side,
Which dide unto Seyncte Godwine's covent lede,
A hapless pilgrim moneynge did abide.
Pore in his newe, ungentle in his weede,
Longe bretful of the miseries of neede,
Where from the hail-stone coulde the almer flie?
He had no housen there, ne anie covent nie.

Look in his glommed face, his sprighte there scanne;
Howe woe-be-gone, how withered, forwynd, deade!
Haste to thie church-glebe-house, asshrewed manne!
Haste to thie kiste, thie onlie dortoure bedde.
Cale, as the claie whiche will gre on thie hedde,
Is Charitie and Love aminge highe elves;
Knightis and Barons live for pleasure and themselves.

The gatherd storme is rype; the bigge drops falle;
The forswat meadowes smethe, and drenche the raine;
The comyng ghastrness do the cattle pall,
And the full flockes are drivynge ore the plaine;
Dashde from the cloudes the waters flott againe;
The welkin opes; the yellow levynne flies;
And the hot fierie smothe in the wide lowings dies.

Liste! now the thunder's rattling clymmynge sound
Cheves slowlie on, and then embollen clangs,
Shakes the hie spyre, and losst, dispended, drown'd,
Still on the gallard eare of terroure hanges;
The windes are up; the lofty elmen swanges;
Again the levynne and the thunder poures,
And the full cloudes are braste attenes in stonen showers.

Spurreynge his palfrie oere the watrie plaine,
The Abbote of Seyncte Godwynes convente came;
His chapournette was drented with the reine,
And his pencte gyrdle met with mickle shame;

He aynewarde tolde his bederoll at the same;
The storme encreasen, and he drew aside,
With the mist almes craver neere to the holme to bide.

His cope was all of Lyncolne clothe so fyne,
With a gold button fasten'd neere his chynne;
His autremete was edged with golden twynne,
And his shoone pyke a loverds mighte have binne;
Full well it shewn he thoughten coste no sinne:
The trammels of the palfrye pleasde his sighte,
For the horse-millanare his head with roses dighte.

"An almes, sir prieste!" the droppyng pilgrim saide,
"O! let me waite within your covente dore,
Till the sunne sheneth hie above our heade,
And the loude tempeste of the aire is oer;
Helpless and ould am I alas! and poor;
No house, ne friend, ne moneie in my pouche;
All yatte I call my owne is this my silver crouche."

"Varlet," replyd the Abbatte, "cease your dinne;
This is no season almes and prayers to give;
Mie porter never lets a faitour in;
None touch mie rynges who not in honour live."
And now the sonne with the blacke cloudes did stryve,
And shettyng on the grounde his glairie raie,
The Abbatte spurrd his steede, and eftsoones roadde awaie.

Once moe the skie was blacke, the thunder rolde;
Faste reyneyng oer the plaine a prieste was seen;
Ne dighte full proude, ne buttoned up in golde;
His cope and jape were graie, and eke were clene;
A Limitoure he was of order seene;
And from the pathwaie side then turned hee,
Where the pore almer laie binethe the holmen tree.

"An almes, sir priest!" the droppyng pilgrim sayde,
"For sweete Seyncte Marie and your order sake."
The Limitoure then loosen'd his pouche threde,
And did thereoute a groate of silver take;
The mister pilgrim dyd for halline shake.
"Here take this silver, it maie eathe thie care;
We are Goddes stewards all, nete of oure owne we bare.

"But ah! unhailie pilgrim, lerne of me,
Scathe anie give a rentrolle to their Lorde.
Here take my semecope, thou arte bare I see;
Tis thyne; the Seynctes will give me mie rewarde."
He left the pilgrim, and his waie aborde.
Virgynne and hallie Seyncte, who sitte yn gloure,
Or give the mittee will, or give the gode man power.

Thomas Chatterton

Apostate Will

In days of old, when Wesley's power
Gathered new strength by every hour;
Apostate Will, just sunk in trade,
Resolved his bargain should be made;
Then strait to Wesley he repairs,
And puts on grave and solemn airs;
Then thus the pious man addressed.
Good sir, I think your doctrine best;
Your servant will a Wesley be,
Therefore the principles teach me.
The preacher then instructions gave.
How he in this world should behave;
He hears, assents, and gives a nod,
Says every word's the word of God,
Then lifting his dissembling eyes,
How blessed is the sect! he cries;
Nor Bingham, Young, nor Stillingfleet,
Shall make me from this sect retreat.
He then his circumstances declared,
How hardly with him matters fared,
Begg'd him next morning for to make
A small collection for his sake.
The preacher said, Do not repine,
The whole collection shall be thine.
With looks demure and cringing bows,
About his business strait he goes.
His outward acts were grave and prim,
The methodist appear'd in him.
But, be his outward what it will,
His heart was an apostate's still.
He'd oft profess an hallow'd flame,
And every where preach'd Wesley's name;
He was a preacher, and what not,
As long as money could be got;
He'd oft profess, with holy fire.
The labourer's worthy of his hire.
It happen'd once upon a time,
When all his works were in their prime,
A noble place appear'd in view;
Then _____ to the methodists, adieu.
A methodist no more he'll be,
The protestants serve best for he.
Then to the curate strait he ran,
And thus address'd the rev'rend man:
I was a methodist, tis true;
With penitence I turn to you.
O that it were your bounteous will
That I the vacant place might fill!
With justice I'd myself acquit,
Do every thing that's right and fit.
The curate straitway gave consent--
To take the place he quickly went.

Accordingly he took the place,
And keeps it with dissembled grace.

Thomas Chatterton

Chatterton's Will

Burgum, I thank thee, thou hast let me see
That Bristol has impress'd her stamp on thee,
Thy generous spirit emulates the Mayor's,
Thy generous spirit with thy Bristol's pairs.
Gods! what would Burgum give to get a name,
And snatch his blundering dialect from shame!
What would he give, to hand his memory down
To time's remotest boundary?--A Crown.
Catcott, for thee, I know thy heart is good,
But ah! thy merit's seldom understood;
Too bigoted to whimsies, which thy youth
Received to venerate as Gospel truth,
Thy friendship never could be so dear to me,
Since all I am is opposite to thee.
If ever obligated to thy purse,
Rowley discharges all-- my first chief curse!
For had I never known the antique lore,
I ne'er had ventured from my peaceful shore,
To be the wreck of promises and hopes,
A Boy of Learning, and a Bard of Tropes;
But happy in my humble sphere had moved,
Untroubled, unsuspected, unbelov'd.
To Barrett next, he has my thanks sincere,
For all the little knowledge I had here.
But what was knowledge? Could it here succeed
When scarcely twenty in the town can read?
Could knowledge bring in interest to maintain
The wild expenses of a Poet's brain;
Disinterested Burgum never meant
To take my knowledge for his gain per cent.
When wildly squand'ring ev'ry thing I got,
On books and learning, and the Lord knows what,
Could Burgum then, my critic, patron, friend!
Without security attempt to lend?
No, that would be imprudent in the man;
Accuse him of imprudence if you can.
He promis'd, I confess, and seem'd sincere;
Few keep an honorary promise here.
I thank thee, Barrett-- thy advice was right,
But 'twas ordain'd by fate that I should write.
Spite of the prudence of this prudent place,
I wrote my mind, nor hid the author's face.
Harris ere long, when reeking from the press,
My numbers make his self-importance less,
Will wrinkle up his face, and damn the day,
And drag my body to the triple way--

This is the last Will and Testament of me, Thomas Chatterton, of the city of Bristol; being sound in body, or it is the fault of my last surgeon: the soundness of my mind, the coroner and jury are to be the judges of, desiring them to take notice, that the most perfect masters of human nature in Bristol distinguish me by the title of Mad

Genius; therefore, if I do a mad action, it is conformable to every action of my life, which is all savoured of insanity.

Item. If after my death, which will happen tomorrow night before eight o'clock, being the Feast of the Resurrection, the coroner and jury bring it in lunacy, I will and direct, that Paul Farr, Esq. and Mr. John Flower, at their joint expense, cause my body to be interred in the tomb of my fathers, and raise the monument over my body to the height of four feet five inches, placing the present flat stone on the top, and adding six tablets.

On the first, to be engraved in Old English characters:--

[Note that Chatterton did not speak French and this Middle French inscription was probably copied from a gravestone he had seen on his many pilgrimages to area churches. The same is true for the Latin. Interesting that he did not go to church for God, but to admire the ancient architecture and the memorial stones. --Anne]

Vous qui par ici pazez
Pur l'ame Guateroine Chatterton priez
Le cors di oi ici gist
L'ame receyve Thu Crist. MCCX.

(You who pass by here
Pray for the soul of Chatterton
Here lies his body
His soul is with Christ)

On the second tablet, in Old English characters:-

Orate pro animabus Alanus Chatterton, et Alicia Uxeris eius, qui quidem Alanus obictx die mensis Novemb. MCCCCXV, quorum animabus propinetur Deus Amen.

On the third tablet, in Roman characters:-

Sacred to the memory of
Thomas Chatterton

Reader, judge not; if thou art a Christian-- believe that he shall be judged by a superior Power-- to that Power alone is he now answerable

On the fifth and sixth tablets, which shall front each other:-

Atchievements: viz. on the one, vest, a fess, or; crest, a mantle of estate, gules, supported by a spear, sable, headed, or. On the other, or, a fess vert, crest, a cross of Knights Templars.--And I will and direct that if the coroner's inquest bring it in felo-de-se,

the said monument shall notwithstanding be erected. And if the said Paul Farr and John Flower have souls so Bristolish as to refuse this my request, they will transmit a copy of my will to the Society for supporting the Bill of Rights, whom I hereby empower to build the said monument according to the aforesaid directions. And if they the said Paul Farr and John Flower should build the said monument, I will and direct that the second edition of my Kew Gardens shall be dedicated to them in the following dedication:- To Paul Farr and John Flower, Esqrs. this book is most humbly dedicated by the Author's

Ghost.

Item: I give all my vigour and fire of youth to Mr. George Catcott, being sensible he is most want of it.

Item: From the same charitable motive, I give and bequeath unto the Reverent Mr. Camplin senior, all my humility. To Mr. Burgum all my prosody and grammar, --likewise one moiety of my modesty; the other moiety to any young lady who can prove without blushing that she wants that valuable commodity. To Bristol, all my spirit and disinterestedness, parcels of goods, unknown on her quay since Canning and Rowley! 'Tand direct is true, a charitable gentleman, one Mr. Colston, smuggled a considerable quantity of it, but it being proved that he was a papist, the Worshipful Society of Aldermen endeavoured to throttle him with the oath of allegiance. I also leave my religion to Dr. Cutts Barton, Dean of Bristol, hereby empowering the Sub-Sacrist to strike him on the head when he goes to sleep in church. My powers of utterance I give to the Reverend Mr. Broughton, hoping he will employ them to a better purpose than reading letters on the immortality of the soul. I leave the Reverend Mr. Catcott some little of my free thinking, that he may put on spectacles of reason and see how vilely he is duped in believing the scriptures literally. I wish he and his brother George would know how far I am their real enemy; but I have an unlucky way of raillery, and when the strong fit of satire is upon me, I spare neither friend nor foe. This is my excuse for what I have said of them elsewhere. I leave Mr. Clayfield the sincerest thanks my gratitude can give ; and I will and direct that whatever any person may think the pleasure of reading my works worth, they immediately pay their own valuation to him, since it is then become a lawful debt to me and to him as my executor in this case.

I leave my moderation to the politicians on both sides of the question. I leave my generosity to our present Right Worshipful Mayor, Thomas Harris, Esq. I give my abstinence to the company at the Sheriffs' annual feast in general, more particularly the Aldermen.

Item. I give and bequeath to Mr. Matthew Mease a mourning ring with this motto, "Alas, poor Chatterton!" provided he pays for it himself.

Item. I leave the young ladies all the letters they have had from me, assuring them that they need be under no apprehensions from the appearance of my ghost, for I die for none of them. --

Item. I leave all of my debts, the whole not five pounds, to the payment of the charitable and generous Chamber of Bristol, on penalty, if refused, to hinder every member from a good dinner by appearing in the form of a bailiff. If in defiance of this terrible spectre, they obstinately persist in refusing to discharge my debts, let my two creditors apply to the supporters of the Bill of Rights.

Item. I leave my mother and my sister to the protection of my friends, if I have any.

--Executed in the presence of Omniscience this 14th of April, 1770.

Thos. Chatterton

Thomas Chatterton

Colin Instructed

Young Colin was as stout a boy
As ever gave a maiden joy;
But long in vain he told his tale
To black-eyed Bidy of the Dale.
Ah why, the whining shepherd cried,
Am I alone your smiles denied?
I only tell in vain my tale
To black-eyed Bidy of the Dale.

True Colin, said the laughing dame,
You only whimper out your flame,
Others do more than sigh their tale
To black-eyed Bidy of the Dale.

He took the hint &c.

Thomas Chatterton

Eclogues

Eclogue the First.

Whanne Englonde, smeethynge from her lethal wounde,
From her galled necke dyd twytte the chayne awaie,
Kennynge her legeful sonnes falle all arounde,
(Myghtie theie fell, 'twas Honoure ledde the fraie,)
Thanne inne a dale, bie eve's dark surcote graie,
Twayne lonelie shepsterres dyd abrodden flie,
(The rostlyng liff doth theyr whytte hartes affraie,)
And whythe the owlette trembled and dyd crie;
Firste Roberte Neatherde hys sore boesom stroke,
Then fellen on the grounde and thus yspoke.

Roberte.

Ah, Raufe! gif thos the howres do comme alonge,
Gif thos wee flie in chase of farther woe,
Oure fote wylle fayle, albeytte wee bee stronge,
Ne wylle oure pace swefte as oure danger goe.
To oure grete wronges we have enheped moe,
The Baronnes warre! oh! woe and well-a-daie!
I haveth lyff, bott have escaped soe
That lyff ytsel mie senses doe affraie.
Oh Raufe, comme lyste, and hear mie dernie tale,
Comme heare the balefull dome of Robynne of the dale.

Raufe.

Saie to mee nete; I kenne thie woe in myne;
O! I've a tale that Sabalus mote telle.
Swote flouretts, mantled meadows, forestes dyngge;
Gravots far-kend around the Errmiets cell;
The swote ribible dynning yn the dell;
The joyous dauncynge ynn the hoastrie courte;
Eke the highe songe and everych joie farewell,
Farewell the verie shade of fayre dysporte;
Impestering trobble onn mie dernie tale,
Ne one kynde Seyncte to warde the aye encreasyngge dome.

Roberte.

Oh! I could waile mie kynge-coppe-decked mees,
Mie spreedyngge flockes of shepe of lillie white,
Mie tendre applynges; and embodyde trees,
Mie Parker's Grange, far spreedyngge to the syghte,
Mie cuyen kyne, mie bullockes stringe yn fyghte,
Mie gorne emblaunched with the comfreie plante,
Mie floure Seyncte Marie shottynge wythe the lyghte,
Mie store of all the blessinges Heaven can grant.
I am duressed unto sorrowes blowe,
I hantend to the peyne, will lette ne salte teare flowe.

Raufe.

Here I wille obaie untylle Dethe doe 'pere,
Here lyche a foule empoysoned leathel tree,

Whyche sleaeth everichone that commeth nere,
Soe wille I, fyxed unto thys place, gre.
I to bement haveth moe cause than thee;
Sleene in the warre mie boolie fadre lies;
Oh! joieous Ihys mortherer would slea,
And bie hys syde for aie enclose myne eies.
Calked from everych joie, heere wylle I blede;
Fell ys the Cullys-yatte of mie hartes castle stede.

Roberte.

Oure woes alyche, alyche our dome shal bee.
Mie sonne, mie sonne alleyn, ystorven ys;
Here wylle I staie, and end mie lyff with thee;
A lyff leche myne a borden ys ywis.
Now from e'en logges fledden is selyness,
Mynsterres alleyn can boaste the hallie Seyncte,
Now doeth Englonde wearea a bloudie dresse
And wyth her champyonnes gore her face depeyncte;
Peace fledde, disorder sheweth her dark rode,
And thorow ayre doth flie, yn garments steyned with bloude.

Eclogue the Second

Nygelle.

Sprytes of the bleste, the pious Nygelle sed,
Pure owte yer pleasaunce onn mie fadres hedde.

I.

Rycharde of Lyons harte to fyghte is gon,
Uponne the brede sea doe the banners gleme,
The amenused nationnes be aston,
To ken syke large a flete, syke fyne, syke breme,
The barkis heafods coupe the lymed streme;
Oundes synkeynge oundes upon the hard ake riese;
The water slughornes ayre, and reche the skies.
Sprytes of the bleste, on gouldyn trones astedde,
Poure owte yer pleasaunce onn mie fadres hedde.

II.

The gule depeyncted oares from the black tyde,
Decorn wyth fonnes rare, doe shemrynge ryse;
Upswalynge doe heie shewe ynne drierie pryde,
Lyche gore-red estells in the eve merk skyes;
The nome-depeyncted shields, the speres aryse,
Alyche talle roshes on the water syde;
Alenge from bark to bark the bryghte sheene flies;
Sweft-kerv'd delyghtes doe on the water glyde.
Sprytes of the bleste, and everich Seyncte ydedde,
Poure owte youre pleasaunce on mie fadres hedde.

III.

The Sarasen lokes owte: he doethe feere,
That Englonde's brondeous sonnes do cotte the waie.
Lyke honted bockes, theye reineth here and there,
Onknowlachinge inne whate place to obaie.
The banner glesters on the beme of daie;
The mitte crosse Jerusalem ys seene;
Dhereof the syghte yer corragedoe affraie,
In balefull dole their faces be ywreene.
Sprytes of the bleste, and everich Seyncte ydedde,
Poure owte your pleasaunce on mie fadres hedde.

IV.

The bollengers and cottes, so swyfte yn fyghte,
Upon the sydes of everich bark appere;
Foorth to his office lepethe everych knyghte,
Eftsoones hys squyer, with hys shielde and spere.
The jynyng shielde doe shemre and moke glare;
The dosheyng oare doe make gemoted dynne;
The reynyng foemen, thynckeyng gif to dare,
Boun the merk swerde, theie seche to fraie, theie blyn.
Sprytes of the bleste, and everyche Seyncte ydedde,
Poure owte yer pleasaunce onn mie fadres hedde.

V.

Now comm the warryng Sarasyngs to fyghte;
Kynge Rycharde, lyche a lyoncel of warre,
Inne sheenyng goulde, lyke feerie gronfers, dyghte,
Shaketh alofe hys honde, and seene afarre.
Syke haveth I espyde a greter starre
Amenge the drybblett ons to sheene fulle bryghte;
Syke sunnys wayne wyth amayl'd beames doe barr
The blaunchie mone or estells to gev lyghte.
Sprytes of the bleste, and everich Seyncte ydedde,
Poure owte your pleasaunce on mie fadres hedde.

VI.

Distraughte affraie, wythe lockes of blodde-red die.
Terroure, emburled yn the thonders rage,
Deathe, lynked to dismaie, dothe ugsomme flie,
Enchafyng echone championne war to wage.
Speeres bevyle speres; swerdes upon swerdes engage;
Armoure on armoure dynn, shielde upon shielde;
Ne dethe of thosandes can the warre assuage,
Botte falleyng numbers sable all the feelde.
Sprytes of the bleste, and everych Seyncte ydedde,
Poure owte youre pleasaunce on mie fadres hedde.

VII.

The foemen fal arounde; the cross reles hye;
Steyned ynne goere, the harte of warre ys seen;
Kynge Rycharde, thorough everyche trope dothe flie,
And beereth meynte of Turkes onto the greene;
Bie hymm the floure of Asies menn ys sleene;
The waylynge mone doth fade before hys sonne;
Bie hym hys knyghtes bee formed to actions deene,
Doeynge syke marvels, strongers be aston.
Sprytes of the bleste, and everych Seyncte ydedde,
Poure owte your pleasaunce onn mie fadres hedde.

VIII.

The fyghte ys wonne;
Kynge Rycharde master is;
The Englonde bannerr kisseth the hie ayre;
Full of pure joie the armie is iwys,
And everych one haveth it onne his bayre;
Agayne to Englonde comme, and worschepped there,
Twyghte into lovyng armes, and feasted eft;
In everych eyne aredyng nete of wyere,
Of all remembrance of past peyne berefte.
Sprytes of the bleste, and everych Seyncte ydedde,
Syke pleasures power upon mie fadres hedde.

Syke Nigel sed, whan from the bluie sea
The upswol sayle dyd daunce before hys eyne;
Swefte as the wishe, hee toe the beech dyd flee,
And found his fadre steppeynge from the bryne.
Letter thyssen menne, who haveth sprite of loove,
Bethyncke unto hemselfes how mote the meetynge prove.

ECLOGUE THE THIRD.

Manne, womanne, Sir Rogerre.
Wouldst thou kenn nature in her better parte?
Goe, serche the logges and bordels of the hynde;
Gyff theie have anie, itte ys roughe-made arte,
Inne hem you see the blakied forme of kynde.
Haveth your mynde a lycheynge of a mynde?
Woulde it kenne everich thyng, as it mote bee?
Woulde ytte here phrase of vulgar from the hynde,
Withoute wiseegger wordes and knowlage free?
Gyfsoe, rede thys, whyche Iche dysportynge pende;
Gif nete besyde, yttes rhyme maie ytte commende.

Manne.

Botte whether, fayre mayde, do ye goe?
O where do ye bende yer waie?

I wille knowe whether you goe,
I wylle not bee asseled naie.

Womanne.
To Robin and Nell, all downe in the delle,
To hele hem at mekeynge of haie.

Manne.
Syr Roggerre, the parson, have hyred mee there,
Comme, comme, lett us tryppe ytte awaie,
We'lle wurke and we'lle synge, and weylle drenche of stronge beer
As longe as the merrie sommers daie.

Womanne.
How hard ys mie dome to wurch!
Moke is mie woe.
Dame Agnes, whoe lies ynne the Chyrche
With birlette golde,
Wythe gelten aumeres stronge ontolde,
What was shee moe than me, to be soe?

Manne.
I kenne Syr Roger from afar
Tryppyng over the lea;
Ich ask whie the loverds son
Is moe than mee.

Syr Rogerre.
The sweltrie sonne dothe hie apace hys wayne,
From everich beme a seme of lyfe doe falle;
Swythyn scille oppe the haie uponne the playne;
Methynckes the cockes begynneth to gre talle.
Thys ys alyche oure doome; the great the smalle,
Moste withe and bee forwyned by deathis darte.
See! the swote flourette hathe noe swote at alle;
Itte wythe the ranke wede bereth evalle parte.
The cravent, warrioure, and the wyse be blente,
Alyche to drie awaie wythe those theie dyd bemente.

Manne.
All-a-boon, Syr Priest, all-a-boon.
Bye yer preestshype nowe saye unto mee;
Syr Gaufryd the knyghte, who lyvethe harde bie,
Whie shoulde hee than mee
Bee more greate,
Inne honnoure, knyghtehood and estate?

Syr Rogerre.
Attourne thy eyne arounde thys haied mee,
Tentyflie loke around the chaper delle;
An answeere to thie barganette here see,
Thys welked flourette wylle a lesen telle;

Arist it blew, itte florished, and dyd well,
Lokeynge ascaunce upon the naighboure greene;
Yet with the deigned greene yttes rennome felle,
Eftsoones ytte shronke upon the daie-brente playne,
Didde not yttes loke, whilst ytte there dyd stonde,
To crophe ytte in the bodde move somme dred honde.

Syke ys the waie of lyffe;
the loverds ente
Mooveth the robber hym therfor to slea;
Gyf thou has ethe, the shadowe of contente,
Believe the throthe, theres none moe haile yan thee.
Thou wurchest; wille, cann thatte a trobble bee?
Slothe moe wulde jade thee than the roughest daie.
Couldest thou the kivercled of soughlys see,
Thou wouldst eftsoones see trothe ynne whatte I saie;
Botte lette me heere thie waie of lyffe, and thenne
Heare thou from me the lyffes of odher menne.

Manne.
I ryse wythe the sonne,
Lyche hym to dryve the wayne,
And eere mie wurche is don
I synge a songe or twayne.
I followe the plough-tayle,
Wythe a longe jubbe of ale.
Botte of the maydens, oh!
Itte lacketh notte to telle;
Syre Preeste mote notte crie woe
Culde hys bull do as welle.
I daunce the beste heiedeygnes,
And foile the wysest feygnes.
On everych Seynctes hie daie
Wythe the mynstrelle am I seene,
All a footeynge it awaie,
Wythe maydens on the greene.
But oh! I wyssheto be moe greate,
In rennome, tenure, and estate.

Syr Rogerre.
Has thou ne seene a tree uponne a hylle,
Whose unliste braunces rechen far toe syghte;
Whan fuired unwers doe the heaven fylle,
Itte shaketh deere yn dole and moke affryghte.
Whylest the congeon flowrette abessie dyghte,
Stondethe unhurte, unquaced bie the storme;
Syke is a picte of lyffe: the manne of myghte
Is tempest-chaft, hys woe greate as hys forme;
Thieselfe a flowrette of a small accounte,
Wouldst harderfelle the wynde, as hygher thee dydste mounte.

Thomas Chatterton

Elegy on the Death of Mr. Phillips

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Thomas Chatterton

February

Begin, my muse, the imitative lay,
Aonian doxies sound the thrumming string;
Attempt no number of the plaintive Gay,
Let me like midnight cats, or Collins sing.
If in the trammels of the doleful line
The bounding hail, or drilling rain descend;
Come, brooding Melancholy, pow'r divine,
And ev'ry unform'd mass of words amend.

Now the rough goat withdraws his curling horns,
And the cold wat'rer twirls his circling mop:
Swift sudden anguish darts thro' alt'ring corns,
And the spruce mercer trembles in his shop.

Now infant authors, madd'ning for renown,
Extend the plume, and him about the stage,
Procure a benefit, amuse the town,
And proudly glitter in a title page.

Now, wrapt in ninefold fur, his squeamish grace
Defies the fury of the howling storm;
And whilst the tempest whistles round his face,
Exults to find his mantled carcase warm.

Now rumbling coaches furious drive along,
Full of the majesty of city dames,
Whose jewels sparkling in the gaudy throng,
Raise strange emotions and invidious flames.

Now Merit, happy in the calm of place,
To mortals as a highlander appears,
And conscious of the excellence of lace,
With spreading frogs and gleaming spangles glares.

Whilst Envy, on a tripod seated nigh,
In form a shoe-boy, daubs the valu'd fruit,
And darting lightnings from his vengeful eye,
Raves about Wilkes, and politics, and Bute.

Now Barry, taller than a grenadier,
Dwindles into a stripling of eighteen;
Or sabled in Othello breaks the ear,
Exerts his voice, and totters to the scene.

Now Foote, a looking-glass for all mankind,
Applies his wax to personal defects;
But leaves untouch'd the image of the mind,
His art no mental quality reflects.

Now Drury's potent kind extorts applause,
And pit, box, gallery, echo, "how divine!"
Whilst vers'd in all the drama's mystic laws,

His graceful action saves the wooden line.

Now-- but what further can the muses sing?
Now dropping particles of water fall;
Now vapours riding on the north wind's wing,
With transitory darkness shadow all.

Alas! how joyless the descriptive theme,
When sorrow on the writer's quiet preys
And like a mouse in Cheshire cheese supreme,
Devours the substance of the less'ning bays.

Come, February, lend thy darkest sky.
There teach the winter'd muse with clouds to soar;
Come, February, lift the number high;
Let the sharp strain like wind thro' alleys roar.

Ye channels, wand'ring thro' the spacious street,
In hollow murmurs roll the dirt along,
With inundations wet the sabled feet,
Whilst gouts responsive, join th'elegiac song.

Ye damsels fair, whose silver voices shrill,
Sound thro' meand'ring folds of Echo's horn;
Let the sweet cry of liberty be still,
No more let smoking cakes awake the morn.

O, Winter! Put away the snowy pride;
O, Spring! Neglect the cowslip and the bell;
O, Summer! Throw thy pears and plums aside;
O, Autumn! Bid the grape with poison swell.

The pension'd muse of Johnson is no more!
Drown'd in a butt of wine his genius lies;
Earth! Ocean! Heav'n! The wond'rous loss deplore,
The dregs of nature with her glory dies.

What iron Stoic can suppress the tear;
What sour reviewer read with vacant eye!
What bard but decks his literary bier!
Alas! I cannot sing-- I howl-- I cry--

Thomas Chatterton

Heccar and Gaira

Where the rough Caigra rolls the surgy wave,
Urging his thunders thro' the echoing cave;
Where the sharp rocks, in distant horror seen,
Drive the white currents thro' the spreading green;
Where the loud tiger, pawing in his rage,
Bids the black archers of the wilds engage;
Stretch'd on the sand, two panting warriors lay,
In all the burning torments of the day;
Their bloody jav'lins reeked one living steam,
Their bows were broken at the roaring stream;
Heccar the Chief of Jarra's fruitful hill,
Where the dark vapours nightly dews distil,
Saw Gaira the companion of his soul,
Extended where loud Caigra's billows roll;
Gaira, the king of warring archers found,
Where daily lightnings plough the sandy ground,
Where brooding tempests bowl along the sky,
Where rising deserts whirl'd in circles fly.

Heccar.

Gaira, 'tis useless to attempt the chace,
Swifter than hunted wolves they urge the race;
Their lessening forms elude the straining eye,
Upon the plumage of macaws they fly.
Let us return, and strip the reeking slain
Leaving the bodies on the burning plain.

Gaira.

Heccar, my vengeance still exclaims for blood,
'Twould drink a wider stream than Caigra's flood.
This jav'lin, oft in nobler quarrels try'd,
Put the loud thunder of their arms aside.
Fast as the streaming rain, I pour'd the dart,
Hurling a whirlwind thro' the trembling heart;
But now my ling'ring feet revenge denies,
O could I throw my jav'lin from my eyes!

Heccar.

When Gaira the united armies broke,
Death wing'd the arrow; death impell'd the stroke.
See, pil'd in mountains, on the sanguine sand
The blasted of the lightnings of thy hand.
Search the brown desert, and the glossy green;
There are the trophies of thy valour seen.
The scatter'd bones mantled in silver white,
Once animated, dared the force in fight.
The children of the wave, whose pallid face,
Views the faint sun display a languid face,
From the red fury of thy justice fled,
Swifter than torrents from their rocky bed.
Fear with a sickened silver ting'd their hue;
The guilty fear, when vengeance is their due.

Gaira.

Rouse not Remembrance from her shadowy cell,
Nor of those bloody sons of mischief tell.
Cawna, O Cawna! deck'd in sable charms,
What distant region holds thee from my arms?
Cawna, the pride of Afric's sultry vales,
Soft as the cooling murmur of the gales,
Majestic as the many colour'd snake,
Trailing his glories thro' the blossom'd brake;
Black as the glossy rocks, where Eascal roars,
Foaming thro' sandy wastes to Jaghir's shores;
Swift as the arrow, hasting to the breast,
Was Cawna, the companion of my rest.

The sun sat low'ring in the western sky,
The swelling tempest spread around the eye;
Upon my Cawna's bosom I reclin'd,
Catching the breathing whispers of the wind
Swift from the wood a prowling tiger came;
Dreadful his voice, his eyes a glowing flame;
I bent the bow, the never-erring dart
Pierced his rough armour, but escaped his heart;
He fled, tho' wounded, to a distant waste,
I urg'd the furious flight with fatal haste;
He fell, he died-- spent in the fiery toil,
I strip'd his carcase of the furry spoil,
And as the varied spangles met my eye,
On this, I cried, shall my loved Cawna lie.
The dusky midnight hung the skies in grey;
Impell'd by love, I wing'd the airy way;
In the deep valley and mossy plain,
I sought my Cawna, but I sought in vain,
The pallid shadows of the azure waves
Had made my Cawna, and my children slaves.
Reflection maddens, to recall the hour,
The gods had given me to the demon's power.
The dusk slow vanished from the hated lawn,
I gain'd a mountain glaring with the dawn.
There the full sails, expanded to the wind,
Struck horror and distraction in my mind,
There Cawna mingled with a worthless train,
In common slavery drags the hated chain.
Now judge, my Heccar, have I cause for rage?
Should aught the thunder of my arm assuage?
In ever-reeking blood this jav'lin dyed
With vengeance shall be never satisfied;
I'll strew the beaches with the mighty dead
And tinge the lily of their features red.

Heccar.

When the loud shriekings of the hostile cry

Roughly salute my ear, enraged I'll fly;
Send the sharp arrow quivering thro' the heart
Chill the hot vitals with the venom'd dart;
Nor heed the shining steel or noisy smoke,
Gaira and Vengeance shall inspire the stroke.

Thomas Chatterton

Narva and Mored

Recite the loves of Narva and Mored
The priest of Chalma's triple idol said.
High from the ground the youthful warriors sprung,
Loud on the concave shell the lances rung:
In all the mystic mazes of the dance,
The youths of Banny's burning sands advance,
Whilst the soft virgin panting looks behind,
And rides upon the pinions of the wind;
Ascends the mountain's brow, and measures round
The steepy cliffs of Chalma's sacred ground,
Chalma, the god whose noisy thunders fly
Thro' the dark covering of the midnight sky,
Whose arm directs the close-embattled host,
And sinks the labouring vessels on the coast;
Chalma, whose excellence is known from far;
From Lupa's rocky hill to Calabar.
The guardian god of Afric and the isles,
Where nature in her strongest vigour smiles;
Where the blue blossom of the forky thorn,
Bends with the nectar of the op'ning morn:
Where ginger's aromatic, matted root,
Creep through the mead, and up the mountains shoot.
Three times the virgin, swimming on the breeze,
Danc'd in the shadow of the mystic trees:
When, like a dark cloud spreading to the view,
The first-born sons of war and blood pursue;
Swift as the elk they pour along the plain;
Swift as the flying clouds distilling rain.
Swift as the boundings of the youthful row,
They course around, and lengthen as they go.
Like the long chain of rocks, whose summits rise,
Far in the sacred regions of the skies;
Upon whose top the black'ning tempest lours,
Whilst down its side the gushing torrent pours,
Like the long cliffy mountains which extend
From Lorbar's cave, to where the nations end,
Which sink in darkness, thick'ning and obscure,
Impenetrable, mystic, and impure;
The flying terrors of the war advance,
And round the sacred oak, repeat the dance.
Furious they twist around the gloomy trees,
Like leaves in autumn, twirling with the breeze.
So when the splendor of the dying day
Darts the red lustre of the watery way;
Sudden beneath Toddida's whistling brink,
The circling billows in wild eddies sink,
Whirl furious round, and the loud bursting wave
Sinks down to Chalma's sacerdotal cave,
Explores the palaces on Zira's coast,
Where howls the war-song of the chieftain's ghost;
Where the artificer in realms below,
Gilds the rich lance, or beautifies the bow;

From the young palm tree spins the useful twine,
Or makes the teeth of elephants divine.
Where the pale children of the feeble sun,
In search of gold, thro' every climate run:
From burning heat to freezing torments go,
And live in all vicissitudes of woe.
Like the loud eddies of Toddida's sea,
The warriors circle the mysterious tree:
'Till spent with exercise they spread around
Upon the op'ning blossoms of the ground.
The priestess rising, sings the sacred tale,
And the loud chorus echoes thro' the dale.

Priestess

Far from the burning sands of Calabar;
Far from the lustre of the morning star;
Far from the pleasure of the holy morn;
Far from the blessedness of Chalma's horn:
Now rests the souls of Narva and Mored,
Laid in the dust, and number'd with the dead.
Dear are their memories to us, and long,
Long shall their attributes be known in song.
Their lives were transient as the meadow flow'r.
Ripen'd in ages, wither'd in an hour.
Chalma, reward them in his gloomy cave,
And open all the prisons of the grave.
Bred to the service of the godhead's throne,
And living but to serve his God alone,
Narva was beauteous as the opening day
When on the spangling waves the sunbeams play,
When the mackaw, ascending to the sky,
Views the bright splendour with a steady eye.
Tall, as the house of Chalma's dark retreat;
Compact and firm, as Rhadal Ynca's fleet,
Completely beauteous as a summer's sun,
Was Narva, by his excellence undone.
Where the soft Togla creeps along the meads,
Thro' scented Calamus and fragrant reeds;
Where the sweet Zinsa spreads its matted bed
Liv'd the still sweeter flower, the young Mored;
Black was her face, as Togla's hidden cell;
Soft as the moss where hissing adders dwell.
As to the sacred court she brought a fawn,
The sportive tenant of the spicy lawn,
She saw and loved! and Narva too forgot
His sacred vestment and his mystic lot.
Long had the mutual sigh, the mutual tear,
Burst from the breast and scorn'd confinement there.
Existence was a torment! O my breast!
Can I find accents to unfold the rest!
Lock'd in each others arms, from Hyga's cave,

They plung'd relentless to a wat'ry grave;
And falling murmured to the powers above,
"Gods! take our lives, unless we live to love."

Thomas Chatterton

Sly Dick

Sharp was the frost, the wind was high
And sparkling stars bedeck't the sky
Sly Dick in arts of cunning skill'd,
Whose rapine all his pockets fill'd,
Had laid him down to take his rest
And soothe with sleep his anxious breast.
'Twas thus a dark infernal sprite
A native of the blackest night,
Portending mischief to devise
Upon Sly Dick he cast his eyes;
Then straight descends the infernal sprite,
And in his chamber does alight;
In visions he before him stands,
And his attention he commands.
Thus spake the sprite-- hearken my friend,
And to my counsels now attend.
Within the garret's spacious dome
There lies a well stor'd wealthy room,
Well stor'd with cloth and stockings too,
Which I suppose will do for you,
First from the cloth take thou a purse,
For thee it will not be the worse,
A noble purse rewards thy pains,
A purse to hold thy filching gains;
Then for the stockings let them reeve
And not a scrap behind thee leave,
Five bundles for a penny sell
And pence to thee will come pell mell;
See it be done with speed and care
Thus spake the sprite and sunk in air.
When in the morn with thoughts erect
Sly Dick did on his dreams reflect,
Why faith, thinks he, 'tis something too,
It might-- perhaps-- it might be true,
I'll go and see-- away he hies,
And to the garret quick he flies,
Enters the room, cuts up the clothes
And after that reeves up the hose;
Then of the cloth he purses made,
Purses to hold his filching trade.

Thomas Chatterton

Song from Aella

O SING unto my roundelay,
O drop the briny tear with me;
Dance no more at holyday,
Like a running river be:
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Black his cryne as the winter night,
White his rode as the summer snow,
Red his face as the morning light,
Cold he lies in the grave below:
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Sweet his tongue as the throstle's note,
Quick in dance as thought can be,
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout;
O he lies by the willow-tree!
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Hark! the raven flaps his wing
In the brier'd dell below;
Hark! the death-owl loud doth sing
To the nightmares, as they go:
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

See! the white moon shines on high;
Whiter is my true-love's shroud:
Whiter than the morning sky,
Whiter than the evening cloud:
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Here upon my true-love's grave
Shall the barren flowers be laid;
Not one holy saint to save
All the coldness of a maid:
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

With my hands I'll dent the briers
Round his holy corse to gre:
Ouph and fairy, light your fires,
Here my body still shall be:

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Come, with acorn-cup and thorn,
Drain my heartes blood away;
Life and all its good I scorn,
Dance by night, or feast by day:
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Thomas Chatterton

The Advice

Revolving in their destin'd sphere,
The hours begin another year
As rapidly to fly;
Ah! think, Maria, (e'er in grey
Those auburn tresses fade away
So youth and beauty die.
Tho' now the captivating throng
Adore with flattery and song,
And all before you bow;
Whilst unattentive to the strain,
You hear the humble muse complain,
Or wreath your frowning brow.

Tho' poor Pitholeon's feeble line,
In opposition to the nine,
Still violates your name;
Tho' tales of passion meanly told,
As dull as Cumberland, as cold,
Strive to confess a flame.

Yet, when that bloom and dancing fire,
In silver'd rev'rence shall expire,
Aged, wrinkled, and defaced;
To keep one lover's flame alive,
Requires the genius of a Clive,
With Walpole's mental taste.

Tho' rapture wantons in your air,
Tho' beyond simile you're fair,
Free, affable, serene;
Yet still one attribute divine
Should in your composition shine--
Sincerity, I mean.

Tho' num'rous swains before you fall,
'Tis empty admiration all,
'Tis all that you require;
How momentary are their chains!
Like you, how unsincere the strains
Of those who but admire!

Accept, for once, advice from me,
And let the eye of censure see
Maria can be true;
No more for fools or empty beaux,
Heav'n's representatives disclose,
Or butterflies pursue.

Fly to your worthiest lover's arms,
To him resign your swelling charms,
And meet his gen'rous breast;
Or if Pitholeon suits your taste,

His muse with tattr'd fragments graced,
Shall read your cares to rest.

Thomas Chatterton

The Copernican System

The Sun revolving on his axis turns,
And with creative fire intensely burns;
Impell'd by forcive air, our Earth supreme,
Rolls with the planets round the solar gleam.
First Mercury completes his transient year,
Glowing, refulgent, with reflected glare;
Bright Venus occupies a wider way,
The early harbinger of night and day;
More distant still our globe terraqueous turns,
Nor chills intense, nor fiercely heated burns;
Around her rolls the lunar orb of light,
Trailing her silver glories through the night:
On the Earth's orbit see the various signs,
Mark where the Sun our year completing shines;
First the bright Ram his languid ray improves;
Next glaring watry thro' the Bull he moves;
The am'rous Twins admit his genial ray;
Now burning thro' the Crab he takes his way;
The Lion flaming bears the solar power;
The Virgin faints beneath the sultry show'r,
Now the just Balance weighs his equal force,
The slimy Serpent swelters in his course;
The sabled Archer clouds his languid face;
The Goat, with tempests, urges on his race;
Now in the Wat'rer his faint beams appear,
And the cold Fishes end the circling year.
Beyond our globe the sanguine Mars displays
A strong reflection of primoeval rays;
Next belted Jupiter far distant gleams,
Scarcely enlighten'd with the solar beams,
With four unfix'd receptacles of light,
He tours majestic thro' the spacious height:
But farther yet the tardy Saturn lags,
And five attendant Luminaries drags,
Investing with a double ring his pace,
He circles thro' immensity of space.
These are thy wondrous works, first source of Good!
Now more admir'd in being understood.

Thomas Chatterton

The Death of Nicou

On Tiber's banks, Tiber, whose waters glide
In slow meanders down to Gaigra's side;
And circling all the horrid mountain round,
Rushes impetuous to the deep profound;
Rolls o'er the ragged rocks with hideous yell;
Collects its waves beneath the earth's vast shell;
There for a while in loud confusion hurl'd,
It crumbles mountains down and shakes the world.
Till borne upon the pinions of the air,
Through the rent earth the bursting waves appear;
Fiercely propell'd the whiten'd billows rise,
Break from the cavern, and ascend the skies;
Then lost and conquered by superior force,
Through hot Arabia holds its rapid coursel
On Tiber's banks where scarlet jas'mines bloom,
And purple aloes shed a rich perfume;
Where, when the sun is melting in his heat,
The reeking tygers find a cool retreat;
Bask in the sedges, lose the sultry beam,
And wanton with their shadows in the stream;
On Tiber's banks, by sacred priests rever'd,
Where in the days of old a god appear'd;
'Twas in the dead of night, at Chalma's feast,
The tribe of Alra slept around the priest.
He spoke; as evening thunders bursting near,
His horrid accents broke upon the ear;
Attend, Alraddas, with your sacred priest!
This day the sun is rising in the east;
The sun, which shall illumine all the earth,
Now, now is rising, in a mortal birth.
He vanish'd like a vapour of the night,
And sunk away in a faint blaze of light.
Swift from the branches of the holy oak,
Horror, confusion, fear, and torment brake;
And still when midnight trims her mazy lamp,
They take their way through Tiber's wat'ry swamp.
On Tiber's banks, close ranked, a warring train,
Stretch'd to the distant edge of Galca's plain;
So when arrived at Gaigra's highest steep,
We view the wide expansion of the deep;
See in the gilding of her wat'ry robe,
The quick declension of the circling globe;
From the blue sea a chain of mountains rise,
Blended at once with water and with skies;
Beyond our sight in vast extension curl'd,
The check of waves, the guardians of the world.
Strong were the warriors, as the ghost of Cawn,
Who threw the Hill-of-archers to the lawn;
When the soft earth at his appearance fled;
And rising billows play'd around his head;
When a strong tempest rising from the main,
Dashed the full clouds, unbroken on the plain.

Nicou, immortal in the sacred song,
Held the red sword of war, and led the strong;
From his own tribe the sable warriors came,
Well try'd in battle, and well known in fame.
Nicou, descended from the god of war,
Who lived coeval with the morning star;
Narada was his name; who cannot tell
How all the world through great Narada fell!
Vichon, the god who ruled above the skies,
Look'd, on Narada, but with envious eyes;
The warrior dared him, ridiculed his might,
Bent his white bow, and summon'd him to fight.
Vichon, disdainful, bade his lightnings fly,
And scatter'd burning arrows in the sky;
Threw down a star the armour of his feet,
To burn the air with supernat'ral heat;
Bid a loud tempest roar beneath the ground;
Lifted him up, and bore him thro' the sea.
The waters still ascending fierce and high,
He tower'd into the chambers of the sky;
There Vichon sat, his armour on his bed,
He thought Narada with the mighty dead.
Before his seat the heavenly warrior stands,
The lightning quiv'ring in his yellow hands.
The god astonish'd dropt; hurl'd from the shore,
He dropt to torments, and to rise no more.

Head-long he falls; 'tis his own arms compel.
Condemn'd in ever-burning fires to dwell.
From this Narada, mighty Nicou sprung;
The mighty Nicou, furious, wild and young.
Who led th'embattled archers to the field,
And more a thunderbolt upon his shield;
That shield his glorious father died to gain,
When the white warriors fled along the plain,
When the full sails could not provoke the flood,
Till Nicou came and swell'd the seas with blood.
Slow at the end of his robust array,
The mighty warrior pensive took his way;
Against the son of Nair, the young Rorest,
Once the companion of his youthful breast.
Strong were the passions of the son of Nair,
Strong, as the tempest of the evening air.
Insatiate in desire; fierce as the boar;
Firm in resolve as Cannie's rocky shore.
Long had the gods endeavour'd to destroy,
All Nicou's friendship, happiness, and joy:
They sought in vain, 'till Vicat, Vichon's son,
Never in feats of wickedness outdone,
Saw Nica, sister to the Mountain king,
Drest beautiful, with all the flow'rs of spring;
He saw, and scatter'd poison in her eyes;

From limb to limb in varied forms he flies;
Dwelt on her crimson lip, and added grace
To every glossy feature of her face.
Rorest was fir'd with passion at the sight.
Friendship and honor, sunk to Vicat's right;
He saw, he lov'd, and burning with desire,
Bore the soft maid from brother, sister, sire.
Pining with sorrow, Nica faded, died,
Like a fair alow, in its morning pride.
This brought the warrior to the bloody mead,
And sent to young Rorest the threat'ning reed.
He drew his army forth: Oh, need I tell!
That Nicou conquer'd, and the lover fell;
His breathless army mantled all the plain;
And Death sat smiling on the heaps of slain.
The battle ended, with his reeking dart,
The pensive Nicou pierc'd his beating heart;
And to his mourning valiant warriors cry'd,
I, and my sister's ghost are satisfy'd.

Thomas Chatterton

The Methodist

Says Tom to Jack, 'tis very odd,
These representatives of God,
In color, way of life and evil,
Should be so very like the devil.
Jack, understand, was one of those,
Who mould religion in the rose,
A red hot methodist; his face
Was full of puritanic grace,
His loose lank hair, his slow gradation,
Declared a late regeneration;
Among the daughters long renown'd,
For standing upon holy ground;
Never in carnal battle beat,
Tho' sometimes forced to a retreat.
But C_____t, hero as he is,
Knight of incomparable phiz,
When pliant Doxy seems to yield,
Courageously forsakes the field.
Jack, or to write more gravely, John,
Thro' hills of Wesley's works had gone;
Could sing one hundred hymns by rote;
Hymns which would sanctify the throat;
But some indeed composed so oddly,
You'd swear 'twas bawdy songs made godly.

Thomas Chatterton

The Resignation

O God, whose thunder shakes the sky,
Whose eye this atom globe surveys,
To thee, my only rock, I fly,
Thy mercy in thy justice praise.

The mystic mazes of thy will,
The shadows of celestial light,
Are past the pow'r of human skill,--
But what th' Eternal acts is right.

O teach me in the trying hour,
When anguish swells the dewy tear,
To still my sorrows, own thy pow'r,
Thy goodness love, thy justice fear.

If in this bosom aught but Thee
Encroaching sought a boundless sway,
Omniscience could the danger see,
And Mercy look the cause away.

Then why, my soul, dost thou complain?
Why drooping seek the dark recess?
Shake off the melancholy chain.
For God created all to bless.

But ah! my breast is human still;
The rising sigh, the falling tear,
My languid vitals' feeble rill,
The sickness of my soul declare.

But yet, with fortitude resigned,
I'll thank th' inflicter of the blow;
Forbid the sigh, compose my mind,
Nor let the gush of mis'ry flow.

The gloomy mantle of the night,
Which on my sinking spirit steals,
Will vanish at the morning light,
Which God, my East, my sun reveals.

Thomas Chatterton