

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Thomas Parnell**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## A Hymn for Evening

The beam-repelling mists arise,  
And evening spreads obscurer skies;  
The twilight will the night forerun,  
And night itself be soon begun.  
Upon thy knees devoutly bow,  
And pray the Lord of glory now  
To fill thy breast, or deadly sin  
May cause a blinder night within.  
And whether pleasing vapours rise  
Which gently dim the closing eyes,  
Which make the weary members bless'd  
With sweet refreshment in their rest,  
Or whether spirits in the brain  
Dispel their soft embrace again,  
And on my watchful bed I stay,  
Forsook by sleep and waiting day,  
Be God for ever in my view  
And never He forsake me, too;  
But, still as day concludes in night  
To break again with new-born light,  
His wondrous bounty let me find  
With still a more enlighten'd mind  
When grace and love in one agree,  
Grace from God, and love from me,  
Grace that will from heaven inspire,  
Love that seals it with desire,  
Grace and love that mingle beams,  
And fill me with encreasing flames.  
Thou that hast Thy palace far  
Above the moon and every star,  
Thou that sittest on a throne  
To which the night was never known,  
Regard my voice and make me bless'd,  
By kindly granting its request.  
If thoughts on Thee my soul employ,  
My darkness will afford me joy,  
'Till Thou shalt call, and I shall soar,  
And part with darkness evermore.

Thomas Parnell

## A Hymn for Morning

See the star that leads the day  
Rising shoots a golden ray,  
To make the shades of darkness go  
From heaven above and earth below;  
And warn us early with the sight  
To leave the beds of silent night,  
From a heart sincere and sound  
From its very deepest ground,  
Send devotion up on high  
Wing'd with heat to reach the sky.  
See the time for sleep has run,  
Rise before, or with the sun,  
Lift thine hands and humbly pray  
The fountain of eternal day,  
That as the light serenely fair  
Illustrates all the tracts of air,  
The sacred spirit so may rest  
With quick'ning beams upon thy breast,  
And kindly clean it all within  
From darker blemishes of sin,  
And shine with grace until we view  
The realm it gilds with glory, too.  
See the day that dawns in air,  
Brings along its toil and care;  
From the lap of night it springs  
With heaps of business on its wings;  
Prepare to meet them in a mind  
That bows submissively resign'd,  
That would to works appointed fall,  
And knows that God has order'd all.  
And whether with a small repast  
We break our sober morning fast,  
Or in our thoughts and houses lay  
The future methods of the day,  
Or early walk abroad to meet  
Our business, with industrious feet,  
Whate'er we think, whate'er we do,  
His glory still be kept in view.  
O Giver of eternal bliss,  
Heavenly Father, grant me this;  
Grant it all as well as me,  
All whose hearts are fix'd on Thee,  
Who revere Thy Son above,  
Who Thy sacred Spirit love.

Thomas Parnell

## A Hymn for Noon

The sun is swiftly mounted high;  
It glitters in the southern sky;  
Its beams with force and glory beat,  
And fruitful earth is fill'd with heat.  
Father, also with Thy fire  
Warm the cold, the dead desire,  
And make the sacred love of Thee  
Within my soul a sun to me.  
Let it shine so fairly bright  
That nothing else be took for light,  
That worldly charms be seen to fade,  
And in its lustre find a shade.  
Let it strongly shine within  
To scatter all the clouds of sin,  
That drive when gusts of passion rise  
And intercept it from our eyes.  
Let its glory more than vie  
With the sun that lights the sky;  
Let it swiftly mount in air,  
Mount with that, and leave it there,  
And soar with more aspiring flight  
To realms of everlasting light.  
Thus, while here I'm forc'd to be,  
I daily wish to live with Thee,  
And feel that union which Thy love  
Will, after death, complete above.  
From my soul I send my prayer;  
Great creator, bow Thine ear;  
Thou for whose propitious sway  
The world was taught to see the day,  
Who spake the word and earth begun  
And show'd its beauties in the sun;  
With pleasure I Thy creatures view,  
And would with good affection, too,  
Good affection sweetly free,  
Loose from them and move to Thee;  
O teach me due returns to give,  
And to Thy glory let me live,  
And then my days shall shine the more  
Or pass more blessed than before.

Thomas Parnell

## A Hymn to Contentment

Lovely, lasting peace of mind!  
Sweet delight of human-kind!  
Heavenly-born, and bred on high,  
To crown the fav'rites of the sky  
With more of happiness below,  
Than victors in a triumph know!  
Whither, O whither art thou fled,  
To lay thy meek, contented head;  
What happy region dost thou please  
To make the seat of calms and ease!

Ambition searches all its sphere  
Of pomp and state, to meet thee there.  
Increasing Avarice would find  
Thy presence in its gold enshrin'd.  
The bold advent'rer ploughs his way  
Through rocks amidst the foaming sea,  
To gain thy love; and then perceives  
Thou wert not in the rocks and waves.  
The silent heart which grief assails,  
Treads soft and lonesome o'er the vales,  
Sees daisies open, rivers run,  
And seeks (as I have vainly done)  
Amusing thought; but learns to know  
That solitude's the nurse of woe.  
No real happiness is found  
In trailing purple o'er the ground;  
Or in a soul exalted high,  
To range the circuit of the sky,  
Converse with stars above, and know  
All nature in its forms below;  
The rest it seeks, in seeking dies,  
And doubts at last, for knowledge, rise.

Lovely, lasting peace, appear!  
This world itself, if thou art here,  
Is once again with Eden blest,  
And man contains it in his breast.

'Twas thus, as under shade I stood,  
I sung my wishes to the wood,  
And lost in thought, no more perceiv'd  
The branches whisper as they wav'd:  
It seem'd, as all the quiet place  
Confess'd the presence of the Grace.  
When thus she spoke--"Go rule thy will,  
Bid thy wild passions all be still,  
Know God--and bring thy heart to know  
The joys which from religion flow:  
Then ev'ry Grace shall prove its guest,  
And I'll be there to crown the rest."

Oh! by yonder mossy seat,  
In my hours of sweet retreat,  
Might I thus my soul employ,  
With sense of gratitude and joy!  
Rais'd as ancient prophets were,  
In heavenly vision, praise, and pray'r;  
Pleasing all men, hurting none,  
Pleas'd and bless'd with God alone:  
Then while the gardens take my sight,  
With all the colours of delight;  
While silver waters glide along,  
To please my ear, and court my song;  
I'll lift my voice, and tune my string,  
And thee, great source of nature, sing.

The sun that walks his airy way,  
To light the world, and give the day;  
The moon that shines with borrow'd light;  
The stars that gild the gloomy night;  
The seas that roll unnumber'd waves;  
The wood that spreads its shady leaves;  
The field whose ears conceal the grain,  
The yellow treasure of the plain;  
All of these, and all I see,  
Should be sung, and sung by me:  
They speak their maker as they can,  
But want and ask the tongue of man.

Go search among your idle dreams,  
Your busy or your vain extremes;  
And find a life of equal bliss,  
Or own the next begun in this.

Thomas Parnell

## A Night-piece on Death

By the blue taper's trembling light,  
No more I waste the wakeful night,  
Intent with endless view to pore  
The schoolmen and the sages o'er:  
Their books from wisdom widely stray,  
Or point at best the longest way.  
I'll seek a readier path, and go  
Where wisdom's surely taught below.

How deep yon azure dyes the sky!  
Where orbs of gold unnumber'd lie,  
While through their ranks in silver pride  
The nether crescent seems to glide!  
The slumb'ring breeze forgets to breathe,  
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,  
Where once again the spangled show  
Descends to meet our eyes below.  
The grounds which on the right aspire,  
In dimness from the view retire:  
The left presents a place of graves,  
Whose wall the silent water laves.  
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight  
Among the livid gleams of night.  
There pass with melancholy state,  
By all the solemn heaps of fate,  
And think, as softly-sad you tread  
Above the venerable dead,  
"Time was, like thee they life possest,  
And time shall be, that thou shalt rest."

Those graves, with bending osier bound,  
That nameless heave the crumpled ground,  
Quick to the glancing thought disclose,  
Where toil and poverty repose.

The flat smooth stones that bear a name,  
The chisel's slender help to fame,  
(Which ere our set of friends decay  
Their frequent steps may wear away,)  
A middle race of mortals own,  
Men, half ambitious, all unknown.

The marble tombs that rise on high,  
Whose dead in vaulted arches lie,  
Whose pillars swell with sculptur'd stones,  
Arms, angels, epitaphs, and bones,  
These (all the poor remains of state)  
Adorn the rich, or praise the great;  
Who, while on earth in fame they live,  
Are senseless of the fame they give.

Ha! while I gaze, pale Cynthia fades,

The bursting earth unveils the shades!  
All slow, and wan, and wrapp'd with shrouds  
They rise in visionary crowds,  
And all with sober accent cry,  
"Think, mortal, what it is to die."

Now from yon black and fun'ral yew,  
That bathes the charnel-house with dew,  
Methinks I hear a voice begin;  
(Ye ravens, cease your croaking din;  
Ye tolling clocks, no time resound  
O'er the long lake and midnight ground)  
It sends a peal of hollow groans,  
Thus speaking from among the bones.

"When men my scythe and darts supply,  
How great a king of fears am I!  
They view me like the last of things:  
They make, and then they dread, my stings.  
Fools! if you less provok'd your fears,  
No more my spectre form appears.  
Death's but a path that must be trod,  
If man would ever pass to God;  
A port of calms, a state of ease  
From the rough rage of swelling seas.

"Why then thy flowing sable stoles,  
Deep pendant cypress, mourning poles,  
Loose scarfs to fall athwart thy weeds,  
Long palls, drawn hearses, cover'd steeds,  
And plumes of black, that, as they tread,  
Nod o'er the scutcheons of the dead?

"Nor can the parted body know,  
Nor wants the soul, these forms of woe.  
As men who long in prison dwell,  
With lamps that glimmer round the cell,  
Whene'er their suff'ring years are run,  
Spring forth to greet the glitt'ring sun:  
Such joy though far transcending sense,  
Have pious souls at parting hence.  
On earth, and in the body plac'd,  
A few, and evil years they waste;  
But when their chains are cast aside,  
See the glad scene unfolding wide,  
Clap the glad wing, and tow'r away,  
And mingle with the blaze of day."

Thomas Parnell

## **An Elegy, To an Old Beauty**

In vain, poor Nymph, to please our youthful sight  
You sleep in cream and frontlets all the night,  
Your face with patches soil, with paint repair,  
Dress with gay gowns, and shade with foreign hair.  
If truth in spite of manners must be told,  
Why, really fifty-five is something old.

Once you were young; or one, whose life's so long  
She might have born my mother, tells me wrong.  
And once (since Envy's dead before you die,)  
The women own, you play'd a sparkling eye,  
Taught the light foot a modish little trip,  
And pouted with the prettiest purple lip --

To some new charmer are the roses fled,  
Which blew, to damask all thy cheek with red;  
Youth calls the Graces there to fix their reign,  
And airs by thousands fill their easy train.  
So parting Summer bids her flow'ry prime  
Attend the sun to dress some foreign clime,  
While with'ring seasons in succession, here,  
Strip the gay gardens, and deform the year.

But thou (since Nature bids) the world resign,  
'Tis now thy daughter's daughter's time to shine.  
With more address, (or such as pleases more)  
She runs her female exercises o'er,  
Unfurls or closes, raps or turns the Fan,  
And smiles, or blushes at the creature Man.  
With quicker life, as guilded coaches pass,  
In sideling courtesy she drops the glass.

With better strength, on visit-days she bears  
To mount her fifty flights of ample stairs.  
Her mein, her shape, her temper, eyes and tongue  
Are sure to conquer. -- for the rogue is young;  
And all that's madly wild, or oddly gay,  
We call it only pretty Fanny's way.

Let time that makes you homely, make you sage,  
The sphere of wisdom is the sphere of age.  
'Tis true, when beauty dawns with early fire,  
And hears the flatt'ring tongues of soft desire,  
If not from virtue, from its gravest ways  
The soul with pleasing avocation strays.  
But beauty gone, 'tis easier to be wise;  
As harper better, by the loss of eyes.

Henceforth retire, reduce your roving airs,  
Haunt less the plays, and more the publick pray'rs,  
Reject the Mechlin Head, and gold brocade,  
Go pray, in sober Norwich Crape array'd.

Thy pendent diamonds let thy Fanny take,  
(Their trembling lustre shows how much you shake;)  
Or bid her wear thy necklace row'd with pearl,  
You'll find your Fanny an obedient girl.

So for the rest, with less incumbrance hung,  
You walk thro' life, unmingled with the young;  
And view the shade and substance as you pass  
With joint endeavour trifling at the glass,  
Or Folly drest, and rambling all her days,  
To meet her counterpart, and grow by praise:  
Yet still sedate your self, and gravely plain,  
You neither fret, nor envy at the vain.

'Twas thus (if Man with Woman we compare)  
The wise Athenian crost a glittering fair,  
Unmov'd by tongues and sights, he walk'd the place,  
Thro' tape, toys, tinsel, gimp, perfume, and lace;  
Then bends from Mars's Hill his awful eyes,  
And "What a world I never want?" he cries;  
But cries unheard: For Folly will be free.  
So parts the buzzing gaudy crowd, and he:  
As careless he for them, as they for him;  
He wrapt in wisdom, and they whirl'd by whim.

Thomas Parnell

## Hesiod: or, The Rise of Woman

What ancient times (those times we fancy wise)  
Have left on long record of woman's rise,  
What morals teach it, and what fables hide,  
What author wrote it, how that author dy'd  
All these I sing. In Greece they fram'd the tale  
(In Greece 'twas thought a woman might be frail);  
Ye modern beauties! where the Poet drew  
His softest pencil, thin he dreamt of you;  
And, warn'd by him, ye wanton pens beware  
How Heaven's concern'd to vindicate the fair.  
The case was Hesiod's; he the fable writ;  
Some think with meaning, some with idle wit:  
Perhaps 'tis either, as the ladies please;  
I wave the contest, and commence the lays.  
In days of yore (no matter what or when,  
'Twas ere the low creation swarm'd with men)  
That one Prometheus, sprung of heavenly birth,  
(Our Author's song can witness) liv'd on earth:  
He carv'd the turf to mould a manly frame,  
And stole from Jove his animating flame.  
The sly contrivance o'er Olympus ran,  
When thus the Monarch of the Stars began.  
O vers'd in arts! whose daring thoughts aspire,  
To kindle clay with never-dying fire!  
Enjoy thy glory past, that gift was thine;  
The next thy creature meets, be fairly mine:  
And such a gift, a vengeance so design'd,  
As suits the counsel of a God to find;  
A pleasing bosom-cheat, a specious ill,  
Which felt the curse, yet covets still to feel.  
He said, and Vulcan straight the Sire commands,  
To temper mortar with Etherial hands;  
In such a shape to mould a rising fair;  
As virgin goddesses are proud to wear;  
To make her eyes with diamond-water shine,  
And form her organs for a voice divine  
'Twas thus the Sire ordain'd; the Power obey'd;  
And work'd, and wonder'd at the work he made;  
The fairest, softest, sweetest frame beneath,  
Now made to seem, now more than seem to breathe.  
As Vulcan ends, the cheerful Queen of Charms  
Clasp'd the new-panting creature in her arms:  
From that embrace a fine complexion spread,  
Where mingled whiteness glow'd with softer red.  
Then in a kiss she breath'd her various arts,  
Of triffling prettily with wounded hearts;  
A mind for love, but still a changing mind;  
The lisp affected, and the glance design'd  
The sweet confusing blush, the secret wink,  
The gentle swimming walk, the courteous sink;  
The stare for strangeness fit, for scorn the frown;  
For decent yielding, looks declining down;

The practis'd languish, where well-feign'd desire  
 Would its own melting in a mutual fire;  
 Gay smiles to comfort; April showers to move;  
 And all the nature, all the art of love.  
 Gold scepter'd Juno next exalts the fair;  
 Her touch endows her with imperious air,  
 Self-valuing fancy, highly-crested pride,  
 Strong soverign will, and some desire to chide;  
 For which an eloquence, that aims to vex,  
 With native tropes of anger, arms the sex.  
 Minerva, skillful goddess, train'd the maid  
 To twirle the spindle by the twisting thread;  
 To fix the loom, instruct the reeds to part,  
 Cross the long weft, and close the web with art,  
 A useful gift; but what profuse expense,  
 What world of fashions, took its rise from hence!  
 Young Hermes next, a close contriving god,  
 Her brows encircled with his serpent rod;  
 Then plots and fair excuses fill'd her brain,  
 The views of breaking amorous vows for gain;  
 The price of favours; the designing arts  
 That aim at riches in contempt of hearts;  
 And, for a comfort in the marriage life,  
 The little pilfering temper of a wife.  
 Full on the fair his beams Apollo flung,  
 And fond persuasion tipp'd her easy tongue;  
 He gave her words, where oily flattery lays  
 The pleasing colours of the art of praise;,  
 And wit, to scandal equisitely prone  
 Which frets another's spleen to cure its own.  
 Those sacred Virgins<sup>1</sup> whom the bards revere  
 Tun'd all her voice, and shed a sweetness there,  
 To make her sense with double charms abound,  
 Or make her lively nonsense please by sound.  
 To dress the maid, the decent Graces brought  
 A robe in all the dies of beauty wrought,  
 And plac'd their boxes o'er a rich brocade,  
 Where pictured Loves on every cover play'd;  
 Then spread those implements that Vulcan's art  
 Had fram'd to merit Cytherea's heart;  
 The wire to curl, the close indented comb  
 To call the locks, that lightly wander, home;  
 And chief, the mirror, where the ravish'd maid  
 Beholds and loves her own reflected shade.  
 Fair Flora lent her stores; the purpled Hours  
 Confin'd her tresses with a wreath of flowers;  
 Within the wreath arose a radiant crown;  
 A veil pellucid hung depending down;  
 Back roll'd her azure veil with surpent fold,  
 The pursled border deck'd the floor with gold.  
 Her robe (which closely by the girdle brac'd  
 Reveal'd the beauties of a slender waist)

Flow'd to the feet, to copy Venus' air,  
 When Venus' statues have a robe to wear.  
 The new-sprung creature, finish'd thus for harms,  
 Adjusts her habit, practices her charms,  
 With blushes glows, or shines with lively smiles,  
 Confirms her will, or recollects her wiles:  
 Then, conscious of her worth, with easy pace  
 Glides by the glass, and turning views her face.  
 A finer flax than what they wrought before,  
 Through Time's deep cave, the Sister Fates explore,  
 Then fix the loom, their fingers nimbly weave,  
 And thus their toil prophetic songs deceive.  
 Flow from the rock, my flax! and swiftly flow,  
 Pursue thy thread; the spindle runs below.  
 A creature fond and changing, fair and vain,  
 The creature woman, rises now to reign.  
 New beauty blooms, a beauty form'd to fly;  
 New love begins, a love produc'd to die;  
 New parts distress the troubled scenes of life,  
 The fondling mistress, and the ruling wife.  
 "Men born to labour, all with pains provide;  
 Women have time to sacrifice to pride:  
 They want the care of man, their want they know,  
 And dress to please with heart-alluring show;  
 The show prevailing, for the sway contend,  
 And make a servant where they meet a friend.  
 Thus in a thousand wax-erected forts  
 A loitering race the painful bee supports;  
 From sun to sun, from bank to bank he flies,  
 With honey loads his bag, with wax his thighs;  
 Fly where he will, at home the race remain,  
 Prune the silk dress, and murmuring eat the gain.  
 Yet here and there we grant a gentle bride,  
 Whose temper betters by the father's side;  
 Unlike the rest that double human care,  
 Fond to relieve, or resolute to share:  
 Happy the man whom thus his stars advance!  
 The curse is general, but the blessing chance.  
 Thus sung the Sisters, while the Gods admire  
 Their beauteous creature, made for man in ire;  
 The young Pandora she, whom all contend  
 To make too perfect not to gain her end:  
 Then bid the winds, that fly to breathe the spring  
 Return to bear her on a gentle wing;  
 With wafting airs the winds obsequious blow,  
 And land the shining vengeance safe below.  
 A golden coffer in her hand she bore,  
 The present treacherous, but the bearer more;  
 'Twas fraught with pangs; for Jove ordain'd above  
 That gold should aid, and pangs attend on love.  
 Her gay descent the man perceiv'd afar,  
 Wondering he ran to catch the falling star:

But so surpris'd, as none but he can tell,  
 Who lov'd so quickly, and who lov'd so well.  
 O'er all his veins the wandering passion burns,  
 He calls her Nymph, and every Nymph by turns.  
 Her form to lovely Venus he prefers;  
 Or swears that Venus' must be such as hers.  
 She, proud to rule, yet strangely fram'd to teaze,  
 Neglects his offers while her airs she plays,  
 Shoots scornful glances from the bended frown,  
 In brisk disorder trips it up and down;  
 Then hums a careless tune to lay the storm,  
 And sits, and blushes, smiles, and yields in form.  
 "Now take what Jove design'd," she softly cry'd,  
 "This box they portion, and myself the bride."  
 Fir'd with the prospect of the double charms,  
 He snatch'd the box, and bride, with eager arms.  
 Unhappy man! to whom so bright she shone,  
 The fatal gift, her tempting self, unknown!  
 The winds were silent, all the waves asleep,  
 And heaven was trac'd upon the flattering deep:  
 But, whilst he looks unmindful of a storm,  
 And thinks the water wears a stable form,  
 What dreadful din around his ears shall rise!  
 What frowns confuse his picture of the skies!  
 At first the creature man was fram'd alone,  
 Lord of himself, and all the world his own.  
 For him the Nymphs in green forsook the woods,  
 For him the Nymphs in blue forsook the floods;  
 In vain the Satyrs rage, the Tritons rave,  
 They bore him heroes in the secret cave.  
 No care destroy'd, no sick disorder prey'd,  
 No bending age his sprightly form decay'd,  
 No wars were known, no females heard to rage,  
 And, Poets tell us, 'twas a golden age.  
 When woman came, those ills the box confin'd  
 Burst furious out, and poison'd all the wind,  
 From point to point, from pole to pole they flew,  
 Spread as they went, and in the progress grew:  
 the Nymphs regretting left the mortal race,  
 And altering nature wore a sickly face:  
 New terms of folly rose, new states of care;  
 New plagues to suffer, and to please, the Fair!  
 The days of whining, and of wild intrigues,  
 Commenc'd, or finish'd with the breach of leagues;  
 The mean designs of well-dissembled love;  
 The sordid matches never join'd above:  
 Abroad the labour, and at home the noise,  
 (Man's double sufferings for domestic joys)  
 The curse of jealousy; expense and strife;  
 Divorce, the public brand of shameful life;  
 The rival's sword; the qualm that takes the fair;  
 Disdain for passion, passion in despair --

These, and a thousand yet unnam'd, we find;  
 Ah fear the thousand yet unnam'd behind!  
 Thus on Parnassus tuneful Hesiod sung,  
 The mountains echoed, and the valley rung,  
 The sacred goves a fix'd attention show,  
 The crystal Helicon forebore to flow,  
 The sky grew bright, and (if his verse be true)  
 The Muses came to give the laurel too.  
 But what avail'd the verdant prize of wit,  
 If Love swore vengeance for the tales he writ?  
 Ye Fair offended, hear your friend relate  
 What heavy judgment prov'd the writer's fate,  
 Though when it happen'd no relation clears,  
 'Tis thought in five, or five and twenty years.  
 Where, dark and silent, with a twisted shade  
 the neighbouring woods a native arbour made,  
 There oft a tender pair, for amorous play  
 Returing, toy'd the ravish'd hours away;  
 A Locrian youth, the gentle Troilus he,  
 A fair Milesian, kind Evanthe she:  
 But swelling nature in a fatal hour  
 Betray'd the secrets of the conscious bower;  
 240 The dire disgrace her brothers count their own,  
 And track her steps to make its author known.  
 It chanc'd one evening, 'twas the lover's day,  
 Conceal'd in brakes the jealous kindred lay;  
 When Hesiod, wandering, mus'd along the plain,  
 245 And fix'd his seat where love had fix'd the scene;  
 A strong suspicion straight possess their mind,  
 (For Poets ever were a gentle kind)  
 But when Evanthe near the passage stood,  
 Flung back a doubtful look, and shot the wood,  
 "Now take (at once they cry) thy due reward,"  
 And, urg'd with erring rage, assault the Bard.  
 His corpse the sea receiv'd. The dolphins bore  
 ('Twas all the gods would do) the corpse to shore.  
 Methinks I view the dead with pitying eyes  
 And see the dreams of ancient wisdom rise;  
 I see the Muses round the body cry,  
 But hear a Cupid loudly laughing by;  
 He wheels his arrow with insulting hand,  
 And thus inscribes the moral on the sand.  
 "Here Hesiod lies: ye future Bards, beware  
 How far your moral tales incense the Fair.  
 Unlov'd, unloving, 'twas his fate to bleed;  
 Without his quiver, Cupid caus'd the deed:  
 He judg'd this turn of malice justly due,  
 And Hesiod dy'd for joys he never knew."

Thomas Parnell

## **My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free**

My days have been so wondrous free,  
The little birds that fly  
With careless ease from tree to tree,  
Were but as bless'd as I.

Ask gliding waters, if a tear  
Of mine increas'd their stream?  
Or ask the flying gales, if e'er  
I lent one sigh to them?

But now my former days retire,  
And I'm by beauty caught;  
The tender chains of sweet desire  
Are fix'd upon my thought.

Ye nightingales, ye twisting pines!  
Ye swains that haunt the grove!  
Ye gentle echoes, breezy winds!  
Ye close retreats of love!

With all of nature, all of art,  
Assist the dear design;  
Oh teach a young, unpractic'd heart  
To make my Nancy mine!

The very thought of change I hate,  
As much as of despair;  
Nor ever covet to be great,  
Unless it be for her.

'Tis true, the passion in my mind  
Is mix'd with soft distress;  
Yet while the fair I love is kind,  
I cannot wish it less.

Thomas Parnell

## Song

When thy beauty appears  
In its graces and airs  
All bright as an angel new dropp'd from the sky,  
At distance I gaze and am awed by my fears:  
So strangely you dazzle my eye!

But when without art  
Your kind thoughts you impart,  
When your love runs in blushes through every vein;  
When it darts from your eyes, when it pants in your heart,  
Then I know you're a woman again.

There 's a passion and pride  
In our sex (she replied),  
And thus, might I gratify both, I would do:  
Still an angel appear to each lover beside,  
But still be a woman to you.

Thomas Parnell

## The Hermit

Far in a wild, unknown to public view,  
From youth to age a rev'rend hermit grew;  
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,  
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well:  
Remote from man, with God he pass'd the days,  
Pray'r all his bus'ness, all his pleasure praise.

A life so sacred, such serene repose,  
Seem'd heav'n itself, till one suggestion rose;  
That vice should triumph, virtue vice obey,  
This sprung some doubt of Providence's sway:  
His hopes no more a certain prospect boast,  
And all the tenor of his soul is lost.  
So when a smooth expanse receives imprest  
Calm nature's image on its wat'ry breast,  
Down bend the banks, the trees depending grow,  
And skies beneath with answering colours glow:  
But if a stone the gentle scene divide,  
Swift ruffling circles curl on ev'ry side,  
And glimm'ring fragments of a broken sun,  
Banks, trees, and skies, in thick disorder run.

To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,  
To find if books, or swains, report it right,  
(For yet by swains alone the world he knew,  
Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew,)  
He quits his cell; the pilgrim-staff he bore,  
And fix'd the scallop in his hat before;  
Then with the sun a rising journey went,  
Sedate to think, and watching each event.

The morn was wasted in the pathless grass,  
And long and lonesome was the wild to pass;  
But when the southern sun had warm'd the day,  
A youth came posting o'er a crossing way;  
His raiment decent, his complexion fair,  
And soft in graceful ringlets wav'd his hair.  
Then near approaching, "Father, hail!" he cried;  
"And hail, my son," the rev'rend sire replied;  
Words follow'd words, from question answer flow'd,  
And talk of various kind deceiv'd the road;  
Till each with other pleas'd, and loth to part,  
While in their age they differ, join in heart  
Thus stands an aged elm in ivy bound,  
Thus youthful ivy clasps an elm around.

Now sunk the sun; the closing hour of day  
Came onward, mantled o'er with sober gray;  
Nature in silence bid the world repose;  
When near the road a stately palace rose:  
There by the moon through ranks of trees they pass,  
Whose verdure crown'd their sloping sides of grass.

It chanc'd the noble master of the dome  
Still made his house the wand'ring stranger's home;  
Yet still the kindness, from a thirst of praise,  
Prov'd the vain flourish of expensive ease.  
The pair arrive: the liv'ried servants wait;  
Their lord receives them at the pompous gate.  
The table groans with costly piles of food,  
And all is more than hospitably good.  
Then led to rest, the day's long toil they drown,  
Deep sunk in sleep, and silk, and heaps of down.

At length 'tis morn, and at the dawn of day,  
Along the wide canals the zephyrs play;  
Fresh o'er the gay parterres the breezes creep,  
And shake the neighb'ring wood to banish sleep.  
Up rise the guests, obedient to the call:  
An early banquet deck'd the splendid hall;  
Rich luscious wine a golden goblet grac'd,  
Which the kind master forc'd the guests to taste.  
Then, pleas'd and thankful, from the porch they go;  
And, but the landlord, none had cause of woe;  
His cup was vanish'd; for in secret guise  
The younger guest purloin'd the glitt'ring prize.

As one who spies a serpent in his way,  
Glist'ning and basking in the summer ray,  
Disorder'd stops to shun the danger near,  
Then walks with faintness on, and looks with fear;  
So seem'd the sire; when far upon the road,  
The shining spoil his wily partner show'd.  
He stopp'd with silence, walk'd with trembling heart,  
And much he wish'd, but durst not ask to part:  
Murmuring he lifts his eyes, and thinks it hard,  
That gen'rous actions meet a base reward.

While thus they pass, the sun his glory shrouds,  
The changing skies hang out their sable clouds;  
A sound in air presag'd approaching rain,  
And beasts to covert scud across the plain.  
Warn'd by the signs, the wand'ring pair retreat,  
To seek for shelter at a neighb'ring seat.  
'Twas built with turrets, on a rising ground,  
And strong, and large, and unimprov'd around;  
Its owner's temper, tim'rous and severe,  
Unkind and griping, caus'd a desert there.

As near the miser's heavy doors they drew,  
Fierce rising gusts with sudden fury blew;  
The nimble lightning mix'd with showers began,  
And o'er their heads loud rolling thunders ran.  
Here long they knock, but knock or call in vain,  
Driven by the wind, and batter'd by the rain.

At length some pity warm'd the master's breast,  
('Twas then his threshold first receiv'd a guest,)  
Slow creaking turns the door with jealous care,  
And half he welcomes in the shiv'ring pair;  
One frugal faggot lights the naked walls,  
And Nature's fervour through their limbs recalls:  
Bread of the coarsest sort, with eager wine,  
Each hardly granted, serv'd them both to dine;  
And when the tempest first appear'd to cease,  
A ready warning bid them part in peace.  
With still remark the pond'ring hermit view'd  
In one so rich, a life so poor and rude;  
And why should such, within himself he cried,  
Lock the lost wealth a thousand want beside?  
But what new marks of wonder soon took place  
In every settling feature of his face,  
When from his vest the young companion bore  
That cup, the gen'rous landlord own'd before,  
And paid profusely with the precious bowl,  
The stinted kindness of this churlish soul!

But now the clouds in airy tumult fly;  
The sun emerging opes an azure sky;  
A fresher green the smelling leaves display,  
And glitt'ring as they tremble, cheer the day:  
The weather courts them from their poor retreat,  
And the glad master bolts the wary gate.

While hence they walk, the pilgrim's bosom wrought:  
With all the travel of uncertain thought;  
His partner's acts without their cause appear,  
'Twas there a vice, and seem'd a madness here:  
Detesting that, and pitying this, he goes,  
Lost and confounded with the various shows.

Now night's dim shades again involve the sky,  
Again the wanderers want a place to lie,  
Again they search, and find a lodging nigh:  
The soil improv'd around, the mansion neat,  
And neither poorly low, nor idly great:  
It seem'd to speak its master's turn of mind,  
Content, and not for praise, but virtue kind.

Hither the walkers turn with weary feet,  
Then bless the mansion, and the master greet:  
Their greeting fair bestow'd, with modest guise,  
The courteous master hears, and thus replies:

"Without a vain, without a grudging heart,  
To Him who gives us all, I yield a part;  
From Him you come, for Him accept it here,  
A frank and sober, more than costly cheer."

He spoke, and bid the welcome table spread,  
Then talk'd of virtue till the time of bed,  
When the grave household round his hall repair,  
Warn'd by a bell, and close the hours with pray'r.

At length the world, renew'd by calm repose,  
Was strong for toil, the dappled morn arose.  
Before the pilgrims part, the younger crept  
Near the clos'd cradle where an infant slept,  
And writh'd his neck: the landlord's little pride,  
O strange return! grew black, and gasp'd, and died!  
Horrors of horrors! what! his only son!  
How look'd our hermit when the fact was done?  
Not hell, though hell's black jaws in sunder part,  
And breathe blue fire, could more assault his heart.

Confus'd, and struck with silence at the deed,  
He flies, but, trembling, fails to fly with speed.  
His steps the youth pursues: the country lay  
Perplex'd with roads, a servant show'd the way:  
A river cross'd the path; the passage o'er  
Was nice to find; the servant trod before:  
Long arms of oak an open bridge supplied,  
And deep the waves beneath the bending glide.  
The youth, who seem'd to watch a time to sin,  
Approach'd the careless guide, and thrust him in;  
Plunging he falls, and rising lifts his head,  
Then flashing turns, and sinks among the dead.

Wild, sparkling rage inflames the father's eyes,  
He bursts the bands of fear, and madly cries,  
"Detested wretch!"--but scarce his speech began,  
When the strange partner seem'd no longer man:  
His youthful face grew more serenely sweet;  
His robe turn'd white, and flow'd upon his feet,  
Fair rounds of radiant points invest his hair;  
Celestial odours breathe through purpled air;  
And wings, whose colours glitter'd on the day,  
Wide at his back their gradual plumes display.  
The form ethereal bursts upon his sight,  
And moves in all the majesty of light.

Though loud at first the pilgrim's passion grew,  
Sudden he gaz'd, and wist not what to do;  
Surprise in secret chains his words suspends,  
And in a calm his settling temper ends.  
But silence here the beauteous angel broke,  
(The voice of music ravish'd as he spoke).

"Thy prayer, thy praise, thy life to vice unknown,  
In sweet memorial rise before the throne:  
These charms, success in our bright region find,

And force an angel down, to calm thy mind;  
For this, commission'd, I forsook the sky,  
Nay, cease to kneel--thy fellow-servant I.

"Then know the truth of government divine,  
And let these scruples be no longer thine.

"The Maker justly claims that world He made,  
In this the right of Providence is laid;  
Its sacred majesty through all depends  
On using second means to work his ends:  
'Tis thus, withdrawn in state from human eye,  
The Pow'r exerts his attributes on high,  
Your actions uses, nor controls your will,  
And bids the doubting sons of men be still.

"What strange events can strike with more surprise,  
Than those which lately struck thy wond'ring eyes?  
Yet taught by these, confess th' Almighty just,  
And where you can't unriddle, learn to trust!

"The great vain man, who far'd on costly food,  
Whose life was too luxurious to be good;  
Who made his iv'ry stands with goblets shine,  
And forc'd his guests to morning draughts of wine,  
Has, with the cup, the graceless custom lost,  
And still he welcomes, but with less of cost.

"The mean, suspicious wretch, whose bolted door  
Ne'er mov'd in duty to the wand'ring poor;  
With him I left the cup, to teach his mind  
That Heav'n can bless, if mortals will be kind.  
Conscious of wanting worth, he views the bowl,  
And feels compassion touch his grateful soul.  
Thus artists melt the sullen ore of lead,  
With heaping coals of fire upon its head;  
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,  
And loose from dross, the silver runs below.

"Long had our pious friend in virtue trod,  
But now the child half-wean'd his heart from God;  
(Child of his age) for him he liv'd in pain,  
And measur'd back his steps to earth again.  
To what excesses had this dotage run!  
But God, to save the father, took the son.  
To all but thee, in fits he seem'd to go,  
(And 'twas my ministry to deal the blow).  
The poor fond parent, humbled in the dust,  
Now owns in tears the punishment was just.

"But how had all his fortune felt a wrack,  
Had that false servant sped in safety back!

This night his treasur'd heaps he meant to steal,  
And what a fund of charity would fail!

"Thus Heav'n instructs thy mind: this trial o'er,  
Depart in peace, resign, and sin no more."

On sounding pinions here the youth withdrew,  
The sage stood wondering as the seraph flew.  
Thus look'd Elisha, when, to mount on high,  
His master took the chariot of the sky;  
The fiery pomp ascending left the view;  
The prophet gaz'd, and wish'd to follow too.

The bending hermit here a prayer begun,  
"Lord! as in heav'n, on earth thy will be done!"  
Then gladly turning, sought his ancient place,  
And pass'd a life of piety and peace.

Thomas Parnell