

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Walter Savage Landor**

**- poems -**

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### **Walter Savage Landor (1775 - 1864)**

Keats was the son of a livery stable keeper who died when he was eight; his mother died when he was 14. Keats remained deeply attached to his two brothers and sister for the rest of his life, nursing his brother Tom up until his death. He began writing in 1814 with an Imitation of Spenser, but his first published poem was *O Solitude*, published by Leigh Hunt in his journal *The Examiner* in 1816. In 1818 Keats met and fell passionately in love with Fanny Brawne. However the affair was plagued with difficulties and although they became engaged they were never able to marry. Keats's disappointment about this was an intense and tragic force in his life, and 1818-1819 saw the most prolific period of his writing. His poetry shows many of the themes which came to be characteristic of romanticism: a concern with dreams and mediaeval themes; images of the natural world and perhaps most centrally a dynamic balance between the ugliness and the beauty of existence together with vivid and sensuous imagery.

Keats had given up his training as a medical student at Guy's to earn a precarious living as a poet and although his final volume of poems received some good reviews, he had to put up with vicious and repeated attacks by Lockhart in *Blackwood's* and *The Quarterly Review*. He died, aged 26, before receiving the recognition he sought and deserved.

## **Absence**

HERE, ever since you went abroad,  
If there be change no change I see:  
I only walk our wonted road,  
The road is only walk'd by me.

Yes; I forgot; a change there is--  
Was it of that you bade me tell?  
I catch at times, at times I miss  
The sight, the tone, I know so well.

Only two months since you stood here?  
Two shortest months? Then tell me why  
Voices are harsher than they were,  
And tears are longer ere they dry.

Walter Savage Landor

## Acon and Rhodope

The Year's twelve daughters had in turn gone by,  
Of measured pace tho' varying mien all twelve,  
Some froward, some sedater, some adorn'd  
For festival, some reckless of attire.  
The snow had left the mountain-top; fresh flowers  
Had withered in the meadow; fig and prune  
Hung wrinkling; the last apple glow'd amid  
Its freckled leaves; and weary oxen blinkt  
Between the trodden corn and twisted vine,  
Under whose bunches stood the empty crate,  
To creak ere long beneath them carried home.  
This was the season when twelve months before,  
O gentle Hamadryad, true to love!  
Thy mansion, thy dim mansion in the wood  
Was blasted and laid desolate: but none  
Dared violate its precincts, none dared pluck  
The moss beneath it, which alone remain'd  
Of what was thine.

Old Thallinos sat mute  
In solitary sadness. The strange tale  
(Not until Rhaicos died, but then the whole)  
Echion had related, whom no force  
Could ever make look back upon the oaks.  
The father said "Echion! thou must weigh,  
Carefully, and with steady hand, enough  
(Although no longer comes the store as once!)  
Of wax to burn all day and night upon  
That hollow stone where milk and honey lie:  
So may the Gods, so may the dead, be pleas'd!"  
Thallinos bore it thither in the morn,  
And lighted it and left it.

First of those  
Who visited upon this solemn day  
The Hamadryad's oak, were Rhodope  
And Acon; of one age, one hope, one trust.  
Graceful was she as was the nymph whose fate  
She sorrowed for: he slender, pale, and first  
Lapt by the flame of love: his father's lands  
Were fertile, herds lowed over them afar.  
Now stood the two aside the hollow stone  
And lookt with stedfast eyes toward the oak  
Shivered and black and bare.

"May never we  
Love as they loved!" said Acon. She at this  
Smiled, for he said not what he meant to say,  
And thought not of its bliss, but of its end.  
He caught the flying smile, and blusht, and vow'd  
Nor time nor other power, whereto the might  
Of love hath yielded and may yield again,

Should alter his.

The father of the youth  
Wanted not beauty for him, wanted not  
Song, that could lift earth's weight from off his heart,  
Discretion, that could guide him thro' the world,  
Innocence, that could clear his way to heaven;  
Silver and gold and land, not green before  
The ancestral gate, but purple under skies  
Bending far off, he wanted for his heir.

Fathers have given life, but virgin heart  
They never gave; and dare they then control  
Or check it harshly? dare they break a bond  
Girt round it by the holiest Power on high?

Acon was grieved, he said, grieved bitterly,  
But Acon had complied . . 'twas dutiful!

Crush thy own heart, Man! Man! but fear to wound  
The gentler, that relies on thee alone,  
By thee created, weak or strong by thee;  
Touch it not but for worship; watch before  
Its sanctuary; nor leave it till are closed  
The temple-doors and the last lamp is spent.

Rhodope, in her soul's waste solitude,  
Sate mournful by the dull-resounding sea,  
Often not hearing it, and many tears  
Had the cold breezes hardened on her cheek.  
Meanwhile he sauntered in the wood of oaks,  
Nor shun'd to look upon the hollow stone  
That held the milk and honey, nor to lay  
His plighted hand where recently 'twas laid  
Opposite hers, when finger playfully  
Advanced and pusht back finger, on each side.  
He did not think of this, as she would do  
If she were there alone.

The day was hot;  
The moss invited him; it cool'd his cheek,  
It cool'd his hands; he thrust them into it  
And sank to slumber. Never was there dream  
Divine as his. He saw the Hamadryad.  
She took him by the arm and led him on  
Along a valley, where profusely grew  
The smaller lilies with their pendent bells,  
And, hiding under mint, chill drosera,  
The violet shy of butting cyclamen,  
The feathery fern, and, browser of moist banks,  
Her offspring round her, the soft strawberry;  
The quivering spray of ruddy tamarisk,

The oleander's light-hair'd progeny  
Breathing bright freshness in each other's face,  
And graceful rose, bending her brow, with cup  
Of fragrance and of beauty, boon for Gods.  
The fragrance fill'd his breast with such delight  
His senses were bewildered, and he thought  
He saw again the face he most had loved.  
He stopt: the Hamadryad at his side  
Now stood between; then drew him farther off:  
He went, compliant as before: but soon  
Verdure had ceast: altho' the ground was smooth,  
Nothing was there delightful. At this change  
He would have spoken, but his guide repress  
All questioning, and said,

"Weak youth! what brought  
Thy footstep to this wood, my native haunt,  
My life-long residence? this bank, where first  
I sate with him . . . the faithful (now I know,  
Too late!) the faithful Rhaicos. Haste thee home;  
Be happy, if thou canst; but come no more  
Where those whom death alone could sever, died."

He started up: the moss whereon he slept  
Was dried and withered: deadlier paleness spread  
Over his cheek; he sickened: and the sire  
Had land enough; it held his only son.

Walter Savage Landor

## Alciphron and Leucippe

An ancient chestnut's blossoms threw  
Their heavy odour over two:  
Leucippe, it is said, was one;  
The other, then, was Alciphron.  
'Come, come! why should we stand beneath?  
This hollow tree's unwholesome breath?'  
Said Alciphron, 'here's not a blade  
Of grass or moss, and scanty shade.  
Come; it is just the hour to rove  
In the lone dingle shepherds love;  
There, straight and tall, the hazel twig  
Divides the crookèd rock-held fig,  
O'er the blue pebbles where the rill  
In winter runs and may run still.  
Come then, while fresh and calm the air,  
And while the shepherds are not there.'

Leucippe. But I would rather go when they  
Sit round about and sing and play.  
Then why so hurry me? for you  
Like play and song, and shepherds too.

Alciphron. I like the shepherds very well,  
And song and play, as you can tell.  
But there is play, I sadly fear,  
And song I would not have you hear.

Leucippe. What can it be? What can it be?

Alciphron. To you may none of them repeat  
The play that you have play'd with me,  
The song that made your bosom beat.

Leucippe. Don't keep your arm about my waist.

Alciphron. Might you not stumble?

Leucippe. Well then, do.  
But why are we in all this haste?

Alciphron. To sing.

Leucippe. Alas! and not play too?

Walter Savage Landor

## **Autumn**

MILD is the parting year, and sweet  
The odour of the falling spray;  
Life passes on more rudely fleet,  
And balmless is its closing day.

I wait its close, I court its gloom,  
But mourn that never must there fall  
Or on my breast or on my tomb  
The tear that would have soothed it all.

Walter Savage Landor



## **Child of a Day**

Child of a day, thou knowest not  
The tears that overflow thy urn,  
The gushing eyes that read thy lot,  
Nor, if thou knewest, couldst return!

And why the wish! the pure and blest  
Watch like thy mother o'er thy sleep.  
O peaceful night! O envied rest!  
Thou wilt not ever see her weep.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Corinna, from Athens, to Tanagra**

Tanagra! think not I forget  
Thy beautifully-storey'd streets;  
Be sure my memory bathes yet  
In clear Thermodon, and yet greets  
The blythe and liberal shepherd boy,  
Whose sunny bosom swells with joy  
When we accept his matted rushes  
Upheaved with sylvan fruit; away he bounds, and blushes.

I promise to bring back with me  
What thou with transport wilt receive,  
The only proper gift for thee,  
Of which no mortal shall bereave  
In later times thy mouldering walls,  
Until the last old turret falls;  
A crown, a crown from Athens won!  
A crown no god can wear, beside Latona's son.

There may be cities who refuse  
To their own child the honours due,  
And look ungently on the Muse;  
But ever shall those cities rue  
The dry, unyielding, niggard breast,  
Offering no nourishment, no rest,  
To that young head which soon shall rise  
Disdainfully, in might and glory, to the skies.

Sweetly where cavern'd Dirce flows  
Do white-arm'd maidens chaunt my lay,  
Flapping the while with laurel-rose  
The honey-gathering tribes away;  
And sweetly, sweetly, Attick tongues  
Lisp your Corinna's early songs;  
To her with feet more graceful come  
The verses that have dwelt in kindred breasts at home.

O let thy children lean aslant  
Against the tender mother's knee,  
And gaze into her face, and want  
To know what magic there can be  
In words that urge some eyes to dance,  
While others as in holy trance  
Look up to heaven; be such my praise!  
Why linger? I must haste, or lose the Delphick bays.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Death Stands Above Me, Whispering Low**

Death stands above me, whispering low  
I know not what into my ear:  
Of his strange language all I know  
Is, there is not a word of fear.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Dirce**

Stand close around, ye Stygian set,  
With Dirce in one boat conveyed,  
Or Charon, seeing, may forget  
That he is old and she a shade.

Walter Savage Landor

### **Do you Remember me? or are you Proud?**

"Do you remember me? or are you proud?"  
Lightly advancing thro' her star-trimm'd crowd,  
Ianthe said, and lookt into my eyes,  
"A yes, a yes, to both: for Memory  
Where you but once have been must ever be,  
And at your voice Pride from his throne must rise."

Walter Savage Landor

## **Dying Speech of an Old Philosopher**

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:  
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art:  
I warm'd both hands before the fire of Life;  
It sinks; and I am ready to depart.

Walter Savage Landor

## Fæsulán Idyl

Here, where precipitate Spring with one light bound  
Into hot Summer's lusty arms expires;  
And where go forth at morn, at eve, at night,  
Soft airs, that want the lute to play with them,  
And softer sighs, that know not what they want;  
Under a wall, beneath an orange-tree  
Whose tallest flowers could tell the lowlier ones  
Of sights in Fiesole right up above,  
While I was gazing a few paces off  
At what they seemed to show me with their nods,  
Their frequent whispers and their pointing shoots,  
A gentle maid came down the garden-steps  
And gathered the pure treasure in her lap.  
I heard the branches rustle, and stept forth  
To drive the ox away, or mule, or goat,  
(Such I believed it must be); for sweet scents  
Are the swift vehicles of still sweeter thoughts,  
And nurse and pillow the dull memory  
That would let drop without them her best stores.  
They bring me tales of youth and tones of love,  
And 'tis and ever was my wish and way  
To let all flowers live freely, and all die,  
Whene'er their Genius bids their souls depart,  
Among their kindred in their native place.  
I never pluck the rose; the violet's head  
Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank  
And not reproacht me; the ever-sacred cup  
Of the pure lily hath between my hands  
Felt safe, unsoil'd, nor lost one grain of gold.  
I saw the light that made the glossy leaves  
More glossy; the fair arm, the fairer cheek  
Warmed by the eye intent on its pursuit;  
I saw the foot, that, altho half-erect  
From its grey slipper, could not lift her up  
To what she wanted: I held down a branch  
And gather'd her some blossoms, since their hour  
Was come, and bees had wounded them, and flies  
Of harder wing were working their way thro  
And scattering them in fragments under foot.  
So crisp were some, they rattled unevolved,  
Others, ere broken off, fell into shells,  
For such appear the petals when detach't,  
Unbending, brittle, lucid, white like snow,  
And like snow not seen thro, by eye or sun:  
Yet every one her gown received from me  
Was fairer than the first . . I thought not so,  
But so she praised them to reward my care.  
I said: you find the largest.

This indeed,  
Cried she, is large and sweet.

She held one forth,  
Whether for me to look at or to take  
She knew not, nor did I; but taking it  
Would best have solved (and this she felt) her doubts.  
I dared not touch it; for it seemed a part  
Of her own self; fresh, full, the most mature  
Of blossoms, yet a blossom; with a touch  
To fall, and yet unfallen.

She drew back  
The boon she tendered, and then, finding not  
The ribbon at her waist to fix it in,  
Dropt it, as loth to drop it, on the rest.

Walter Savage Landor



## **Finis**

I STROVE with none, for none was worth my strife.  
Nature I loved and, next to Nature, Art:  
I warm'd both hands before the fire of life;  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Walter Savage Landor

## **God Scatters Beauty**

God scatters beauty as he scatters flowers  
O'er the wide earth, and tells us all are ours.  
A hundred lights in every temple burn,  
And at each shrine I bend my knee in turn.

Walter Savage Landor

## **I Entreat You, Alfred Tennyson**

I entreat you, Alfred Tennyson,  
Come and share my haunch of venison.  
I have too a bin of claret,  
Good, but better when you share it.  
Tho' 'tis only a small bin,  
There's a stock of it within.  
And as sure as I'm a rhymer,  
Half a butt of Rudeheimer.  
Come; among the sons of men is one  
Welcomer than Alfred Tennyson?

Walter Savage Landor

## **I Strove with None**

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.  
Nature I loved and, next to Nature, Art:  
I warm'd both hands before the fire of life;  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Ianthe**

From you, Ianthe, little troubles pass  
Like little ripples down a sunny river;  
Your pleasures spring like daisies in the grass,  
Cut down, and up again as blithe as ever.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Ianthe! You are Call'd to Cross the Sea**

Ianthe! you are call'd to cross the sea!  
A path forbidden me!  
Remember, while the Sun his blessing sheds  
Upon the mountain-heads,  
How often we have watcht him laying down  
His brow, and dropt our own  
Against each other's, and how faint and short  
And sliding the support!  
What will succeed it now? Mine is unblest,  
Ianthe! nor will rest  
But on the very thought that swells with pain.  
O bid me hope again!  
O give me back what Earth, what (without you)  
Not Heaven itself can do--  
One of the golden days that we have past,  
And let it be my last!  
Or else the gift would be, however sweet,  
Fragile and incomplete.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Ianthe! you are call'd to cross the sea!**

Ianthe! you are call'd to cross the sea!  
A path forbidden me!  
Remember, while the Sun his blessing sheds  
Upon the mountain-heads,  
How often we have watcht him laying down  
His brow, and dropt our own  
Against each other's, and how faint and short  
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Not Heaven itself can do--  
One of the golden days that we have past,  
And let it be my last!  
Or else the gift would be, however sweet,  
Fragile and incomplete.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Ianthe's Question**

'Do you remember me? or are you proud?'  
Lightly advancing thro' her star-trimm'd crowd,  
Ianthe said, and look'd into my eyes.  
'A yes, a yes to both: for Memory  
Where you but once have been must ever be,  
And at your voice Pride from his throne must rise.'

Walter Savage Landor



## **In spring and summer winds may blow**

In spring and summer winds may blow,  
And rains fall after, hard and fast;  
The tender leaves, if beaten low,  
Shine but the more for shower and blast

But when their fated hour arrives,  
When reapers long have left the field,  
When maidens rifle turn'd-up hives,  
And their last juice fresh apples yield,

A leaf perhaps may still remain  
Upon some solitary tree,  
Spite of the wind and of the rain . . .  
A thing you heed not if you see.

At last it falls. Who cares? Not one:  
And yet no power on earth can ever  
Replace the fallen leaf upon  
Its spray, so easy to dissever.

If such be love, I dare not say.  
Friendship is such, too well I know:  
I have enjoyed my summer day;  
'Tis past; my leaf now lies below.

Walter Savage Landor

## Late Leaves

THE leaves are falling; so am I;  
The few late flowers have moisture in the eye;  
    So have I too.  
Scarcely on any bough is heard  
Joyous, or even unjoyous, bird  
    The whole wood through.

Winter may come: he brings but nigher  
His circle (yearly narrowing) to the fire  
    Where old friends meet.  
Let him; now heaven is overcast,  
And spring and summer both are past,  
    And all things sweet.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Lately our poets**

Lately our poets loiter'd in green lanes,  
Content to catch the ballads of the plains;  
I fancied I had strength enough to climb  
A loftier station at no distant time,  
And might securely from intrusion doze  
Upon the flowers thro' which Ilissus flows.  
In those pale olive grounds all voices cease,  
And from afar dust fills the paths of Greece.  
My sluber broken and my doublet torn,  
I find the laurel also bears a thorn.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Mild is the Parting Year**

Mild is the parting year, and sweet  
The odour of the falling spray;  
Life passes on more rudely fleet,  
And balmless is its closing day.

I wait its close, I court its gloom,  
But mourn that never must there fall  
Or on my breast or on my tomb  
The tear that would have soothed it all.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Mother, I cannot mind my Wheel**

MOTHER, I cannot mind my wheel;  
My fingers ache, my lips are dry:  
O, if you felt the pain I feel!  
But O, who ever felt as I?

No longer could I doubt him true--  
All other men may use deceit;  
He always said my eyes were blue,  
And often swore my lips were sweet.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Mother, I Cannot Mind My Wheel...**

Mother, I cannot mind my wheel;  
My fingers ache, my lips are dry:  
Oh! if you felt the pain I feel!  
But Oh, who ever felt as I?

No longer could I doubt him true;  
All other men may use deceit:  
He always said my eyes were blue,  
And often swore my lips were sweet.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Of Clementina**

In Clementina's artless mien  
Lucilla asks me what I see,  
And are the roses of sixteen  
Enough for me?

Lucilla asks, if that be all,  
Have I not cull'd as sweet before:  
Ah yes, Lucilla! and their fall  
I still deplore.

I now behold another scene,  
Where Pleasure beams with Heaven's own light,  
More pure, more constant, more serene,  
And not less bright.

Faith, on whose breast the Loves repose,  
Whose chain of flowers no force can sever,  
And Modesty who, when she goes,  
Is gone for ever.

Walter Savage Landor

## **On an Eclipse of the Moon**

Struggling, and faint, and fainter didst thou wane,  
O Moon! and round thee all thy starry train  
Came forth to help thee, with half-open eyes,  
And trembled every one with still surprise,  
That the black Spectre should have dared assail  
Their beauteous queen and seize her sacred veil.

Walter Savage Landor



## **On Catullus**

Tell me not what too well I know  
About the bard of Sirmio.  
Yes, in Thalia's son  
Such stains there are—as when a Grace  
Sprinkles another's laughing face  
With nectar, and runs on.

Walter Savage Landor

## **On His Eightieth Birthday**

To my ninth decade I have tottered on,  
And no soft arm bends now my steps to steady;  
She, who once led me where she would, is gone,  
So when he calls me, Death shall find me ready.

Walter Savage Landor

### **On His Seventy-fifth Birthday**

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;  
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;  
I warmed both hands before the fire of Life;  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Walter Savage Landor

## **One Lovely Name**

One lovely name adorns my song,  
And, dwelling in the heart,  
Forever falters at the tongue,  
And trembles to depart.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Proud Word You Never Spoke**

Proud word you never spoke, but you will speak  
Four not exempt from pride some future day.  
Resting on one white hand a warm wet cheek,  
Over my open volume you will say,  
'This man loved me'—then rise and trip away.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Remain!**

REMAIN, ah not in youth alone!  
--Tho' youth, where you are, long will stay--  
But when my summer days are gone,  
And my autumnal haste away.  
'Can I be always by your side?'  
No; but the hours you can, you must,  
Nor rise at Death's approaching stride,  
Nor go when dust is gone to dust.

Walter Savage Landor

## Resignation

WHY, why repine, my pensive friend,  
At pleasures slipp'd away?  
Some the stern Fates will never lend,  
And all refuse to stay.

I see the rainbow in the sky,  
The dew upon the grass;  
I see them, and I ask not why  
They glimmer or they pass.

With folded arms I linger not  
To call them back; 'twere vain:  
In this, or in some other spot,  
I know they'll shine again.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Rose Aylmer**

Ah, what avails the sceptred race!  
Ah, what the form divine!  
What every virtue, every grace!  
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes  
May weep, but never see,  
A night of memories and sighs  
I consecrate to thee.

Walter Savage Landor



## **Separation**

THERE is a mountain and a wood between us,  
Where the lone shepherd and late bird have seen us  
Morning and noon and eventide repass.  
Between us now the mountain and the wood  
Seem standing darker than last year they stood,  
And say we must not cross--alas! alas!

Walter Savage Landor

**Soon, O Ianthe! life is o'er**

Soon, O Ianthe! life is o'er,  
And sooner beauty's heavenly smile:  
Grant only (and I ask no more),  
Let love remain that little while.

Walter Savage Landor

## **The Chrysolites and Rubies Bacchus Brings**

The chrysolites and rubies Bacchus brings  
To crown the feast where swells the broad-vein'd brow,  
Where maidens blush at what the minstrel sings,  
They who have coveted may covet now.

Bring me, in cool alcove, the grape uncrush'd,  
The peach of pulpy cheek and down mature,  
Where every voice (but bird's or child's) is hush'd,  
And every thought, like the brook nigh, runs pure.

Walter Savage Landor

## **The Dragon-Fly**

Life (priest and poet say) is but a dream;  
I wish no happier one than to be laid  
Beneath a cool syringa's scented shade,  
Or wavy willow, by the running stream,  
Brimful of moral, where the dragon-fly,  
Wanders as careless and content as I.

Thanks for this fancy, insect king,  
Of purple crest and filmy wing,  
Who with indifference givest up  
The water-lily's golden cup,  
To come again and overlook  
What I am writing in my book.  
Believe me, most who read the line  
Will read with hornier eyes than thine;  
And yet their souls shall live for ever,  
And thine drop dead into the river!  
God pardon them, O insect king,  
Who fancy so unjust a thing!

Walter Savage Landor

## **The Evening Star**

Smiles soon abate; the boisterous throes  
Of anger long burst forth;  
Inconstantly the south-wind blows,  
But steadily the north.

Thy star, O Venus! often changes  
Its radiant seat above,  
The chilling pole-star never ranges --  
'Tis thus with Hate and Love.

Walter Savage Landor

## **The Maid's Lament**

I loved him not; and yet, now he is gone,  
I feel I am alone.  
I check'd him while he spoke; yet, could he speak,  
Alas! I would not check.  
For reasons not to love him once I sought,  
And wearied all my thought  
To vex myself and him: I now would give  
My love could he but live  
Who lately lived for me, and, when he found  
'Twas vain, in holy ground  
He hid his face amid the shades of death!  
I waste for him my breath  
Who wasted his for me! but mine returns,  
And this torn bosom burns  
With stifling heat, heaving it up in sleep,  
And waking me to weep  
Tears that had melted his soft heart: for years  
Wept he as bitter tears!  
Merciful God! such was his latest prayer,  
These may she never share.  
Quieter is his breath, his breast more cold,  
Than daisies in the mould,  
Where children spell, athwart the churchyard gate,  
His name and life's brief date.  
Pray for him, gentle souls, whoe'er you be,  
And oh! pray too for me!

Walter Savage Landor

## **The Three Roses**

When the buds began to burst,  
Long ago, with Rose the First  
I was walking; joyous then  
Far above all other men,  
Till before us up there stood  
Britonferry's oaken wood,  
Whispering, "Happy as thou art,  
Happiness and thou must part."  
Many summers have gone by  
Since a Second Rose and I  
(Rose from the same stem) have told  
This and other tales of old.  
She upon her wedding day  
Carried home my tenderest lay:  
From her lap I now have heard  
Gleeful, chirping, Rose the Third.  
Not for her this hand of mine  
Rhyme with nuptial wreath shall twine;  
Cold and torpid it must lie,  
Mute the tongue, and closed the eye.

Walter Savage Landor

## To Age

Welcome, old friend! These many years  
Have we lived door by door;  
The fates have laid aside their shears  
Perhaps for some few more.

I was indocile at an age  
When better boys were taught,  
But thou at length hast made me sage,  
If I am sage in aught.

Little I know from other men,  
Too little they know from me,  
But thou hast pointed well the pen  
That writes these lines to thee.

Thanks for expelling Fear and Hope,  
One vile, the other vain;  
One's scourge, the other's telescope,  
I shall not see again.

Rather what lies before my feet  
My notice shall engage--  
He who hath braved Youth's dizzy heat  
Dreads not the frost of Age.

Walter Savage Landor



## **To Robert Browning**

There is delight in singing, though none hear  
Beside the singer; and there is delight  
In praising, though the praiser sits alone  
And see the praised far off him, far above.  
Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,  
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,  
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale  
No man hath walked along our roads with step  
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue  
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes  
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing; the breeze  
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on  
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where  
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

Walter Savage Landor

## To Zoë

Against the groaning mast I stand,  
The Atlantic surges swell,  
To bear me from my native land  
And Zoë's wild farewell.

From billow upon billow hurl'd  
I can yet hear her say,  
'And is there nothing in the world  
Worth one short hour's delay?'

'Alas, my Zoë! were it thus,  
I should not sail alone,  
Nor seas nor fates had parted us,  
But are you all my own?'

Thus were it, never would burst forth  
My sighs, Heaven knows how true!  
But, though to me of little worth,  
The world is much to you.

'Yes,' you shall say, when once the dream  
(So hard to break!) is o'er,  
'My love was very dear to him,  
My fame and peace were more.'

Walter Savage Landor

## **Twenty Years Hence**

Twenty years hence my eyes may grow  
If not quite dim, yet rather so,  
Still yours from others they shall know  
Twenty years hence.

Twenty years hence though it may hap  
That I be called to take a nap  
In a cool cell where thunderclap  
Was never heard,

There breathe but o'er my arch of grass  
A not too sadly sighed Alas,  
And I shall catch, ere you can pass,  
That winged word.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Verse**

Past ruined Iliion Helen lives,  
Alcestis rises from the shades.  
Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives  
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall oblivion's deepening veil  
Hide all the peopled hills you see,  
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail  
These many summers you and me.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Very True, the Linnets Sing**

Very true, the linnets sing  
Sweetest in the leaves of spring:  
You have found in all these leaves  
That which changes and deceives,  
And, to pine by sun or star,  
Left them, false ones as they are.  
But there be who walk beside  
Autumn's, till they all have died,  
And who lend a patient ear  
To low notes from branches sere.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Well I Remember How You Smiled**

Well I remember how you smiled  
To see me write your name upon  
The soft sea-sand . . . "O! what a child!  
You think you're writing upon stone!"

I have since written what no tide  
Shall ever wash away, what men  
Unborn shall read o'er ocean wide  
And find Ianthe's name again.

Walter Savage Landor

## **What News**

Here, ever since you went abroad,  
If there be change, no change I see,  
I only walk our wonted road,  
The road is only walkt by me.

Yes; I forgot; a change there is;  
Was it of that you bade me tell?  
I catch at times, at times I miss  
The sight, the tone, I know so well.

Only two months since you stood here!  
Two shortest months! then tell me why  
Voices are harsher than they were,  
And tears are longer ere they dry.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Who Ever Felt as I?**

Mother, I cannot mind my wheel;  
My fingers ache, my lips are dry:  
Oh! if you felt the pain I feel!  
But oh, who ever felt as I?

No longer could I doubt him true;  
All other men may use deceit:  
He always said my eyes were blue,  
And often swore my lips were sweet.

Walter Savage Landor



## **Why, Why Repine**

Why, why repine, my pensive friend,  
At pleasures slipp'd away?  
Some the stern Fates will never lend,  
And all refuse to stay.

I see the rainbow in the sky,  
The dew upon the grass,  
I see them, and I ask not why  
They glimmer or they pass.

With folded arms I linger not  
To call them back; 'twere vain;  
In this, or in some other spot,  
I know they'll shine again.

Walter Savage Landor

## **Years**

Years, many parti-colour'd years,  
Some have crept on, and some have flown  
Since first before me fell those tears  
I never could see fall alone.

Years, not so many, are to come,  
Years not so varied, when from you  
One more will fall: when, carried home,  
I see it not, nor hear Adieu.

Walter Savage Landor

## **You smiled, you spoke, and I believed**

You smiled, you spoke, and I believed,  
By every word and smile deceived.  
Another man would hope no more;  
Nor hope I what I hoped before:  
But let not this last wish be vain;  
Deceive, deceive me once again!

Walter Savage Landor