

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Jones Very**  
**- poems -**

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# Jones Very(28 August 1813 – 8 May 1880)

Jones Very was an American essayist, poet, clergymen, and mystic associated with the American Transcendentalism movement. He was known as a scholar of William Shakespeare and many of his poems were Shakespearean sonnets. He was well-known and respected amongst the Transcendentalists, though he had a mental breakdown early in his career.

Born in Salem, Massachusetts to two unwed first cousins, Jones Very became associated with Harvard University, first as an undergraduate, then as a student in the Harvard Divinity School and as a tutor of Greek. He heavily studied epic poetry and was invited to lecture on the topic in his home town, which drew the attention of [Ralph Waldo Emerson](http://www.poemhunter.com/ralph-waldo-emerson/). Soon after, Very asserted that he was the Second Coming of Christ, which resulted in his dismissal from Harvard and his eventual institutionalization in an insane asylum. When he was released, Emerson helped him issue a collection called *Essays and Poems* in 1839. Very lived the majority of his life as a recluse from then on, issuing poetry only sparingly. He died in 1880.

## **Biography**

Very was born on August 28, 1813, in Salem, Massachusetts and spent much of his childhood at sea. He was the oldest of six children, born out of wedlock to two first cousins. His mother, Lydia Very, was known for being an aggressive freethinker who made her atheistic beliefs known to all. She believed that marriage was only a moral arrangement and not a legal one. His father, also named Jones Very, was a captain during the War of 1812 and was held in Nova Scotia for a time by the British as a prisoner of war. When the younger Jones Very was ten, his father, by then a shipmaster, took him on a sailing voyage to Russia. A year later, his father had Very serve as a cabin boy on a trip to New Orleans, Louisiana. His father died on the return trip, apparently due to a lung disease he contracted while in Nova Scotia.

As a boy, Very was studious, well-behaved, and solitary. By 1827, he left school when his mother told him he must take the place of his father and care for the family. After working at an auction house, Very became a paid assistant to the principal of a private school in Salem as a teenager. The principal, Henry Kemble Oliver, exposed his young assistant to philosophers and writers, including James Mackintosh, to influence his religious beliefs and counteract his mother's atheism. He composed a poem for the dedication of a new Unitarian church in Salem: "O

God; On this, our temple, rest thy smile, Till bent with days its tower shall nod".

## <b>Harvard Years</b>

Very enrolled at Harvard College in 1834. During his college years, he was shy, studious, and ambitious of literary fame. He had become interested in the works of [Lord Byron](http://www.poemhunter.com/george-gordon-lord-byron/), [William Wordsworth](http://www.poemhunter.com/william-wordsworth/), [Samuel Taylor Coleridge](http://www.poemhunter.com/samuel-taylor-coleridge/), [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](http://www.poemhunter.com/johann-wolfgang-von-goethe/) and [Friedrich Schiller](http://www.poemhunter.com/friedrich-schiller/). His first few poems were published in his hometown newspaper, the Salem Observer, while he completed his studies. He graduated from Harvard in 1836, ranked number two in his class. He was chosen to speak at his commencement; his address was titled "Individuality". After graduating, Very served as a tutor in Greek before entering Harvard Divinity School, thanks to the financial assistance of an uncle. Though Very never completed his divinity degree, he held temporary pastorates in Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

Very became known for his ability to draw people into literature, and was asked to speak at a lyceum in his hometown of Salem in 1837. There he was befriended by Elizabeth Peabody, who wrote to Emerson suggesting Very lecture in Concord. In 1838, Ralph Waldo Emerson arranged a talk by Very at the Concord Lyceum. Very lectured on epic poetry on April 4 of that year, after he had walked twenty miles from Salem to Concord to deliver it. Emerson made up for the meager \$10 payment by inviting Very to his home for dinner. Emerson signed Very's personal copy of *Nature* with the words: "Har[mony] of Man with Nature Must Be Reconciled With God".

For a time, Very tried to recruit Nathaniel Hawthorne as a brother figure in his life. Though Hawthorne treated him kindly, he was not impressed by Very. Unlike Hawthorne, Emerson found him "remarkable" and, when Very showed up at his home unannounced along with Cornelius Conway Felton in 1838, Emerson invited several other friends, including [Henry David Thoreau](http://www.poemhunter.com/henry-david-thoreau/), to meet him. Emerson, however, was surprised at Very's behavior in larger groups. "When he is in the room with other persons, speech stops, as if there were a corpse in the apartment", he wrote. Even so, in May 1838, the same month Very published his "Epic Poetry" lecture in the *Christian Examiner*, Emerson brought Very to a meeting of the Transcendental Club, where the topic of discussion was "the question of

mysticism". At the meeting, held at the home of Caleb Stetson in Medford, Massachusetts, Very was actively engaged in the discussion, building his reputation as a mystic within that circle.

### <b>Mental Collapse</b>

Very was known as an eccentric, prone to odd behavior and may have suffered from bipolar disorder. The first signs of a breakdown came shortly after meeting Emerson, as Very was completing an essay on William Shakespeare. As Very later explained, "I felt within me a new will... it was not a feeling of my own but a sensible will that was not my own... These two consciousnesses, as I may call them, continued with me". In August 1837, while traveling by train, he was suddenly overcome with terror at its speed until he realized he was being "borne along by a divine engine and undertaking his life-journey". As he told Henry Ware, Jr., professor of pulpit eloquence and pastoral care at Harvard Divinity School, divine inspiration helped him suddenly understand the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew and that Christ was having his Second Coming within him. When Ware did not believe him, Very said, "I had thought you did the will of the Father, and that I should receive some sympathy from you—But I now find that you are doing your own will, and not the will of your father". Very also claimed that he was under the influence of the Holy Spirit and composed verse while in this state. Emerson did not believe Very's claim and, noting the poor writing, he asked, "cannot the spirit parse & spell?" Very said he was also tormented by strong sexual desires which he believed were only held in check by the will of God. To help control himself, he avoided speaking with or even looking at women—he called it his "sacrifice of Beauty".

One of Very's students, a fellow native of Salem named Samuel Johnson, Jr., said that people ridiculed Very behind his back since he had "gained the fame of being cracked (or crazy, if you are not acquainted with Harvard technicalities)". During one of his tutoring sessions, Very declared that he was "infallible: that he was a man of heaven, and superior to all the world around him". He then cried out to his students, "Flee to the mountains, for the end of all things is at hand". Harvard president Josiah Quincy III relieved Very of his duties, referring to a "nervous collapse" that required him to be left in the care of his younger brother Washington Very, himself a freshman at Harvard. After returning to Salem, he visited Elizabeth Peabody on September 16, 1838, apparently having given up his rule "not to speak or look at women". As she recalled,

He looked much flushed and his eyes very brilliant and unwinking. It struck me at once that there was something unnatural—and dangerous in his air—As soon as we were within the parlor door he laid his hand on my head—and said "I come

to baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire"—and then he prayed.

After this, Very told her she would soon feel different, explaining, "I am the Second Coming". He performed similar "baptisms" to other people throughout Salem, including ministers. It was finally Reverend Charles Wentworth Upham who had him committed.

Very was institutionalized for a month at a hospital near Boston, the McLean Asylum, as he wrote, "contrary to my will". While there, he finished an essay on Hamlet, arguing that the play is about "the great reality of a soul unsatisfied in its longings after immortality" and that "Hamlet has been called mad, but as we think, Shakespeare thought more of his madness than he did of the wisdom of the rest of the play". During his stay at the hospital, Very lectured his fellow patients on Shakespeare and on poetry in general.

He was released on October 17, 1838, though he refused to renounce his beliefs. His fellow patients reportedly thanked him as he left. McLean's superintendent Luther Bell took credit for saving him "from the delusion of being a prophet extraordinaire", which Luther thought was caused by Very's digestive system being "entirely out of order". The same month he was released, Very stayed with Emerson at his home in Concord for a week. While he was visiting, Emerson wrote in his journal on October 29, "J. Very charmed us all by telling us he hated us all."

Amos Bronson Alcott wrote of Very in December 1838:

I received a letter on Monday of this week from Jones Very of Salem, formerly Tutor in Greek at Harvard College — which institution he left, a few weeks since, being deemed insane by the Faculty. A few weeks ago he visited me....He is a remarkable man. His influence at Cambridge on the best young men was very fine. His talents are of a high order....Is he insane? If so, there yet linger glimpses of wisdom in his memory. He is insane with God — diswitted in the contemplation of the holiness of Divinity. He distrusts intellect... Living, not thinking, he regards as the worship meet for the soul. This is mysticism in its highest form.

<b>Poetry</b>

Emerson saw a kindred spirit in Very and defended his sanity. As he wrote to Margaret Fuller, "Such a mind cannot be lost". Emerson was sympathetic with Very's plight because he himself had recently been ostracized after his controversial lecture, the "Divinity School Address". He helped Very publish a

small volume, *Essays and Poems* in 1839. The poems collected in this volume were chiefly Shakespearean sonnets. Very also published several poems in the *Western Messenger* between 1838 and 1840 as well as in *The Dial*, the journal of the Transcendentalists. He was disappointed, however, that Emerson, serving as editor of the journal, altered his poems. Very wrote to Emerson in July 1842, "Perhaps they were all improvements but I preferred my own lines. I do not know but I ought to submit to such changes as done by the rightful authority of an Editor but I felt a little sad at the aspect of the piece." He was never widely read, and was largely forgotten by the end of the nineteenth century, but in the 1830s and 1840s the Transcendentalists, including Emerson, as well as William Cullen Bryant, praised his work.

Very continued writing throughout his life, though sparingly. Many of his later poems were never collected but only distributed in manuscript form among the Transcendentalists. In January 1843, his work was included in the first issue of *The Pioneer*, a journal edited by James Russell Lowell which also included the first publication of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart".

#### <b>Final Years and Death</b>

Jones Very believed his role as a prophet would last only twelve months. By September 1839, his role was complete. Emerson suggested that Very's temporary mental instability was worth the message he had delivered. In his essay "Friendship", Emerson referred to Very:

I knew a man who under a certain religious frenzy cast off this drapery, and spoke to the conscience of every person he encountered, and that with great insight and beauty. At first, all men agreed he was mad. But persisting, he attained to the advantage of bringing every man of his acquaintance into true relations with him... To stand in true relations with men in a false age is worth a fit of insanity, is it not?

The last decades of Very's life were spent in Salem as a recluse under the care of his sister. It was during these years that he held roles as a visiting minister in Eastport, Maine and North Beverly, Massachusetts, though these roles were temporary because he had become too shy. By age 45, he had retired. In his last forty years, Very did very little. As biographer Edwin Gittleman wrote, "Although he lived until 1880, Very's effective life was over by the end of 1840." He died on May 8, 1880 and, upon hearing of Very's death, Alcott wrote a brief remembrance on May 16, 1880:

The newspapers record the death of Jones Very of Salem, Mass. It was my

fortune to have known the man while he was tutor in Harvard College and writing his Sonnets and Essays on Shakespeare, which were edited by Emerson, and published in 1839. Very was then the dreamy mystic of our circle of Transcendentalists, and a subject of speculation by us. He professed to be taught by the Spirit and to write under its inspiration. When his papers were submitted to Emerson for criticism the spelling was found faulty and on Emerson's pointing out the defect, he was told that this was by dictation of the Spirit also. Whether Emerson's witty reply, "that the Spirit should be a better speller," qualified the mystic's vision does not appear otherwise than that the printed volume shows no traces of illiteracy in the text.

Very often came to see me. His shadowy aspect at times gave him a ghostly air. While walking by his side, I remember, he seemed spectral, — and somehow using my feet instead of his own, keeping as near me as he could, and jostling me frequently. His voice had a certain hollowness, as if echoing mine. His whole bearing made an impression as if himself were detached from his thought and his body were another's. He ventured, withal, to warn me of falling into idolatries, while he brought a sonnet or two (since printed) for my benefit. His temperament was delicate and nervous, disposed to visionariness and a dreamy idealism, stimulated by over-studies and the school of thought then in the ascendant. His sonnets and Shakespearean essays surpass any that have since appeared in subtlety and simplicity of execution.

#### <b>Critical Assessment</b>

The first critical review of Very's book was written by Margaret Fuller and published in Orestes Brownson's Boston Quarterly Review; it said Very's poems had "an elasticity of spirit, a genuine flow of thought, and unsought nobleness and purity", though she admitted she preferred the prose in the collection over the poetry. She mocked the "sing song" style of the poems and questioned his religious mission. She concluded: "I am... greatly interested in Mr Very. He seems worthy to be well known." James Freeman Clarke admired Very's poetry enough to have several published in his journal, the Western Messenger, between 1838 and 1840. William Ellery Channing admired Very's poetry as well, writing that his insanity "is only superficial". Richard Henry Dana, Sr. also commented positively on Very's poetry: "The thought is deeply spiritual; and while there is a certain character of peculiarity which we so often find in like things from our old writers, there is a freedom from quaintness... Indeed, I know not where you would... find any thing in this country to compare with these Sonnets."

Editor and critic Rufus Wilmot Griswold was impressed enough by Very's poetry

to include him in the first edition of his anthology *The Poets and Poetry of America* in 1842. He wrote to Emerson asking for more information about him and expressing his opinion of his poetry: "Though comparatively unknown, he seems to be a true poet."

# Beauty

I gazed upon thy face--and beating life,  
Once stilled its sleepless pulses in my breast  
And every thought whose being was a strife  
Each in its silent chamber sank to rest;  
I was not, save it were a thought of thee,  
The world was but a spot where thou hadst trod,  
From every star thy glance seemed fix on me,  
Almost I loved thee better than my God.  
And still I gaze--but 'tis a holier thought  
Than that in which my spirit lived before,  
Each star a purer ray of love has caught,  
Earth wears a lovelier robe than then it wore,  
And every lamp that burns around thy shrine  
I fed with fire whose fountain is Divine.

Jones Very

# Bread

Long do we live upon the husks of corn,  
While 'neath untasted lie the kernels still,  
Heirs of the kingdom, but in Christ unborn,  
Fain with swine's food would we our hunger fill;  
We eat, but 'tis not of the bread from heaven;  
We drink, but 'tis not from the stream of life;  
Our swelling actions want the little leaven  
To make them with the sighed-for blessing rife;  
We wait unhappy on a stranger's board,  
While we the master's friend by right should live,  
Enjoy with him the fruits our labors stored,  
And to the poor with him the pittance give;  
No more to want, the long expected heir  
With Christ the Father's love forevermore to share.

Jones Very

# Change

Father! there is no change to live with Thee,  
Save that in Christ I grow from day to day,  
In each new word I hear, each thing I see,  
I but rejoicing hasten on the way;  
The morning comes with blushes overspread,  
And I new-wakened find a morn within;  
And in its modest dawn around me shed,  
Thou hear'st the prayer and the ascending hymn;  
Hour follows hour, the lengthening shades descend,  
Yet they could never reach as far as me,  
Did not thy love thy kind protection lend,  
That I a child might sleep awhile on Thee,  
Till to the light restored by gentle sleep  
With new-found zeal I might thy precepts keep.

Jones Very

# Day

Day! I lament that none can hymn thy praise  
In fitting strains, of all thy riches bless;  
Though thousands sport them in thy golden rays,  
Yet none like thee their Maker's name confess.  
Great fellow of my being! woke with me  
Thou dost put on thy dazzling robes of light,  
And onward from the east go forth to free  
Thy children from the bondage of the night;  
I hail thee, pilgrim! on thy lonely way,  
Whose looks on all alike benignant shine;  
A child of light, like thee, I cannot stay,  
But on the world I bless must soon decline,  
New rising still, though setting to mankind,  
And ever in the eternal West my dayspring find.

Jones Very

# Ehue! Fugaces, Posthume, Labuntur Anni

Fleeting years are ever bearing  
In their silent course away  
All that in our pleasures sharing  
Lent to life a cheering ray.

Beauty's cheek but blooms to wither,  
Smiling hours but come to fly;  
They are gone; Time's but the giver  
Of whate'er is doomed to die.

Thou may'st touch with blighting finger  
All that sense can here enjoy;  
Yet within my soul shall linger  
That which thou canst not destroy.

Love's sweet voice shall there awaken  
Joys that earth cannot impart;  
Joys that live when thou hast taken  
All that here can charm the heart.

As the years come gliding by me,  
Fancy's pleasing visions rise;  
Beauty's cheek, ah! still I see thee,  
Still your glances, soft blue eyes!

Jones Very

# Enoch

I looked to find a man who walked with God,  
Like the translated patriarch of old;--  
Though gladdened millions on His footstool trod,  
Yet none with him did such sweet converse hold;  
I heard the wind in low complaint go by  
That none his melodies like him could hear;  
Day unto day spoke wisdom from on high,  
Yet none like David turned a willing ear;  
God walked alone unhonored through the earth;  
For Him no heart-built temple open stood,  
The soul forgetful of her nobler birth  
Had hewn him lofty shrines of stone and wood,  
And left unfinished and in ruins still  
The only temple he delights to fill.

Jones Very

# Faith

There is no faith; the mountain stands within  
Still unrebuked, its summit reaches heaven;  
And every action adds its load of sin,  
For every action wants the little leaven;  
There is no prayer; it is but empty sound,  
That stirs with frequent breath the yielding air,  
With every pulse they are more strongly bound,  
Who make the blood of goats the voice of prayer;  
Oh heal them, heal them, Father, with thy word,—  
Their sins cry out to thee from every side;  
From son and sire, from slave and master heard,  
Their voices fill the desert country wide;  
And bid thee hasten to relieve and save,  
By him who rose triumphant o'er the grave.

Jones Very

## He Gave Me No Meat

My brother, I am hungry,—give me food  
Such as my Father gives me at his board;  
He has for many years been to thee good,  
Thou canst a morsel then to me afford;  
I do not ask of thee a grain of that  
Thou offerest when I call on thee for bread;  
This is not of the wine nor olive fat,  
But those who eat of this like thee are dead;  
I ask the love the Father has for thee,  
That thou should'st give it back to me again;  
This shall my soul from pangs of hunger free,  
And on my parched spirit fall like rain;  
Then thou wilt prove a brother to my need,  
For in the cross of Christ thou too canst bleed.

Jones Very

## He Was Acquainted With Grief

I cannot tell the sorrows that I feel  
By the night's darkness, by the prison's gloom;  
There is no sight that can the death reveal  
The spirit suffers in a living tomb;  
There is no sound of grief that mourners raise,  
No moaning of the wind, or dirge-like sea,  
Nor hymns, though prophet tones inspire the lays,  
That can the spirit's grief awake in thee.  
Thou too must suffer as it suffers here  
The death in Christ to know the Father's love;  
Then in the strains that angels love to hear  
Thou too shalt hear the Spirit's song above,  
And learn in grief what these can never tell,  
A note too deep for earthly voice to swell.

Jones Very

## How Many Of The Body's Health Complain,

HOW many of the body's health complain,  
When they some deeper malady conceal;  
Some unrest of the souled, some secret pain,  
Which thus its presence doth to them reveal.  
Vain would we seek, by the physician's aid,  
A name for this soul-sickness e'er to find;  
A remedy for health and strength decayed,  
Whose cause and cure are wholly of the mind  
To higher nature is the soul allied,  
And restless seeks its being's Source to know;  
Finding not health nor strength in aught beside;  
How often vainly sought in things below,  
Whether in sunny clime, or sacred stream,  
Or plant of wondrous powers of which we dream!

Jones Very

# I Was Sick And In Prison

Thou hast not left the rough-barked tree to grow  
Without a mate upon the river's bank;  
Nor dost Thou on one flower the rain bestow,  
But many a cup the glittering drops has drank;  
The bird must sing to one who sings again,  
Else would her note less welcome be to hear;  
Nor hast Thou bid thy word descend in vain,  
But soon some answering voice shall reach my ear;  
Then shall the brotherhood of peace begin,  
And the new song be raised that never dies,  
That shall the soul from death and darkness win,  
And burst the prison where the captive lies;  
And one by one new-born shall join the strain,  
Till earth restores her sons to heaven again.

Jones Very

## In Him We Live

Father! I bless thy name that I do live,  
And in each motion am made rich with thee,  
That when a glance is all that I can give,  
It is a kingdom's wealth if I but see;  
This stately body cannot move, save I  
Will to its nobleness my little bring;  
My voice its measured cadence will not try,  
Save I with every note consent to sing;  
I cannot raise my hands to hurt or bless,  
But I with every action must conspire;  
To show me there how little I possess,  
And yet that little more than I desire;  
May each new act my new allegiance prove,  
Till in thy perfect love I ever live and move.

Jones Very

# Life

IT is not life upon Thy gifts to live,  
But, to grow fixed with deeper roots in Thee;  
And when the sun and shower their bounties give,  
To send out thick-leaved limbs; a fruitful tree,  
Whose green head meets the eye for many a mile,  
Whose moss-grown arms their rigid branches rear,  
And full-faced fruits their blushing welcome smile  
As to its goodly shade our feet draw near;  
Who tastes its gifts shall never hunger more,  
For 'tis the Father spreads the pure repast,  
Who, while we eat, renews the ready store,  
Which at his bounteous board must ever last;  
For none the bridegroom's supper shall attend,  
Who will not hear and make his word their friend.

Jones Very

# Lines To A Withered Leaf Seen On A Poet's Table

Poet's hand has placed thee there,  
Autumn's brown and withered scroll!  
Though to outward eye not fair,  
Thou hast beauty for the soul,

Though no human pen has traced  
On that leaf its learned lore,  
Love divine the page has graced,—  
What can words discover more?

Not alone dim Autumn's blast  
Echoes from yon tablet sear,—  
Distant music of the Past  
Steals upon the poet's ear.

Voices sweet of summer hours,  
Spring's soft whispers murmur by;  
Feathered songs from leafy bowers  
Draw his listening soul on high.

Jones Very

# Love

I asked of Time to tell me where was Love;  
He pointed to her foot-steps on the snow,  
Where first the angel lighted from above,  
And bid me note the way and onward go;  
Through populous streets of cities spreading wide,  
By lonely cottage rising on the moor,  
Where bursts from sundered cliff the struggling tide,  
To where it hails to sea with answering roar,  
She led me on; o'er mountain's frozen head,  
where mile on mile still stretches on the plain,  
Then homeward whither first my feet she led,  
I traced her path along the snow again;  
But there the sun had melted from the earth  
The prints where first she trod, a child of mortal birth.

Jones Very

# Memory

Soon the waves so lightly bounding  
All forget the tempest blast;  
Soon the pines so sadly sounding  
Cease to mourn the storm that's past.

Soon is hushed the voice of gladness  
Heard within the green wood's breast;  
Yet come back no notes of sadness,  
No remembrance breaks its rest.

But the heart,—how fond t'will treasure  
Every note of grief and joy!  
Oft come back the notes of pleasure,  
Grief's sad echoes oft annoy.

There still dwell the looks that vanish  
Swift as brightness of a dream;  
Time in vain earth's smiles may banish,  
There undying still they beam.

Jones Very

# Morning

The light will never open sightless eyes,  
It comes to those who willingly would see;  
And every object,—hill, and stream, and skies,—  
Rejoice within th' encircling line to be;  
'Tis day,—the field is filled with busy hands,  
The shop resounds with noisy workmen's din,  
The traveller with his staff already stands  
His yet unmeasured journey to begin;  
The light breaks gently too within the breast,—  
Yet there no eye awaits the crimson morn,  
The forge and noisy anvil are at rest,  
Nor men nor oxen tread the fields of corn,  
Nor pilgrim lifts his staff,—it is no day  
To those who find on earth their place to stay.

Jones Very

# Nature

The bubbling brook doth leap when I come by,  
Because my feet find measure with its call;  
The birds know when the friend they love is nigh,  
For I am known to them, both great and small.  
The flower that on the lonely hillside grows  
Expects me there when spring its bloom has given;  
And many a tree and bush my wanderings knows,  
And e'en the clouds and silent stars of heaven;  
For he who with his Maker walks aright,  
Shall be their lord as Adam was before;  
His ear shall catch each sound with new delight,  
Each object wear the dress that then it wore;  
And he, as when erect in soul he stood,  
Hear from his Father's lips that all is good

Jones Very

# Night

I thank thee, Father, that the night is near  
When I this conscious being may resign;  
Whose only task thy words of love to hear,  
And in thy acts to find each act of mine;  
A task too great to give a child like me,  
The myriad-handed labors of the day,  
Too many for my closing eyes to see,  
Thy words too frequent for my tongue to say;  
Yet when thou see'st me burthened by thy love,  
Each other gift more lovely then appears,  
For dark-robed night comes hovering from above,  
And all thine other gifts to me endears;  
And while within her darkened couch I sleep,  
Thine eyes untired above will constant vigils keep.

Jones Very

# On Visiting The Graves Of Hawthorne And Thoreau

Beneath these shades, beside yon winding stream,  
Lies Hawthorne's manly form, the mortal part!  
The soul, that loved to meditate and dream,  
Might linger here unwilling to depart,  
But that a higher life has called away  
To fairer scenes, to nobler work and thought.  
Why should the spirit then on earth delay,  
That has a glimpse of such bright regions caught!  
And near another, Nature's child, doth rest,—  
Thoreau, who loved each woodland path to tread;  
So gently sleeping on his mother's breast!  
Living, though numbered with the numerous dead.  
We mourn! But hope will whisper in the heart,  
We meet again and meet no more to part.

Jones Very

# Psyche

I SAW a worm, with many a fold;  
It spun itself a sliken tomb;  
And there in winter time enrolled,  
It heeded not the cold or gloom.

Within a small, snug nook it lay,  
Nor snow nor sleet could reach it there,  
Nor wind was felt in gusty day,  
Nor biting cold of frosty air.

Spring comes with bursting buds and grass,  
Around him stirs a warmer breeze;  
The chirping insects by him pass,  
His hiding place not yet he leaves.

But summer came; its fervid breath  
Was felt within the sleeper's cell;  
And, waking from his sleep of death,  
I saw him crawl from out his shell

Slow and with pain he first moved on,  
And of the day he seemed to be;  
A day passed by; the worm was gone,  
It soared on golden pinions free!

Jones Very

# Soul-Sickness

How many of the body's health complain,  
When they some deeper malady conceal;  
Some unrest of the soul, some secret pain,  
Which thus its presence doth to them reveal.  
Vain would we seek, by the physician's aid,  
A name for this soul-sickness e'er to find;  
A remedy for health and strength decayed,  
Whose cause and cure are wholly of the mind  
To higher nature is the soul allied,  
And restless seeks its being's Source to know;  
Finding not health nor strength in aught beside;  
How often vainly sought in things below,  
Whether in sunny clime, or sacred stream,  
Or plant of wondrous powers of which we dream!

Jones Very

# The Acorn

The seed has started,—who can stay it? see,  
The leaves are sprouting high above the ground;  
Already o'er the flowers, its head; the tree  
That rose beside it and that on it frowned,  
Behold! is but a small bush by its side.  
Still on! it cannot stop; its branches spread;  
It looks o'er all the earth in giant pride.  
The nations find upon its limbs their bread,  
Its boughs their millions shelter from the heat,  
Beneath its shade see kindreds, tongues, and all  
That the wide world contains, they all retreat  
Beneath the shelter of that acorn small  
That late thou flung away; 'twas the best gift  
That heaven e'er gave;—its head the low shall lift.

Jones Very

# The Ark

There is no change of time and place with Thee;  
Where'er I go, with me 'tis still the same;  
Within thy presence I rejoice to be,  
And always hallow thy most holy name;  
The world doth ever change; there is no peace  
Among the shallows of its storm-vexed breast;  
With every breath the frothy waves increase,  
They toss up mire and dirt, they cannot rest;  
I thank Thee that within thy strong-built ark  
My soul across the uncertain sea can sail,  
And though the night of death be long and dark,  
My hopes in Christ shall reach within the veil;  
And to the promised haven steady steer,  
Whose rest to those who love is ever near.

Jones Very

# The Barberry-Bush

The bush that has most briers and bitter fruit  
Waits till the frost has turned its green leaves red,  
Its sweetened berries will thy palate suit,  
And thou mayst find e'en there a homely bread;  
Upon the hills of Salem scattered wide,  
Their yellow blossoms gain the eye in Spring;  
And straggling e'en upon the turnpike's side,  
Their ripened branches to your hand they bring;  
I've plucked them oft in boyhood's early hour,  
That then I gave such name, and thought it true;  
But now I know that other fruit as sour,  
Grows on what now thou callst Me and You;  
Yet wilt thou wait the autumn that I see,  
Will sweeter taste than these red berries be.

Jones Very

# The Call

Why art thou not awake, my son?  
The morning breaks I formed for thee;  
And I thus early by thee stand,  
Thy new-awakening life to see.

Why art thou not awake, my son?  
The birds upon the bough rejoice;  
And I thus early by thee stand,  
To hear with theirs thy tuneful voice.

Why sleep'st thou still? the laborers all  
Are in my vineyard;—hear them toil,  
As for the poor with harvest song,  
They treasure up the wine and oil.

I come to wake thee; haste, arise,  
Or thou no share with me can find;  
Thy sandals seize, gird on thy clothes,  
Or I must leave thee here behind.

Jones Very

# The Canary Bird

I cannot hear thy voice with other's ears,  
Who make of thy lost liberty a gain;  
And in thy tale of blighted hopes and fears  
Feel not that every note is born with pain.  
Alas! That with thy music's gentle swell  
Past days of joy should through thy memory throng,  
And each to thee their words of sorrow tell  
While ravished sense forgets thee in thy song.  
The heart that on thy past and future feeds,  
And pours in human words its thoughts divine,  
Though at each birth the spirit inly bleeds,  
Its song may charm the listening ear like thine,  
And men with gilded cage and praise will try  
To make the bard like thee forget his native sky.

Jones Very

# The Clay

Thou shalt do what Thou wilt with thine own hand,  
Thou form'st the spirit like the moulded clay;  
For those who love Thee keep thy just command,  
And in thine image grow as they obey;  
New tints and forms with every hour they take  
Whose life is fashioned by thy spirit's power;  
The crimson dawn is round them when they wake,  
And golden triumphs wait the evening hour;  
The queenly-sceptred night their souls receives,  
And spreads their pillows 'neath her sable tent;  
Above them Sleep their palm with poppy weaves,  
Sweet rest Thou hast to all who labor lent;  
That they may rise refreshed to light again  
And with Thee gather in the whitening grain.

Jones Very

# The Clouded Morning

The morning comes, and thickening clouds prevail,  
Hanging like curtains all the horizon round,  
Or overhead in heavy stillness sail;  
So still is day, it seems like night profound;  
Scarce by the city's din the air is stirred,  
And dull and deadened comes its every sound;  
The cock's shrill, piercing voice subdued is heard,  
By the thick folds of muffling vapors drowned.  
Dissolved in mists the hills and trees appear,  
Their outlines lost and blended with the sky;  
And well-known objects, that to all are near,  
No longer seem familiar to the eye,  
But with fantastic forms they mock the sight,  
As when we grope amid the gloom of night.

Jones Very

# The Columbine

Still, still my eye will gaze long fixed on thee,  
Till I forget that I am called a man,  
And at thy side fast-rooted seem to be,  
And the breeze comes my cheek with thine to fan.  
Upon this craggy hill our life shall pass,  
A life of summer days and summer joys,  
Nodding our honey-bells mid pliant grass  
In which the bee half hid his time employs;  
And here we'll drink with thirsty pores the rain,  
And turn dew-sprinkled to the rising sun,  
And look when in the flaming west again  
His orb across the heaven its path has run;  
Here left in darkness on the rocky steep,  
My weary eyes shall close like folding flowers in sleep.

Jones Very

# The Cottage

The house my earthly parent left  
My heavenly parent still throws down,  
For 'tis of air and sun bereft,  
Nor stars its roof with beauty crown.

He gave it me, yet gave it not  
As one whose gifts are wise and good;  
'Twas but a poor and clay-built cot,  
And for a time the storms withstood.

But lengthening years and frequent rain  
O'ercame its strength; it tottered, fell,  
And left me homeless here again,  
And where to go I could not tell.

But soon the light and open air  
Received me as a wandering child,  
And I soon thought their house more fair,  
And all my grief their love beguiled.

Mine was the grove, the pleasant field  
Where dwelt the flowers I daily trod;  
And there beside them too I kneeled  
And called their friend my friend and God.

Jones Very

# The Dead

I see them crowd on crowd they walk the earth  
Dry, leafless trees no Autumn wind laid bare,  
And in their nakedness find cause for mirth,  
And all unclad would winter's rudeness dare;  
No sap doth through their clattering branches flow,  
Whence springing leaves and blossoms bright appear;  
Their hearts the living God have ceased to know,  
Who gives the spring time to th'expectant year;  
They mimic life, as if from him to steal  
His glow of health to paint the livid cheek;  
They borrow words for thoughts they cannot feel,  
That with a seeming heart their tongue may speak;  
And in their show of life more dead they live  
Than those that to the earth with many tears they give.

Jones Very

# The Disciple

Thou wilt my hands employ, though others find  
No work for those who praise thy name aright;  
And in their worldly wisdom call them blind,  
Whom thou has blest with thine own spirit's sight.  
But while they find no work for thee to do,  
And blindly on themselves alone rely;  
The child must suffer what thou sufferest too  
And learn from him thou sent e'en so to die;  
Thou art my Father, thou wilt give me aid  
To bear the wrong the Spirit suffers here;  
Thou hast thy help upon the mighty laid,  
In him I trust, nor know to want or fear,  
But ever onward walk secure from sin,  
For he has conquered every foe within.

Jones Very

# The Eagles

THE eagles gather on the place of death  
So thick the ground is spotted with their wings,  
The air is tainted with the noisome breath  
The wind from off the field of slaughter brings;  
Alas! no mourners weep them for the slain,  
But all unburied lies the naked soul;  
The whitening bones of thousands strew the plain,  
Yet none can now the pestilence control;  
The eagles gathering on the carcase feed,  
In every heart behold their half-formed prey;  
The battened wills beneath their talons bleed,  
Their iron beaks without remorse must slay;  
Till by the sun no more the place is seen,  
Where they who worshipped idol gods have been.

Jones Very

# The Earth

I would lie low, the ground on which men tread,  
Swept by Thy spirit like the wind of heaven;  
An earth where gushing springs and corn for bread,  
By me at every season should be given;  
Yet not the water or the bread that now  
Supplies their tables with its daily food,  
But thou wouldst give me fruit for every bough,  
Such as Thou givest me, and call'st it good;  
And water from the stream of life should flow,  
By every dwelling that thy love has built,  
Whose taste the ransomed of thy Son shall know,  
Whose robes are washed from every stain of guilt;  
And men would own it was thy hand that blest,  
And from my bosom find a surer rest.

Jones Very

# The Fair Morning

The clear bright morning, with its scented air  
And gaily waving flowers, is here again;  
Man's heart is lifted with the voice of prayer,  
And peace descends, as falls the gentle rain;  
The tuneful birds, that all the night have slept,  
Take up at dawn the evening's dying lay,  
When sleep upon their eyelids gently crept  
And stole with stealthy craft their song away.  
High overhead the forest's swaying boughs  
Sprinkle with drops the traveler on his way;  
He hears far off the tinkling bells of cows  
Driven to pasture at the break of day;  
With vigorous step he passes swift along,  
Making the woods reecho with his song.

Jones Very

# The Garden

I saw the spot where our first parents dwelt;  
And yet it wore to me no face of change,  
For while amid its fields and groves I felt  
As if I had not sinned, nor thought it strange;  
My eye seemed but a part of every sight,  
My ear heard music in each sound that rose,  
Each sense forever found a new delight,  
Such as the spirit's vision only knows;  
Each act some new and ever-varying joy  
Did by my Father's love for me prepare;  
To dress the spot my ever fresh employ,  
And in the glorious whole with Him to share;  
No more without the flaming gate to stray,  
No more for sin's dark stain the debt of death to pay.

Jones Very

# The Gifts Of God

THE LIGHT that fills thy house at morn,  
Thou canst not for thyself retain;  
But all who with thee here are born,  
It bids to share an equal gain.

The wind that blows thy ship along,  
Her swelling sails cannot confine;  
Alike to all the gales belong,  
Nor canst thou claim a breath as thine.

The earth, the green out-spreading earth,  
Why hast thou fenced it off from me?  
Hadst thou than I a nobler birth,  
Who callest thine a gift so free?

The wave, the blue encircling wave,  
No chains can bind, no fetters hold;  
Its thunders tell of Him who gave  
What none can ever buy for gold.

Jones Very

# The Grave Yard

My heart grows sick before the wide-spread death,  
That walks and speaks in seeming life around;  
And I would love the corse without a breath,  
That sleeps forgotten 'neath the cold, cold ground;  
For these do tell the story of decay,  
The worm and rotten flesh hide not nor lie;  
But this, though dying too from day to day,  
With a false show doth cheat the longing eye;  
And hide the worm that gnaws the core of life,  
With painted cheek and smooth deceitful skin;  
Covering a grave with sights of darkness rife,  
A secret cavern filled with death and sin;  
And men walk o'er these graves and know it not,  
For in the body's health the soul's forgot.

Jones Very

# The Heart

There is a cup of sweet or bitter drink,  
Whose waters ever o'er the brim must well,  
Whence flow pure thoughts of love as angels think,  
Or of its dæmon depths the tongue will tell;  
That cup can ne'er be cleansed from outward stains  
While from within the tide forever flows;  
And soon it wearies out the fruitless pains  
The treacherous hand on such a task bestows;  
But ever bright its chrystal sides appear,  
While runs the current from its outlet pure;  
And pilgrims hail its sparkling waters near,  
And stoop to drink the healing fountain sure,  
And bless the cup that cheers their fainting soul  
While through this parching waste they seek their heavenly goal.

Jones Very

# The Idler

I IDLE stand that I may find employ,  
Such as my Master when He comes will give;  
I cannot find in mine own work my joy,  
But wait, although in waiting I must live;  
My body shall not turn which way it will,  
But stand till I the appointed road can find,  
And journeying so his messages fulfil,  
And do at every step the work designed.  
Enough for me, still day by day to wait  
Till Thou who formest me findest me too a task,  
A cripple lying at the rich man's gate,  
Content for the few crumbs I get to ask,  
A laborer but in heart, while bound my hands  
Hangidly down still waiting thy commands.

Jones Very

# The Jew

Thou art more deadly than the Jew of old,  
Thou hast his weapons hidden in thy speech;  
And though thy hand from me thou dost withhold,  
They pierce where sword and spear could never reach.  
Thou hast me fenced about with thorny talk,  
To pierce my soul with anguish while I hear;  
And while amid thy populous streets I walk,  
I feel at every step the entering spear;  
Go, cleanse thy lying mouth of all its guile  
That from the will within thee ever flows;  
Go, cleanse the temple thou dost now defile,  
Then shall I cease to feel thy heavy blows;  
And come and tread with me the path of peace,  
And from thy brother's harm forever cease.

Jones Very

# The Latter Rain

THE latter rain, it falls in anxious haste  
Upon the sun-dried fields and branches bare,  
Loosening with searching drops the rigid waste  
As if it would each root's lost strength repair;  
But not a blade grows green as in the spring,  
No swelling twig puts forth its thickening leaves;  
The robins only mid the harvests sing  
Pecking the grain that scatters from the sheaves;  
The rain falls still--the fruit all ripened drops,  
It pierces chestnut burr and walnut shell,  
The furrowed fields disclose the yellow crops,  
Each bursting pod of talents used can tell,  
And all that once received the early rain  
Declare to man it was not sent in vain.

Jones Very

# The Light From Within

I saw on earth another light  
Than that which lit my eye  
Come forth as from my soul within,  
And from a higher sky.

Its beams shone still unclouded on,  
When in the farthest west  
The sun I once had known had sunk  
Forever to his rest.

And on I walked, though dark the night,  
Nor rose his orb by day;  
As one who by a surer guide  
Was pointed out the way.

'Twas brighter far than noonday's beam;  
It shone from God within,  
And lit, as by a lamp from heaven,  
The world's dark track of sin.

Jones Very

# The Living God

There is no death with Thee! each plant and tree  
In living haste their stems push onward still,  
The pointed blade, each rooted trunk we see  
In various movement all attest thy will;  
The vine must die when its long race is run,  
The tree must fall when it no more can rise;  
The worm has at its root his task begun,  
And hour by hour his steady labor plies;  
Nor man can pause but in thy will must grow,  
And, as his roots within more deep extend,  
He shall o'er sons of sons his branches throw,  
And to the latest born his shadows lend;  
Nor know in thee disease nor length of days,  
But lift his head forever in thy praise.

Jones Very

# The Morning Watch

'Tis near the morning watch, the dim lamp burns  
But scarcely shows how dark the slumbering street;  
No sound of life the silent mart returns;  
No friends from house to house their neighbors greet;  
It is the sleep of death; a deeper sleep  
Than e'er before on mortal eyelids fell;  
No stars above the gloom their places keep;  
No faithful watchmen of the morning tell;  
Yet still they slumber on, though rising day  
Hath through their windows poured the awakening light;  
Or, turning in their sluggard trances, say—  
'There yet are many hours to fill the night;'  
They rise not yet; while on the bridegroom goes  
'Till he the day's bright gates forever on them close!

Jones Very

# The New Birth

a new life;--thoughts move not as they did  
With slow uncertain steps across my mind,  
In thronging haste fast pressing on they bid  
The portals open to the viewless wind  
That comes not save when in the dust is laid  
The crown of pride that gilds each mortal brow,  
And from before man's vision melting fade  
The heavens and earth;--their walls are falling now.--  
Fast crowding on, each thought asks utterance strong;  
Storm-lifted waves swift rushing to the shore,  
On from the sea they send their shouts along,  
Back through the cave-worn rocks their thunders roar;  
And I a child of God by Christ made free  
Start from death's slumbers to Eternity.

Jones Very

# The New Man

THE hands must touch and handle many things,  
The eyes long waste their glances all in vain;  
The feet course still in idle, mazy rings,  
E'er man himself, the lost, shall back regain;  
The hand that ever moves, the eyes that see,  
While day holds out his shining lamp on high,  
And strait as flies the honey-seeking bee,  
Direct the feet to unseen flowers they spy,  
These, when they come, the man revealed from heaven,  
Shall labor all the day in quiet rest,  
And find at eve the covert duly given,  
Where with the bird they find sweet sleep and rest;  
That shall their wasted strength to health restore,  
And bid them seek the morn the hills and fields once more.

Jones Very

# The New World

THE NIGHT that has no star lit up by God,  
The day that round men shines who still are blind,  
The earth their grave-turned feet for ages trod,  
And sea swept over by His mighty wind,  
All these have passed away, the melting dream  
That flitted o'er the sleeper's half-shut eye,  
When touched by morning's golden-darting beam;  
And he beholds around the earth and sky  
That ever real stands, the rolling shores  
And heaving billows of the boundless main,  
That show, though time is past, no trace of years.  
And earth restored he sees as his again,  
The earth that fades not and the heavens that stand,  
Their strong foundations laid by God's right hand.

Jones Very

# The Old Road

THE ROAD is left that once was trod  
By man and heavy-laden beast;  
And new ways opened, iron-shod,  
That bind the land from west to east.

I asked of Him who all things knows  
Why none who lived now passed that way:  
Where rose the dust the grass now grows?  
A still, low voice was heard to say,—

“Thou knowest not why I change the course  
Of him who travels: learn to go,  
Obey the Spirit’s gentle force,  
Nor ask thou where the stream may flow.

“Man shall not walk in his own ways,  
For he is blind and cannot see;  
But let him trust, and lengthened days  
Shall lead his feet to heaven and Me.

Then shall the grass the path grow o’er,  
That his own wilfulness has trod;  
And man nor beast shall pass it more,  
But he shall walk with Me, his God.”

Jones Very

# The Poor

I walk the streets and though not meanly drest,  
Yet none so poor as can with me compare;  
For none though weary call me into rest,  
And though I hunger, none their substance share;  
I ask not for my stay the broken reed,  
That fails when most I want a friendly arm;  
I cannot on the loaves and fishes feed  
That want the blessing that they may not harm;  
I only ask the living word to hear  
From tongues that now but speak to utter death;  
I thirst for one cool cup of water clear  
But drink the riled stream of lying breath;  
And wander on though in my Fatherland,  
Yet hear no welcome voice and see no beckoning hand.

Jones Very

# The Prayer

Wilt Thou not visit me?  
The plant beside me feels Thy gentle dew;  
And every blade of grass I see,  
From Thy deep earth its quickening moisture drew.

Wilt Thou not visit me?  
Thy morning calls on me with cheering tone;  
And every hill and tree  
Lends but one voice, the voice of Thee alone.

Come, for I need Thy love,  
More than the flower the dew, or grass the rain;  
Come, gently as Thy holy dove;  
And let me in thy sight rejoice to live again.

I will not hide from them,  
When Thy storms come, though fierce may be their wrath;  
But bow with leafy stem,  
And strengthened follow on Thy chosen path.

Yes, Thou wilt visit me,  
Nor plant nor tree Thing eye delights so well,  
As when from sin set free  
My spirit loves with Thine in peace to dwell.

Jones Very

# The Presence

I sit within my room, and joy to find  
That Thou who always lov'st, art with me here,  
That I am never left by Thee behind,  
But by thyself Thou keep'st me ever near;  
The fire burns brighter when with Thee I look,  
And seems a kinder servant sent to me;  
With gladder heart I read thy holy book,  
Because thou art the eyes by which I see;  
This aged chair, that table, watch and door  
Around in ready service ever wait;  
Nor can I ask of Thee a menial more  
To fill the measure of my large estate,  
For Thou thyself, with all a father's care,  
Where'er I turn, art ever with me there.

Jones Very

# The Rail Road

Thou great proclaimer to the outward eye  
Of what the spirit too would seek to tell,  
Onward thou go'st, appointed from on high  
The other warnings of the Lord to swell;  
Thou art the voice of one that through the world  
Proclaims in startling tones, 'Prepare the way;'  
The lofty mountain from its seat is hurled,  
The flinty rocks thine onward march obey;  
The valleys lifted from their lowly bed  
O'ertop the hills that on them frowned before,  
Thou passest where the living seldom tread,  
Through forests dark, where tides beneath thee roar,  
And bid'st man's dwelling from thy track remove,  
And would with warning voice his crooked paths reprove.

Jones Very

# The Robe

Each naked branch, the yellow leaf or brown,  
The rugged rock, and death-deformed plain  
Lie white beneath the winter's feathery down,  
Nor doth a spot unsightly now remain;  
On sheltering roof, on man himself it falls;  
But him no robe, not spotless snow makes clean;  
Beneath, his corpse-like spirit ever calls,  
That on it too may fall the heavenly screen;  
But all in vain, its guilt can never hide  
From the quick spirit's heart-deep searching eye,  
There barren plains, and caverns yawning wide  
Ever lie naked to the passer by;  
Nor can one thought deformed the presence shun,  
But to the spirit's gaze stands bright as in the sun.

Jones Very

# The Robin

Thou need'st not flutter from thy half-built nest,  
Whene'er thou hear'st man's hurrying feet go by,  
Fearing his eye for harm may on thee rest,  
Or he thy young unfinished cottage spy;  
All will not heed thee on that swinging bough,  
Nor care that round thy shelter spring the leaves,  
Nor watch thee on the pool's wet margin now  
For clay to plaster straws thy cunning weaves;  
All will not hear thy sweet out-pouring joy,  
That with morn's stillness blends the voice of song,  
For over-anxious cares their souls employ,  
That else upon thy music borne along  
And the light wings of heart-ascending prayer  
Had learned that Heaven is pleased thy simple joys to share.

Jones Very

# The Rose

The rose thou show'st me has lost all its hue,  
For thou dost seem to me than it less fair;  
For when I look I turn from it to you,  
And feel the flower has been thine only care;  
Thou could'st have grown as freely by its side  
As spring these buds from out the parent stem,  
But thou art from thy Father severed wide,  
And turnest from thyself to look at them,  
Thy words, do not perfume the summer air,  
Nor draw the eye and ear like this thy flower;  
No bees shall make thy lips their daily care,  
And sip the sweets distilled from hour to hour;  
Nor shall new plants from out thy scattered seed,  
O'er many a field the eye with beauty feed.

Jones Very

# The Slave

I saw him forging link by link his chain,  
Yet while he felt its length he thought him free,  
And sighed for those borne o'er the barren main  
To bondage that to his would freedom be;  
Yet on he walked with eyes far-gazing still  
On wrongs that from his own dark bosom flowed,  
And while he thought to do his master's will  
He but the more his disobedience showed;  
I heard a wild rose by the stony wall,  
Whose fragrance reached me in the passing gale,  
A lesson give—it gave alike to all—  
And I repeat the moral of its tale,  
'That from the spot where deep its dark roots grew  
Bloomed forth the fragrant rose that all delight to view.'

Jones Very

# The Soldier

He was not armed like those of eastern clime,  
Whose heavy axes felled their heathen foe;  
Nor was he clad like those of later time,  
Whose breast-worn cross betrayed no cross below;  
Nor was he of the tribe of Levi born,  
Whose pompous rites proclaim how vain their prayer;  
Whose chilling words are heard at night and morn,  
Who rend their robes but still their hearts would spare;  
But he nor steel nor sacred robe had on,  
Yet went he forth in God's almighty power;  
He spoke the word whose will is ever done  
From day's first dawn till earth's remotest hour;  
And mountains melted from his presence down,  
And hell affrighted fled before his frown.

Jones Very

# The Son

Father, I wait thy word. The sun doth stand  
Beneath the mingling line of night and day,  
A listening servant, waiting thy command  
To roll rejoicing on its silent way;  
The tongue of time abides the appointed hour,  
Till on our ear its silent warnings fall;  
The heavy cloud withholds the pelting shower,  
Then every drop speeds onward at thy call;  
The bird reposes on the yielding bough,  
With breast unswollen by the tide of song;  
So does my spirit wait thy presence now  
To pour thy praise in quickening life along,  
Chiding with voice divine man's lengthened sleep,  
While round the Unuttered Word and Love their vigils keep.

Jones Very

# The Song

When I would sing of crooked streams and fields,  
On, on from me they stretch too far and wide,  
And at their look my song all powerless yields,  
And down the river bears me with its tide;  
Amid the fields I am a child again,  
The spots that then I loved I love the more,  
My fingers drop the strangely scrawling pen,  
And I remember nought but nature's lore,  
I plunge me in the river's cooling wave,  
Or on the embroidered bank admiring lean,  
Now some endangered insect life to save,  
Now watch the pictured flowers and grasses green;  
Forever playing where a boy I played,  
By hill and grove, by field and stream delayed.

Jones Very

# The Spirit

I would not breathe, when blows thy mighty wind  
O'er desolate hill and winter-blasted plain,  
But stand in waiting hope if I may find  
Each flower recalled to newer life again  
That now unsightly hides itself from Thee,  
Amid the leaves or rustling grasses dry,  
With ice-cased rock and snowy-mantled tree  
Ashamed lest Thou its nakedness should spy;  
But Thou shall breathe and every rattling bough  
Shall gather leaves; each rock with rivers flow;  
And they that hide them from thy presence now  
In new found robes along thy path shall glow,  
And meadows at thy coming fall and rise,  
Their green waves sprinkled with a thousand eyes.

Jones Very

# The Spirit Land

Father! thy wonders do not singly stand,  
Nor far removed where feet have seldom strayed;  
Around us ever lies the enchanted land  
In marvels rich to thine own sons displayed;  
In finding thee are all things round us found;  
In losing thee are all things lost beside;  
Ears have we but in vain strange voices sound,  
And to our eyes the vision is denied;  
We wander in the country far remote,  
Mid tombs and ruined piles in death to dwell;  
Or on the records of past greatness dote,  
And for a buried soul the living sell;  
While on our path bewildered falls the night  
That ne'er returns us to the fields of light.

Jones Very

# The Stranger's Gift

I found far culled from fragrant field and grove  
Each flower that makes our Spring a welcome guest;  
In one sweet bond of brotherhood inwove  
An osier band their leafy stalks compressed;  
A stranger's hand had made their bloom my own,  
And fresh their fragrance rested on the air;  
His gift was mine—but he who gave unknown,  
And my heart sorrowed though the flowers were fair.  
Now oft I grieve to meet them on the lawn,  
As sweetly scattered round my path they grow,  
By One who on their petals paints the dawn,  
And gilt with sunset splendors bids them glow,  
For I ne'er asked 'who steeps them in perfume?'  
Nor anxious sought His love who crowns them all with bloom.

Jones Very

# The Tree

I love thee when thy swelling buds appear  
And one by one their tender leaves unfold,  
As if they knew that warmer suns were near,  
Nor longer sought to hide from winter's cold;  
And when with darker growth thy leaves are seen  
To veil from view the early robin's nest,  
I love to lie beneath thy waving skreen  
With limbs by summer's heat and toil opprest;  
And when the autumn winds have stript thee bare,  
And round thee lies the smooth untrodden snow,  
When nought is thine that made thee once so fair,  
I love to watch thy shadowy form below,  
And through thy leafless arms to look above  
On stars that brighter beam when most we need their love.

Jones Very

# The Trees Of Life

For those who worship Thee there is no death,  
For all they do is but with Thee to dwell;  
Now while I take from Thee this passing breath,  
It is but of thy glorious name to tell;  
Nor words nor measured sounds have I to find,  
But in them both my soul doth ever flow;  
They come as viewless as the unseen wind,  
And tell thy noiseless steps where'er I go;  
The trees that grow along thy living stream,  
And from its springs refreshment ever drink,  
Forever glittering in thy morning beam  
They bend them o'er the river's grassy brink  
And as more high and wide their branches grow  
They look more fair within the depths below.

Jones Very

# The Violet

Thou tellest truths unspoken yet by man  
By this thy lonely home and modest look;  
For he has not the eyes such truths to scan,  
Nor learns to read from such a lowly book;  
With him it is not life firm-fixed to grow  
Beneath the outspreading oaks and rising pines,  
Content this humble lot of thine to know,  
The nearest neighbor of the creeping vines;  
Without fixed root he cannot trust like thee  
The rain will know the appointed hour to fall,  
But fears lest sun or shower may hurtful be,  
And would delay or speed them with his call;  
Nor trust like thee when wintry winds blow cold,  
Whose shrinking form the withered leaves enfold.

Jones Very

# The War

I saw a war, yet none the trumpet blew,  
Nor in their hands the steel-wrought weapons bare;  
And in that conflict armed there fought but few,  
And none that in the world's loud tumults share;  
They fought against their wills,—the stubborn foe  
That mail-clad warriors left unfought within,  
And wordy champions left unslain below,—  
The ravening wolf though drest in fleecy skin;—  
They fought for peace,—not that the world can give,  
Whose tongue proclaims the war its hands have ceased  
And bids us as each other's neighbor live,  
Ere haughty Self within us has deceased;  
They fought for him whose kingdom must increase,  
Good will to men, on earth forever peace.

Jones Very

# The Wind-Flower

Thou lookest up with meek confiding eye  
Upon the clouded smile of April's face,  
Unharm'd though Winter stands uncertain by  
Eyeing with jealous glance each opening grace  
Thou trustest wisely! in thy faith arrayed  
More glorious thou than Israel's wisest King;  
Such faith was his whom men to death betrayed  
As thine who hear'st the timid voice of Spring,  
While other flowers still hide them from her call  
Along the river's brink and meadow bare.  
Thee will I seek beside the stony wall,  
And in thy trust with childlike heart would share,  
O'erjoyed that in thy early leaves I find  
A lesson taught by him who loved all human kind.

Jones Very

# Thy Beauty Fades

Thy beauty fades and with it too my love,  
For 'twas the self-same stalk that bore its flower;  
Soft fell the rain, and breaking from above  
The sun looked out upon our nuptial hour;  
And I had thought forever by thy side  
With bursting buds of hope in youth to dwell,  
But one by one Time strewed thy petals wide,  
And every hope's wan look a grief can tell:  
For I had thoughtless lived beneath his sway,  
Who like a tyrant dealeth with us all,  
Crowning each rose, though rooted on decay,  
With charms that shall the spirit's love enthrall,  
And for a season turn the soul's pure eyes  
From virtue's changeless bloom that time and death defies.

Jones Very

# Thy Better Self

I AM thy other self, what thou wilt be,  
When thou art I, the one seest now;  
In finding thy true self thou wilt find me,  
The springing blade, where now thou dost but plough.  
I am thy neighbor, a new house I've built,  
Which thou as yet hast never entered in;  
I come to call thee; come in when thou wilt,  
The feast is always ready to begin.  
Thou should'st love me, as thou dost love thyself,  
For I am but another self beside;  
To show thee him thou lov'st in better health,  
What thou would'st be, when thou to him hast died;  
Then visit me, I make thee many a call;  
Nor live I near to thee alone, but all.

Jones Very

# Thy Brother's Blood

I have no Brother,—they who meet me now  
Offer a hand with their own wills defiled,  
And, while they wear a smooth unwrinkled brow,  
Know not that Truth can never be beguiled;  
Go wash the hand that still betrays thy guilt;—  
Before the spirit's gaze what stain can hide?  
Abel's red blood upon the earth is spilt,  
And by thy tongue it cannot be denied;  
I hear not with the ear,—the heart doth tell  
Its secret deeds to me untold before;  
Go, all its hidden plunder quickly sell,  
Then shalt thou cleanse thee from thy brother's gore,  
Then will I take thy gift;—that bloody stain  
Shall not be seen upon thy hand again.

Jones Very

# Time

There is no moment but whose flight doth bring  
Bright clouds and fluttering leaves to deck my bower;  
And I within like some sweet bird must sing  
To tell the story of the passing hour;  
For time has secrets that no bird has sung,  
Nor changing leaf with changing season told;  
They wait the utterance of some nobler tongue  
Like that which spoke in prophet tones of old;  
Then day and night, and month and year shall tell  
The tale that speaks but faint from bird and bough;  
In spirit-songs their praise shall upward swell  
Nor longer pass heaven's gate unheard as now,  
But cause e'en angels' ears to catch the strain,  
And send it back to earth in joy again.

Jones Very

# To The Canary Bird

I cannot hear thy voice with others' ears,  
Who make of thy lost liberty a gain;  
And in thy tale of blighted hopes and fears  
Feel not that every note is born with pain.  
Alas! that with thy music's gentle swell  
Past days of joy should through thy memory throng,  
And each to thee their words of sorrow tell,  
While ravished sense forgets thee in thy song.  
The heart that on the past and future feeds,  
And pours in human words its thoughts divine,  
Though at each birth the spirit inly bleeds,  
Its song may charm the listening ear like thine,  
And men with gilded cage and praise will try  
To make the bard like thee forget his native sky.

Jones Very

# To The Fossil Flower

Dark fossil flower! I see thy leaves unrolled,  
With all thy lines of beauty freshly marked,  
As when the eye of Morn beamed on thee first,  
And thou first turn'dst to meet its welcome smile.  
And sometimes in the coals' bright rain-bow hues,  
I dream I see the colors of thy prime,  
And for a moment robe thy form again  
In splendor not its own. Flower of the past!  
Now as I look on thee, life's echoing tread  
Falls noiseless on my ear; the present dies;  
And o'er my soul the thoughts of distant time,  
In silent waves, like billows from the sea,  
Come roling on and on, with ceaseless flow,  
Innumerable. Thou may'st have sprung unsown  
Into thy noon of life, when first earth heard  
Its Maker's sovereign voice; and laughing flowers  
Waved o'er the meadows, hung on mountain crags,  
And nodded in the breeze on every hill.  
Thou may'st have bloomed unseen, save by the stars  
That sang together o'er thy rosy birth,  
And came at eve to watch thy folded rest.  
None may have sought thee on thy flagrant home,  
Save light-voiced winds that round thy dwelling played,  
Or seemed to sigh, as oft their winged haste  
Compelled their feet to roam. Thou may'st have lived  
Beneath the light of later days, when man  
With feet free-roving as the homeless wind,  
Sealed the thick-mantled height, coursed plains unshorn,  
Breaking the solitude of nature's haunt  
With voice that seemed to blend, in one sweet strain,  
The mingled music of the elements.  
And when against his infant frame they rose,  
Uncurbed, unawed by his yet feeble hand,  
And when the muttering storm, and shouting wave,  
And rattling thunder, mated, round him raged,  
And seemed at times like dæmon foes to gird,  
Thou may'st have won with gentle look his heart,  
And stirred the first warm prayer of gratitude,  
And been his first, his simplest altar-gift.

For thee, dark flower! the kindling sun can bring  
No more the colors that it gave, nor morn,  
With kindly kiss, restore thy breathing sweets:  
Yet may the mind's mysterious touch recall  
The bloom and fragrance of thy early prime:  
For HE who to the lowly lily gave  
A glory richer than to proudest king,  
He painted not those darkly-shining leaves,  
With blushes like the dawn, in vain; nor gave  
To thee its sweetly-scented breath, to waste  
Upon the barren air. E'en though thou stood  
Alone in nature's forest-home untrod,  
The first-love of the stars and sighing winds,  
The mineral holds with faithful trust thy form,  
To wake in human hearts sweet thoughts of love,  
Now the dark past hangs round thy memory.

Jones Very

# To The Hummingbird

I cannot heal thy green gold breast,  
Where deep those cruel teeth have prest,  
Nor bid thee raise thy ruffled crest,  
And seek thy mate,  
Who sits alone within thy nest,  
Nor sees thy fate.

No more with him in summer hours  
Thou'lt hum amid the leafy bowers,  
Nor hover round the dewy flowers,  
To feed thy young;  
Nor seek, when evening darkly lowers,  
Thy nest high hung.

No more thou'lt know a mother's care  
Thy honied spoils at eve to share,  
Nor teach thy tender brood to dare  
With upward spring,  
Their path through fields of sunny air,  
On new fledged wing.

For thy return in vain shall wait  
Thy tender young, thy fond fond mate,  
Till night's last stars beam forth full late  
On their sad eyes;  
Unknown, alas! thy cruel fate,  
Unheard thy cries!

Jones Very

# To The Painted Columbine

Bright image of the early years  
When glowed my cheek as red as thou,  
And life's dark throng of cares and fears  
Were swift-winged shadows o'er my sunny brow!

Thou blushest from the painter's page,  
Robed in the mimic tints of art;  
But Nature's hand in youth's green age  
With fairer hues first traced thee on my heart.

The morning's blush, she made it thine,  
The morn's sweet breath, she gave it thee,  
And in thy look, my Columbine!  
Each fond-remembered spot she bade me see.

I see the hill's far-gazing head,  
Where gay thou noddest in the gale;  
I hear light-bounding footsteps tread  
The grassy path that winds along the vale.

I hear the voice of woodland song  
Break from each bush and well-known tree,  
And on light pinions borne along,  
Comes back the laugh from childhood's heart of glee.

O'er the dark rock the dashing brook,  
With look of anger, leaps again,  
And, hastening to each flowery nook,  
Its distant voice is heard far down the glen.

Fair child of art! thy charms decay,  
Touched by the withered hand of Time;  
And hushed the music of that day,  
When my voice mingled with the streamlet's chime;

But on my heart thy cheek of bloom  
Shall live when Nature's smile has fled;  
And, rich with memory's sweet perfume,  
Shall o'er her grave thy tribute incense shed.

There shalt thou live and wake the glee  
That echoed on thy native hill;  
And when, loved flower! I think of thee,  
My infant feet will seem to seek thee still.

Jones Very

# To The Pure All Things Are Pure

The flowers I pass have eyes that look at me,  
The birds have ears that hear my spirit's voice,  
And I am glad the leaping brook to see,  
Because it does at my light step rejoice.  
Come, brothers, all who tread the grassy hill,  
Or wander thoughtless o'er the blooming fields,  
Come learn the sweet obedience of the will;  
Thence every sight and sound new pleasure yields.  
Nature shall seem another house of thine,  
When he who formed thee, bids it live and play,  
And in thy rambles e'en the creeping vine  
Shall keep with thee a jocund holiday,  
And every plant, and bird, and insect, be  
Thine own companions born for harmony.

Jones Very

# Who Hath Ears To Hear Let Him Hear

The sun doth not the hidden place reveal,  
Whence pours at morn his golden flood of light;  
But what the night's dark breast would fain conceal,  
In its true colors walks before our sight;  
The bird does not betray the secret springs,  
Whence note on note her music sweetly pours;  
Yet turns the ear attentive while she sings,  
The willing heart while falls the strain adores;  
So shall the spirit tell not whence its birth,  
But in its light thine untold deeds lay bare;  
And while it walks with thee flesh-clothed the earth,  
Its words shall of the Father's love declare;  
And happy those whose ears shall hail its voice,  
And clean within the day it gives rejoice.

Jones Very

# Worship

There is no worship now,—the idol stands  
Within the spirit's holy resting place!  
Millions before it bend with upraised hands,  
And with their gifts God's purer shrine disgrace;  
The prophet walks unhonored mid the crowd  
That to the idol's temple daily throng;  
His voice unheard above their voices loud,  
His strength too feeble 'gainst the torrent strong;  
But there are bounds that ocean's rage can stay  
When wave on wave leaps madly to the shore:  
And soon—the prophet's word shall men obey,  
And hushed to peace the billows cease to roar;  
For he who spoke—and warring winds kept peace,  
Commands again—and man's wild passions cease.

Jones Very

# Yourself

T'is to yourself I speak; you cannot know  
Him whom I call in speaking such a one,  
For you beneath the earth lie buried low,  
Which he, alone, as living walks upon.  
You may at times have heard him speak to you,  
And often wished perchance that you were he;  
And I must ever wish that it were true,  
For then you could hold fellowship with me:  
But now you hear us talk as strangers, met  
Above the room wherein you lie abed;  
A word perhaps loud spoken you may get,  
Or hear our feet when heavily they tread;  
But he who speaks, or he who's spoken to,  
Must both remain as strangers still to you.

Jones Very