

Thomas Sturge Moore

- poems -

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Thomas Sturge Moore(1870-1944)

Thomas Sturge Moore (March 4, 1870– July 18, 1944) was an English poet, author and artist. He was born on 4 March 1870 and was educated at Dulwich College, the Croydon Art School and Lambeth Art School. He was a long-term friend and correspondent of W. B. Yeats. He was also a playwright, writing a Medea influenced by Yeats' drama and the Japanese Noh style.

Sturge Moore was a prolific poet and his subjects included, morality, art and the spirit. His first pamphlet, Two Poems, was printed privately in 1893 and his first book of verse, The Vinedresser, was published in 1899. His love for poetry lead him to become an active member of the Poetry Recital Society. His first (of 31) plays to be produced was Aphrodite against Artemis (1906), staged by the Literary Theatre Club of which he became a member in 1908. He received a civil list pension in 1920 in recognition for his contribution to literature and in 1930 he was nominated as one of seven candidates for the position of Poet Laureate. He died on 18 July 1944.

He adopted the name 'Sturge' as a way of avoiding confusion with the poet Thomas Moore.

He was the brother of the famous philosopher George Edward Moore, one of the founders of the Analytic tradition in philosophy.

A Duet

'FLOWERS nodding gaily, scent in air,
Flowers posied, flowers for the hair,
Sleepy flowers, flowers bold to stare----'
 'O pick me some!'

'Shells with lip, or tooth, or bleeding gum,
Tell-tale shells, and shells that whisper Come,
Shells that stammer, blush, and yet are dumb----'
 'O let me hear.'

'Eyes so black they draw one trembling near,
Brown eyes, caverns flooded with a tear,
Cloudless eyes, blue eyes so windy clear----'
 'O look at me!'

'Kisses sadly blown across the sea,
Darkling kisses, kisses fair and free,
Bob-a-cherry kisses 'neath a tree----'
 'O give me one!'

Thus sand a king and queen in Babylon.

Thomas Sturge Moore

A Sicilian Idyll

(First Scene) Damon
I thank thee, no;
Already have I drunk a bowl of wine . . .
Nay, nay, why wouldest thou rise?
There rolls thy ball of worsted! Sit thee down;
Come, sit thee down, Cydilla,
And let me fetch thy ball, rewind the wool,
And tell thee all that happened yesterday.

Cydilla
Thanks, Damon; now, by Zeus, thou art so brisk,
It shames me that to stoop should try my bones.

Damon
We both are old,
And if we may have peaceful days are blessed;
Few hours of bouyancy will come to break
The sure withdrawal from us of life's flood.

Cydilla
True, true, youth looks a great way off! To think
It wonce was age did lie quite out of sight!

Damon
Not many days have been so beautiful
As yesterday, Cydilla; yet one was;
And I with thee broke tranced on its fine spell;
Thou dost remember? Yes? but not with tears,
Ah, not with tears, Cydilla, pray, oh, pray!

Cydilla
Pardon me, Damon,
'Tis many years since thou hast touched thereon;
And something stirs about thee -
Such air of eagerness as was thine when
I was more foolish than in my life, I hope
To ever have been at another time.

Damon

Pooh! foolish? - thou wast then so very wise
That, often having seen thee foolish since,
Wonder has made me faint that thou shouldst err.

Cydilla

Nay, then I erred, dear Damon; and remorse
Was not so slow to find me as thou deemst.

Damon

There, mop those dear wet eyes, or thou'l ne'er hear
What it was filled my heart yesterday.

Cydilla

Tell, Damon; since I well know that regrets
Hang like dull gossips round another's ear.

Damon

First, thou must know that oftentimes I rise, -
Not heeding or not finding sleep, of watching
Afraid no longer to be prodigal, -
And gaze upon the beauty of the night.
Quiet hours, while dawn absorbs the waning stars,
Are like cold water sipped between our cups
Washing the jaded palate till it taste
The wine again. Ere the sun rose, I sat
Within my garden porch; my lamp was left
Burning beside my bed, though it would be
Broad day before I should return upstairs.
I let it burn, willing to waste some oil
Rather than to disturb my tranquil mood;
But, as the Fates determined, it was seen. -
Suddenly, running round the dovecote, came
A young man naked, breathless, through the dawn,
Florid with haste and wine; it was Hipparchus.
Yes, there he stood before me panting, rubbing
His heated flesh which felt the cold at once.
When he had breath enough, he begged me straight
To put the lamp out; and himself and done it
Ere I was on the stair.
Flung all along my bed, his gasping shook it
When I at length could sit down by his side:
'What cause, young sir, brings you here in this plight

At such an hour?' He shuddered, sighed and rolled
My blanket round him; then came a gush of words:
'The first of causes, Damon, namely Love,
Eldest and least resigned and most unblushing
Of all the turbulent impulsive gods.
A quarter of an hour scarce has flown
Since lovely arms clung round me, and my head
Asleep lay nested in a woman's hair;
My cheek still bears print of its ample coils.'
Athwart its burning flush he drew my fingers
And their tips felt it might be as he said.
'Oh I have had a night, a night, a night!
Had Paris so much bliss?
And oh! was Helen's kiss
To be compared with those I tasted?
Which but for me had all been wasted
On a bald man, a fat man, a gross man, a beast
To scare the best guest from the very best feast!'
Cydilla need not hear half that he said,
For he was mad awhile.
But having given rein to hot caprice,
And satyr jest, and the distempered male,
At length, I heard his story.
At sun-down certain miles without the town
He'd chanced upon a light-wheeled litter-car,
And in it there stood one
Yet more a woman than her garb was rich,
With more of youth and health than elegance.
'The mules,' he said, 'were beauties: she was one,
And cried directions to the neighbour field:
'O catch that big bough! Fool, not that, the next!
Clumsy, you've let it go! O stop it swaying,
The eggs will jolt out!' From the road,' said he,
'I could not see who thus was rated; so
Sprang up beside her and beheld her husband,
Lover or keeper, what you like to call him; -
A middle-aged stout man upon whose shoulders
Kneeled up a scraggy mule-boy slave, who was
The fool that could not reach a thrush's nest
Which they, while plucking almond, had revealed.
Before she knew who it could be, I said,
'Why yes, he is a fool, but we, fair friend,

Were we not foolish waiting for such fools?
Let us be off! I stooped, took, shook the reins
With one hand, while the other clasped her waist.
'Ah, who?' she turned; I smiled like amorous Zeus;
A certain vagueness clouded her wild eyes
As though she saw a swan, a bull, a shower
Of hurried flames, and felt divinely pleased.
I cracked the whip and we were jolted down;
A kiss was snatched getting the ribbons straight;
We hardly heard them first begin to bawl,
So great our expedition towards the town:
We flew. I pulled up at an inn, then bid them
Stable my mules and chariot and prepare
A meal for Dives; meanwhile we would stroll
Down to the market. Took her arm in mine,
And, out of sight, hurried her through cross-lanes,
Bade her choose, now at a fruit, now pastry booth.
Until we gained my lodging she spoke little
But often laughed, tittering from time to time,
'O Bacchus, what a prank! - Just think of Cymon,
So stout as he is, at least five miles to walk
Without a carriage! - well you take things coolly' -
Or such appreciation nice of gifts
I need not boast of, since I had them gratis,
When my stiff door creaked open grudgingly
Her face first fell; the room looked bare enough.
Still we brought with us food and cakes; I owned
A little cellar of delicious wine;
An unasked neighbour's garden furnished flowers;
Jests helped me nimbly, I surpassed myself;
So we were friends and, having laughed, we drank,
Ate, sang, danced, grew wild. Soon both had one
Desire, effort, goal,
One bed, one sleep, one dream . . .
O Damon, Damon, both had one alarm,
When woken by the door forced rudely open,
Lit from the stair, bedazzled, glowered at, hated!
She clung to me; her master, husband, uncle
(I know not which or what he was) stood there;
It crossed my mind he might have been her father.
Naked, unarmed, I rose, and did assume
What dignity is not derived from clothes,

Bid them to quit my room, my private dwelling.
It was no use, for that gross beast was rich;
Had his been neither legal right nor moral,
My natural right was nought, for his she was
In eyes of those bribed catchpols. Brute revenge
Seethed in his pimpled face: 'To gaol with him!'
He shouted huskily. I wrapped some clothes
About my shuddering bed-fellow, a sheet
Flung round myself; ere she was led away,
Had whispered to her 'Shriek, faint on the stair!'
Then I was seized by two dog officers.
That girl was worth her keep, for, going down,
She suddenly writhed, gasped, and had a fit.
My chance occurred, and I whipped through the casement;
All they could do was catch away the sheet;
I dropped a dozen feet into a bush,
Soon found my heels and plied them; here I am.'

Cydilla

A strange tale, Damon, this to tell to me
And introduce as thou at first began.

Damon

Thy life, Cydilla, has at all times been
A ceremony: this young man's
Discovered by free impulse, not couched in forms
Worn and made smooth by prudent folk long dead.
I love Hipparchus for his wave-like brightness;
He wastes himself, but till his flash is gone
I shall be ever glad to hear him laugh:
Nor could one make a Spartan of him even
Were one the Spartan with a will to do it.
Yet had there been no more than what is told,
Thou wouldest not now be lending ear to me.

Cydilla

Hearing such things, I think of my poor son,
Which makes me far too sad to smile at folly.

Damon

There, let me tell thee all just as it happened,
And of thy son I shall be speaking soon.

Cydilla

Delphis! Alas, are his companions still
No better than such ne'er-do-wells? I thought
His life was sager now, though he has killed
My hopes of seeing him a councillor.

Damon

How thou art quick to lay claim to a sorrow!
Should I have come so eagerly to thee
If all there was to tell thee were such poor news?

Cydilla

Forgive me; well know I there is no end
To Damon's kindness; my poor boy has proved it;
Could but his father so have understood him!

Damon

Let lie the sad contents of vanished years;
Why with complaints reproach the helpless dead?
Thy husband ne'er will cross thy hopes again.
Come, think of what a sky made yesterday
The worthy dream of thrice divine Apollo!
Hipparchus' plan was, we should take the road
(As, when such mornings tempt me, is my wont)
And cross the hills, along the coast, toward Mylae.
He in disguise, a younger handier Chloe,
Would lead my mule; must brown his face and arms:
And thereon straight to wake her he was gone.
Their voices from her cabin crossed the yard;
He swears those parts of her are still well made
Which she keeps too well hidden when about; -
And she, no little pleased, that interlards,
Between her exclamations at his figure,
Reproof of gallantries half-laughed at hers.
Anon she titters as he dons her dress
Doubtless with pantomime -
Head-carriage and hip-swagger.
A wench, more conscious of her sex than grace,
He then rejoined me, changed beyond belief,
Roguish as vintage makes them; bustling helps
Or hinders Chloe harness to the mule; -

In fine bewitching both her age and mine.
The life that in such fellows runs to waste
Is like a gust that pulls about spring trees
And spoils your hope of fruit, while it delights
The sense with bloom and odour scattered, mingled
With salt spume savours from a crested offing.
The sun was not long up when we set forth
And, coming to the deeply shadowed gate,
Found catchpolls lurked there, true to his surmise.
Them he, his beard disguised like face-ache, sauced;
(Too gaily for that bandaged cheek, thought I);
But they, whose business was to think,
Were quite contented, let the hussy pass,
Returned her kisses blown back down the road,
And crowned the mirth of their outwitter's heart.
As the steep road wound clear above the town,
Fewer became those little comedies
To which encounteres roused him: till, at last,
He scarcely knew we passed some vine-dressers:
And I could see the sun's heat, lack of sleep,
And his late orgy would defeat his powers.
So, where the road grows level and must soon
Descend, I bade him climb into the car;
On which the mule went slower still and slower.
This creature, who, upon occasions, shows
Taste very like her master's left the highway
And took a grass-grown wheel-track that led down
Zigzag athwart the broad curved banks of lawn
Coating a valley between rounded hills
Which faced the sea abruptly in huge crags.
Each slope grew steeper till I left my seat
And led the mule; for now Hipparchus' snore
Tuned with the crooning waves heard from below.
We passed two narrow belts of wood and then
The sea, that first showed blue above their tops,
Was spread before us chequered with white waves
Breaking beneath on boulders which choked up
The narrowed issue seawards of the glen.
The steep path would no more admit of wheels:
I took the beast and tethered her to graze
Within the shade of a stunt ilex clump, -
Returned to find a vacant car; Hipparchus,

Uneasy on my tilting down the shafts,
And heated with strange clothes, had roused himself
And lay asleep upon his late disguise,
Naked 'neath the cool eaves of one huge rock
That stood alone, much higher up than those
Over, and through, and under which, the waves
Made music or forced milk-white floods of foam.
There I reclined, while vision, sound and scent
Won on my willing soul like sleep on joy,
Till all accustomed thoughts were far away
As from a happy child the cares of men.
The hour was sacred to those earlier gods
Who are not active, but divinely wait
The consummation of their first great deeds,
Unfolding still and blessing hours serene.
Presently I was gazing on a boy,
(Though whence he came my mind had not perceived).
Twelve or thirteen he seemed, with clinging feet
Poised on a boulder, and against the sea
Set off. His wide-brimmed hat of straw was arched
Over his massed black and abundant curls
By orange ribbon tied beneath his chin;
Around his arms and shoulders his sole dress,
A cloak, was all bunched up. He leapt, and lighted
Upon the boulder just beneath; there swayed,
Re-poised,
And perked his head like an inquisitive bird,
As gravely happy; of all unconscious save
His body's aptness for its then employment;
His eyes intent on shells in some clear pool
Or choosing where he next will plant his feet.
Again he leaps, his curls against his hat
Bounce up behind. The daintiest thing alive,
He rocks awhile, turned from me towards the sea;
Unseen I might devour him with my eyes.
At last he stood upon a ledge each wave
Spread with a sheet of foam four inches deep;
From minute to minute, while it bathed his feet,
He gazing at them saw them disappear
And reappear all shining and refreshed;
Then raised his head, beheld the ocean stretched
Alive before him its magnitude.

None but a child could have been so absorbed
As to escape its spell till then, none else
Could so have voiced glad wonder in a song: -
'All the waves of the sea are there!
In at my eyes they crush.
Till my head holds as fair a sea:
Though I shut my eyes, they are there!
Nay towards my lids they rush,
Mad to burst forth from me
Back to the open air! -
To follow them my heart needs,
O white-maned steeds, to ride you;
Lathe-shouldered steeds,
To the western isles astride you
Amyntas speeds!'
'Damon!' said a voice quite close to me
And looking up . . . as might have stood Apollo
In one vase garment such as shepherds wear
And leaning on such tall staff stood . . . Thou guessest,
Whose majesty as vainly was disguised
As must have been Apollo's minding sheep.

Cydilla

Delphis! I know, dear Damon, it was Delphis!
Healthy life in the country having chased
His haggard looks; his speech is not wild now,
Nor wicked with exceptions to things honest:
Thy face a kindlier way than speech tells this.

Damon

Yes, dear Cydilla, he was altogether
What mountaineers might dream of for a king.

Cydilla

But tell me, is he tutor to that boy?

Damon

He is an elder brother to the lad.

Cydilla

Nay, nay, hide nothing, speak the worst at once.

Damon

I meant no hint of ill;
A god in love with young Amyntas might
Look as he did; fathers alone feel like him:
Could I convey his calm and happy speech
Thy last suspicion would be laid to rest.

Cydilla

Damon, see, my glad tears have drowned all fear;
Think'st thou he may come back and win renown,
And fill his father's place?
Not as his father filled it,
But with an inward spirit correspondent
To that contained and high imposing mien
Which made his father honoured before men
Of greater wisdom, more integrity.

Damon

And loved before men of more kindness!

Cydilla

O Damon, far too happy am I now
To grace thy naughtiness by showing pain.
My Delphis 'owns the brains and presence too
That makes a Pericles!' . . . (the words are thine)
Had he but the will; and has he now?
Good Damon, tell me quick?

Damon

He dreams not of the court, and city life
Is what he rails at.

Cydilla

Well, if he now be wise and sober-souled
And loved for goodness, I can rest content.

Damon

My brain lights up to see thee happy! wait,
It may be I can give some notion how
Our poet spoke:
'Damon, the best of life is in thine eyes -
Worship of promise-laden beauty. Seems he not

The god of this fair scene?
Those waves claim such a master as that boy;
And these green slopes have waited till his feet
Should wander them, to prove they were not spread
In wantonness. What were this flower's prayer
Had it a voice? The place behind his ear
Would brim its cup with bliss and overbrim;
O, to be worn and fade beside his cheek!' -
'In love and happy, Delphis; and the boy?' -
'Loves and is happy' -
'You hale from?' -
'Ætna;
We have been out two days and crossed this ridge,
West of Mount Mycon's head. I serve his father,
A farmer well-to-do and full of sense,
Who owns a grass-farm cleared among the pines
North-west the cone, where even at noon in summer,
The slope it falls on lengthens a tree's shade.
To play the lyre and write and dance
I teach this lad; in all their country toil
Join, nor ask better fare than cheese, black bread,
Butter or curds, and milk, nor better bed
Than litter of dried fern or lentisk yields,
Such as they all sleep soundly on and dream,
(If e'er they dream) of places where it grew, -
Where they have gathered mushrooms, eaten berries,
Or found the sheep they lost, or killed a fox,
Or snared the kestrel, or so played their pipes
Some maid showed pleasure, sighed, nay even wept.
There to be poet need involve no strain,
For though enough of coarseness, dung, - nay, nay,
And suffering, too, be mingled with the life,
'Tis wedded to such an air,
Such water and sound health!
What else might jar or fret chimes in attuned
Like satyr's cloven hoof or lorn nymph's grief
In a choice ode. Though lust, disease and death,
As everywhere, are cruel tyrants, yet
They all wear flowers, and each sings a song
Such as the hilly echo loves to learn.'
'At last then even Delphis knows content?'
'Damon, not so:

This life has brought me health but not content.
That boy, whose shouts ring round us while he flings
Intent each sone toward yon shining object
Afloat inshore . . . I eat my heart to think
How all which makes him worthy of more love
Must train his ear to catch the siren croon
That never else had reached his upland home!
And he who failed in proof, how should he arm
Another against perils? Ah, false hope,
And credulous enjoyment! How should I,
Life's fool, while wakening ready wit in him,
Teach how to shun applause, and those bright eyes
Of women who pour in the lap of spring
Their whole year's substance? They can offer
To fill the day much fuller than I could,
And yet teach night surpass it. Can my means
Prevent the ruin of the thing I cherish?
What cares Zeus for him? Fate despises love.
Why, lads more exquisite, brimming with promise,
A thousand times have been lost for the lack
Of just the help a watchful god might give;
But which the best of fathers, best of mothers,
Of friends, of lovers cannot quite supply.
Powers, who swathe man's virtue up in weakness,
Then plunge his delicate mind in hot desire,
Preparing pleasure first and after shame
To bandage round his eyes, - these gods are not
The friends of men.'

The Delphis of old days before me stood,
Passionate, stormy, teeming with black thought,
His back turned on that sparkling summer sea,
His back turned on his love; and wilder words
And less coherent thought poured from him now.
Hipparchus waking took stock of the scene.
I watched him wend down, rubbing sleepy lids,
To where the boy was busy throwing stones.
He joined the work, but even his stronger arm
And heavier flints he hurled would not suffice
To drive that floating object nearer shore:
And, ere the rebel Delphis had expressed
Enough of anger and contempt for gods,
(Who, he asserted, were the dreams of men),

I saw the stone-throwers both take the water
And swimming easily attain their end.
The way they held their noses proved the thing
A tunny, belly floating upward, dead;
Both towed it till the current caught and swept it
Out far from that sweet cove; they laughing watched:
Then, suddenly, Amyntas screamed and Delphis
Turned to see him sink
Locked in Hipparchus' arms.

The god Apollo never
Burst through a cloud with more ease than thy son
Poured from his homespun garb
The rapid glory of his naked limbs,
And like a streak of lightning reached the waves: -
Wherein his thwarted speed appeared more awful
As, brought within the scope of comprehension,
Its progress and its purpose could be gauged.

Spluttering Amyntas rose, Hipparchus near him
Who cried 'Why coy of kisses, lovely lad?
I ne'er would harm thee; art thou not ashamed
To treat thy conquest thus?'

He shouted partly to drown the sea's noise, chiefly
The nearing Dephis to disarm.
His voice lost its assurance while he spoke,
And, as he finished, quick to escape he turned;
Thy son's eyes and that steady coming on,
As he might see them over ruffled crests,
Far better helped him swim
Than ever in his life he swam before.

Delphis passed by Amyntas;
Hipparchus was o'er taken,
Cuffed, ducked and shaken;
In vain he clung about his angry foe;
Held under he perforce let go:
I, fearing for his life, set up a whoop
To bring cause and effect to thy son's mind,
And in dire rage's room his sense returned.
He towed Hipparchus back like one he'd saved
From drowning, laid him out upon that ledge
Where late Amyntas stood, where now he kneeled
Shivering, alarmed and mute.

Delphis next set the drowned man's mouth to drain;

We worked his arms, for I had joined them; soon
His breathing recommenced; we laid him higher
On sun-warmed turf to come back to himself;
Then we climbed to the cart without a word.
The sun had dried their limbs; they, putting on
Their clothes, sat down; at length, I asked the lad
What made him keen to pelt a stinking fish.
Blushing, he said, 'I wondered what it was.
But that man, when he came to help, declared
'Twould prove a dead sea-nymph, and we might see,
By swimming out, how finely she was made.
I did not half believe, yet when we found
That foul stale fish, it made us laugh.' He smiled
And watched Hipparchus spit and cough and groan.
I moved to the car and unpacked bread and meat,
A cheese, some fruit, a skin of wine, two bowls.
Amyntas was all joy to see such things;
Ran off and pulled acanthus for our plates;
Chattering, he helped me set all forth, - was keen
To choose rock basin where the wine might cool;
Approved, was full as happy as I to praise:
And most he pleased me, when he set a place
For poor Hipparchus. Thus our eager work,
While Delphis, in his thoughts retired, sat frowning,
Grew like a home-conspiracy to trap
The one who bears the brunt of outside cares
Into the glow of cheerfulness that bathes
The children and the mother, - happy not
To foresee winter, short-commons or long debts,
Since they are busied for the present meal, -
Too young, too weak, too kind, to peer ahead,
Or probe the dark horizon bleak with storms.
Oh! I have sometimes thought there is a god
Who helps with lucky accidents when folk
Join with the little ones to chase such gloom.
That chance withch left Hipparchus with no clothers,
Surely divinity was ambushed in it?
When he must put on Chloe's, Amyntas rocked
With laughter, and Hipparchus, quick to use
A favourable gust, pretends confusion
Such as a farmer's daughter red-faced shows
If in the dance her dress has come unpinned.

She suddenly grow grave; yet, seeing there
Friends only, stoops behind a sister-skirt.
Then, having set to rights the small mishap,
Holding her screener's elbows, round her shoulder
Peeps, to bob back meeting a young man's eye.
All, grateful for such laughs, give Hermes thanks.
And even Delphis at Hipparchus smiled
When, from behind me, he peeped bashful forth;
Laughing because he was or was not like
Some wench . . .
Why, Delphis, in the name of Zeus
How come you here?

Cydilla What can have happened, Delphis?
Be brief for pity!

Delphis Nothing, mother, nothing
That has not happened time on time before
To thee, to Damon, when the life ye thought
With pride and pleasure yours, has proved a dream.
They strike down on us from the top of heaven,
Bear us up in their talons, up and up,
Drop us: we fall, are crippled, maimed for life.
'Our dreams'? nay, we are theirs for sport, for prey,
And life is the King Eagle,
The strongest, highest, flyer, from whose clutch
The fall is fatal always.

Cydilla Delphis, Delphis,
Good Damon had been making me so happy
By telling . . .

Delphis
How he watched me near the zenith?
Three years back
That dream pounced on me and began to soar;
Having been sick, my heart had found new lies;
The only thoughts I then had ears for were
Healthy, virtuous, sweet;
Jaded town-wastrel,
A country setting was the sole could take me
Three hears back.

Damon might have guessed
From such a dizzy height
What fall was coming.

Cydilla
Ah my boy, my boy!

Damon
Sit down, be patient, let us hear and aid, -
Has aught befallen Amyntas?

Delphis
Would he were dead!
Would that I had been brute enough to slay him. -
Great Zeus, Hipparchus had so turned his head.
His every smile and word
As we sat by our fire, stung my fool's heart. -
'How we laughed to see him curtsey,
Fidget strings about his waist, -
Giggle, his beard caught in the chlamys' hem
Drawing it tight about his neck, just like
Our Baucis.' Could not sleep
For thinking of the life they lead in towns;
He said so: when, at last,
He sighed from dreamland, thoughts
I had been day-long brooding
Broke into vision.

A child, a girl,
Beautiful, nay more than others beautiful,
Not meant for marriage, not for one man meant,
You know what she will be;
At six years old or seven her life is round her;
A company, all ages, old men, young men,
Whose vices she must prey on.
And the bent crone she will be is there too,
Patting her head and chuckling prophecies. -
O cherry lips, O wild bird eyes,
O gay invulnerable setter-at-nought
Of will, of virtue -
Thou art as constant a cause as is the sea,
As is the sun, as are the winds, as night,

Of opportunities not only but events; -

The unalterable past

Is full of thy contrivance,

Aphrodite,

Goddess of ruin!

No girl; nay, nay,

Amyntas is young,

Is gay,

Has beauty and health - and yet

In his sleep I have seen him smile

And known that his dream was vile;

Those eyes which brimmed over with glee

Till my life flowed as fresh as the sea -

Those eyes, gloved each in a warm live lid,

May be glad that their visions are hid.

I taught myself to rhyme; the trick will cling.

Ah, Damon, day-lit vision is more dread

Than those which suddenly replace the dark!

When the dawn filtered through our tent of boughs

I saw him closely wrapped in his grey cloak,

His head upon a pile of caked thin leaves

Whose life had dried up full two years ago.

Their flakes shook in the breath from those moist lips;

The vow his kiss would seal must prove, I knew

As friable as that pale ashen fritter;

It had more body than reason dare expect

From that so beautiful creature's best intent.

He waking found me no more there; and wanders

Through Ætna's woods to-day

Calling at times, or questioning charcoal burners,

Till he shall strike a road shall lead him home;

Yet all his life must be spent as he spends

This day in whistling, wondering, singing, chatting,

In the great wood, vacant and amiable.

Damon

Can it be possible that thou desertest

Thy love, thy ward, the work of three long years,

Because chance, on an April holiday

Has filled this boy's talk with another man,

And wonder at another way of life?
Worse than a woman's is such jealousy;
The lad must live!

Delphis

Live, live, to be sure, he must live!
I have lived, am a fool for my pains!
And yet, and yet,
This heart has ached to play the god for him: -
Mine eyes for his had sifted visible things;
Speech had been filtered ere it reached his ear;
Not in the world should he have lived, but breathed
Humanity's distilled quintessences;
The indiscriminate multitude sorted should yield him
Acquaintance and friend discerned, chosen by me: -
By me, who failed, wrecked, my youth's prime, and dragged
More wonderful than his gifts in the mire!

Damon

Yet if experience could not teach and save
Others from ignorance, why, towns would be
Ruins, and civil men like outlaws thieve,
Stab, riot, ere two generations passed.

Delphis

Where is the Athens that Pericles loved?
Where are the youths that were Socrates' friends?
There was a town where all learnt
What the wisest taught!
Why had crude Sparta such treasonous force?
Could Philip of Macedon
Breed a true Greek of his son?
What honour to conquer a world
Where Alcibiades had failed,
Lead half-drilled highland hordes
Whose lust would inherit the wise?
There is nothing art's industry shaped
But their idleness praising it mocked.
Thus Fate re-assumed her command
And laughed at experienced law.
What ails man to love with such pains?
Why toil to create in the mind

Of those who shall close in his grave
The best that he is and has hoped?
The longer permission he has,
The nobler the structure so raised,
The greater its downfall. Fools, fools,
Where is a town such as Pericles ruled?
Where youths to replace those whom Socrates loved?

Wise Damon, thou art silent; - Mother, thou
Hast only arms to cling about thy son. -
Who can descry the purpose of a god
With eyes wide-open? shut them, every fool
Can conjure up a world arriving somewhere,
Resulting in what he may call perfection.
Evil must soon or late succeed to good.
There well may once have been a golden age:
Why should we treat it as a poet's tale?
Yet, in those hills that hung o'er Arcady,
Some roving inebriate Daimon
Begat him fair children
On nymphs of the vineyard,
On nymphs of the rock: -
And in the heart of the forest
Lay bound in white arms,
In action creative a father
Without a thought for his child: -
A purposeless god,
The forbear of men
To corrupt, ape, inherit and spoil
That fine race before hand with doom!

No, Damon, what's an answer worth to one
Whose mind has been flung open?
Only last night,
The gates of my spirit gave entrance
Unto the great light;
And I saw how virtue seduceth,
Not ended today or tomorrow
Like the passion for love,
Like the passion for life -
But perennial pain
And age-long effort.

Dead deeds are the teeth that shine
In the mouth that repeateth praise,
That spurs men to do high things
Since their fathers did higher before -
To give more than they hope to receive,
To slave and to die in a secular cause!
The mouth that smiles over-praise
Eats out the heart of each fool
To feed the great dream of a race.

Yet wearied peoples each in turn awake
From virtue, as a man from his brief love,
And, roughly shaken, face the useless truth;
No answer to brute fact has e'er been found.
Slaves of your slaves, caged in your furnished rooms,
Ushered to meals when reft of appetite -
Though hungry, bound to wait a stated hour -
Your dearest contemplation broken off
By the appointed summons to your bath;
Racked with more thought for those whom you may flog
Than for those dear; obsessed by your possessions
With a dull round of stale anxieties; -
Soon maintenance grows the extreme reach of hope
For those held in respect, as in a vice,
By citizens of whom they are the pick.
Of men the least bond is the roving seaman
Who hires himself to merchantman or pirate
For single voyages, stays where he may please,
Lives his purse empty in a dozen ports,
And ne'er obeys the ghost of what once was!
His laugh chimes readily; his kiss, no symbol
Of aught to come, but cordial, eager, hot,
Leaves his tomorrow free. With him for comrade
Each day shall be enough, and what is good
Enjoyed, and what is evil borne or cursed.
I go, because I will not have a friend
Lay claim upon my leisure this day week.
I will be melted by each smile that takes me;
What though a hundred lips should meet with mine!
A vagabond I shall be as the moon is.
The sun, the waves, the winds, all birds, all beasts,
Are ever on the move, and take what comes;

They are not parasites like plants and men
Rooted in that which fed them yesterday.
Not even Memory shall follow Delphis,
For I will yield to all impulse save hers,
Therein alone subject to prescient rigour;
Lest she should lure me back among the dying -
Pilfer the present for the beggar past.
Free minds must bargain with each greedy moment
And seize the most that lies to hand at once.
Ye are too old to understand my words;
I yet have youth enough, and can escape
From that which sucks each individual man
Into the common dream.

Cydilla
Stay, Delphis, hear what Damon has to say!
He is mad!

Damon
Mad - yes - mad as cruelty!
.....
Poor, poor Cydilla! was it then to this
That all my tale was prologue?
Think of Amyntas, think of that poor boy,
Bereaved as we are both bereaved! Come, come,
Find him, and say that Love himself has sent us
To offer our poor service in his stead.

Cydilla
Good Damon, help me find my wool; my eyes
Are blind with tears; then I will come at once!
We must be doing something, for I feel
We both shall drown our hearts with time to spare.

Thomas Sturge Moore

Aforetime

Dear exile from the hurrying crowd,
At work I muse to you aloud;
Thought on my anvil softens, glows,
And I forget our art has foes;
For life, the mother of beauty, seems
A joyous sleep with waking dreams.
Then the toy armoury of the brain
Opining, judging, looks as vain
As trowels silver gilt for use
Of mayors and kings, who have to lay
Foundation stones in hope they may
Be honoured for walls others build.
I, in amicable muse,
With fathomless wonder only filled,
Whisper over to your ear
Listening two hundred odd miles north,
And give thought chase that, were you here,
Our talk would never run to earth.

Man can answer no momentous question:
Whence comes his spirit? Has it lived before?
Reason fails; hot springs of feeling spout
Their snowy columns high in the dim land
Of his surmise — violent divine decisions
That often rule him: and at times he views
Portraits of places he has never been to,
Yet more minute and vivid than remembrance,
Of boyhood homes, sail between sleep and waking
Like some mirage, refuting all experience
With topsy-turvy ships,
That steals by in dead calms through tropic haze:
And many a man in his climacteric years,
Thoughts and remembered words have roused from sleep
With knowledge that he lacked on lying down:
And I, lapped in a trance of reverie, doubt
Some spore of episodes
Anterior far beyond this body's birth,
Dispersed like puffs of dust impalpable,
Wind-carried round this globe for centuries,

May, breathed with common air, yet swim the blood,
And striking root in this or that brain, raise
Imaginations unaccountable;
One such seems half-implied in all I am,
And many times re-pondered shapes like this:

A child myself I watched a woman loll
Like to a clot of seaweed thrown ashore;
Heavy and limp as cloth soaked in black dye,
She glooms the noontide dazzle where a bay
Bites into vineyarded flats close-fenced by hills,
Over whose tops lap forests of cork and fir
And reach in places half down their rough slopes.
Lower, some few cleared fields square on the thickets
Of junipers and longer thorns than furze
So clumped that they are trackless even for goats
I know two things about that woman: first
She is a slave and I am free, and next
As mothers need their sons' love she needs mine.
Longings to utter fond compassionate sounds
Stir through me, checked by knowing wiser folk
Reprobate such indulgence. Ill at ease,
Mute, yet her captive, I thrust brown toes through
Loose sand no daily large tides overwhelm
To cake and roll it firm and smooth and clean
As the Atlantic remakes shores, you know.
But there, like trailing skirts, long flaws of wind
Obliterate the prints feet during calms
Track over and over its always lonely stretch,
Till some will have, it ghosts must rove at night;
For folk by day are rare, yet a still week
Leaves hardly ten yards anywhere uncrossed;
Tempest spreads all revirginate like snow,
Half burying dead wood snapped off from tossed trees,
Since right along the foreshore, out of reach
Of furious driven waves, three hundred pines
Straggle the marches between sand and soil.
Like maps of stone-walled fields their branching roots
Hold the silt still so that thin grass grows there,
Its blades whitened with travelling powdery drift
The besom of the lightest breeze sets stirring.
That woman's gaze toils worn from remote years,

Yet forward yearns through the bright spacious noon,
Beyond the farthest isle, whose filmy shape
Floats faint on the sea-line.

I, scooping grains up with the frail half-shell
Pale green and white-lined of sea-urchin, knew
What her eyes sought as often children know
Of grief or sin they could not name or think of
Yet sooth or shrink from, so I saw and longed
To heal her tender wound and yet said naught.

The energy of bygone joy and pain
Had left her listless figure charged with magic
That caught and held my idleness near hers.
Resentful of her power, my spirit chafed
Against its own deep pity, as though it were
Raised ghost and she the witch had bid it haunt me.
What's more I knew this slave by rights should glean
And faggot drift-wood, not lounge there and waste
My father's food dreaming his time away.

For then as now the common-minded rich
Grudged ease to those whose toil brought them in means
For every waste of life. At length I spoke,
Insulting both my inarticulate soul
And her with acted anger: 'Lazy wretch,
Is it for eyes like yours to watch the sea
As though you waited for a homing ship?
My father might with reason spend his hours
Scanning the far horizon; for his Swan
Whose outward lading was full half a vintage
Is now months overdue.' She turned on me
Her languor knit and, through its homespun wrap,
Her muscular frame gave hints of rebel will,
While those great caves of night, her eyes, faced mine,
Dread with the silence of unuttered wrongs:
At last she spoke as one who must be heeded.

Truly I am not clear
Whether her meaning was conveyed in words
(She mingled accents of an eastern tongue
With deformed phrases of our native Latin)
Or whether thought from her gaze poured through mine.
The gravity of recollected life
Was hers, condensed and, like a vision, flashed
Suddenly on the guilty mind, a whole

Compact, no longer a mere tedious string
Of moments negligible, each so small
As they were lived, but stark like a slain man
Who would alive have been ourself with twice
The skill, the knowledge, the vitality
Actually ours. Yea, as a tree may view
With fingerless boughs and lorn pole impotent,
An elephant gorged upon its leaves depart,
Men often have reviewed an unwieldy past,
That like a feasted Mammoth, leisured and slow,
Turned its back on their warped bones. Even thus,
Momentous with reproach, her grave regard
Made me feel mean, cashiered of rank and right,
My limbs that twelve good years had nursed were numbed
And all their fidgety quicksilver grew stiff,
Novel and fevering hallucinations
Invaded my attention. So daylight
When shutters are thrown back spreads through a house;
As then the dreams and terrors of the night
Decamp, so from my mind were driven
All its own thoughts and feelings. Close she leant
Propped on a swarthy arm, while the other helped
With eloquent gesture potent as wizard wand,
Veil the world off as with an airy web,
Or flowing tent a-gleam with pictured folds.
These tauten and distend — one sea of wheat,
Islanded with black cities, borders now
The voluminous blue pavilion of day.
There-under to the nearest of those towns
This woman younger by ten years made haste
While at her side ran a small boy of six.
They neared the walls, half a huge double gate
Lay prostrate, though the other by stone hinges
Hung to its flanking tower. The path they followed
Threaded an old paved road whose flags were edged
With dry grass and dry weeds, even cactuses
Had pushed the stones up or found root in muck heaps:
The path struck up the slope of the fallen door,
Basalt like midnight, o'er which dusty feet
Had greyed a passage, for it rested on
Some débris fallen from the left-hand tower,
And from its upper edge rude blocks like steps

Led down into the straight main street, that ran
Past eyeless buildings mined as it were from coal,
And earthquake-raised to light. Palaces and
Roofless wide-flighted colonnaded temples,
The uncemented walls piled-plumb with blocks
Squared, polished, fitted with daemonic patience.
Each gaping threshold high again as need be
Waited a nine-foot lord to enter hall,
Where the least draughty corner sheltered now
Half-tented hut or improvised small home
For Arab, brown, light-footed and proud-necked
As was this woman with the compelling voice.
Their present hatched and hived within that past
As bees in the parchment chest of Samson's lion;
And all seem conscious that their life was sweet,
Like mice who clean their faces after meals
And have such grace of movement, when unscared,
As wins the admiration even of those
Whose stores they rob and soil. I saw her eyes
Young with contentment in her son
And smaller babe and in their handsome sire,
And knew that many a supper had been relished
With hearts as joyous as waited while she cooked
And served upon returning to their cot
In hall where once far other hearts caroused.
They and their tribe could never reap a tithe
Of the vast harvest rustling round those ruins,
And over which a half-moon soon set forth
From black hills mounded up both east and south,
While north-west her light played on distant summits;
All the huge interspace floored with standing corn
Which kings afar send soldiery to reap,
Who now, beside a long canal cut straight
In ancient days, have pitched their noisy camp
Which on that vast staid silence makes a bruise
Of blare and riot that its robust health
Will certainly heal in a brief lapse of time.

One night, re-thought on after ten whole years,
Is like the condor high above the Andes,
A speck with difficulty found again
Once the attention quits it. And I next

Described our woman under breathless noon,
Bathing in a clear lane of gliding water
Whose banks seem lonely as the path of light
Crossing mid ocean south of Capricorn.
Her son steals warily after a butterfly
And is as hushed with hope to capture it
As are the birds with heat. An insect hum
Circles the spot as round a cymbal's rim,
Long after it has clanged, tingles a throb
Which in a dream forgets the parent sound,
Oppressed by this protracted and awe-filled pause,
She hardly dares to wade the stream and moves
As though in dread to wake some sleeping god,
Yet still she nears and nears the further bank
Where there is shade under a shumac's eaves.
The brilliant surface cut her right in two,
And the reflection of her bronzed torso
Hid all beneath the polished gliding mirror;
How her face listened to that sleep divine
Whose audible breath was tuned to dreams of bliss!

Sudden, as though the woof of heaven were torn,
A strident shout rang from some neighbour shrubs
Three Nubian soldiers ran upon her with
Delighted oily faces. Screaming first
Commands to her small son to make for home,
She laboured to recross the current as when
In nightmares the scared soul expects to die
Tortured by mutiny in limbs like lead,
But as the playful lion of the sea
Climbs the rock ledges hard by Fingal's cave
To throw himself down into deep green baths,
While others barking follow his vigorous lead,
The foremost Abyssinian threw his weight
Before her with a splash that hid them both,
As the explosion of light-filled liquid parcels
Shot forth in all directions. In his arms
She re-appeared, a tragic terrified face
Beside his coarse one laughing with success.
Squeezing her with a pantomime of love,
He turns to follow an arrow with his eyes
That his companion, still upon the bank,

Has aimed towards her son's small head that bobbed
Like a black cork across the basking corn.
But from the level of the sunk stream bed
Neither he nor she could see the target aimed at,
Yet in the pause they heard the poor child scream;
A second arrow, second scream; she fought,
But soon like bundle bound, hung o'er his shoulder,
Helpless as a mouse in cat's mouth carried off
In search of quiet, there to play with it.
Those arrows missed? — or did they not? The child
Shrieked twice, yet scarcely like a wounded thing
She thought and hoped and still but thinks and hopes.
Where is that boy? Where is her husband now?
While she submitted body to force and soul
To the great shuddering violence of despair
How had their life progressed in that far place?
Compassion fused my consciousness with hers
And second-sighted eloquence arose
To claim my mind for rostrum,
But obstinately tranced
My eyes clung to their vision;
For regions to explore allure the boy
No stretch of thought or sea of feeling tempts.
Entranced, the mind I then had, haunted
Those basalt ruins. High on sable towers
Some silky patriarchal goat appears
And ponders silent streets, or suddenly
Some nanny, her huge bag swollen with milk,
Trots out on galleries that unfenced run
Round vacant courts, there, stopped by plaintive kids,
Lets them complete their meal. While always, always,
Throughout, those mazed, sullen and sun-soaked walls,
The steady, healthy wind,
Which often blows for weeks without a lull
Across that upland plain,
Flutes staidly. Moaning
Continuously as seas
Or forests before storm,
And, gathering moment,
Articulated by her woe, begins
With second-sighted eloquence
To wail through me,

Nigh as unheeded,
As though it still had been
Meaningless wind.

For ah! the heart is cowed
And dares not use her strength,
Hears the kind impulse plead
Against the common avaricious fear,
Grants it but life, though sovereignty was due
Or doles it sway but one day out of seven
Or one a year.

So, so, and ever, so
In the close-curtained court
Those causes are deferred
Which most import;
These wait man's leisure.
These daily matters elbow;
Merely because
His panic meanness
Jibs blindly ere it hear
What wisdom has prepared,
Bolts headlong ere it see
Her face unfold its smile.
Man after man, race after race
Drops jaded by the iterancy
Of petty fear.
Even as horses on the green steppes grazing,
Hundreds scattered through lonely peacefulness,
If shadow of cloud or red fox breaking earth
Delude but one with dream of a stealthy foe,
All are stampeded.
Their frantic torrent draws in,
With dire attraction, cumulative force,
Stragglers grazing miles from where it started;
On it thunders quite devoid of meaning.
The tender private soul
Thus takes contagion from the sordid crowd,
And shying at mere dread of loss,
Loses the whole of life.
Thus, in the vortex of a base turmoil,
Those myriad million energies wear down

That might have raised mankind
To live the life of gods.
Had but my soul been his,
As his was mine,
Those wind-resembling accents
Had found fit auditor.
Their second-sighted eloquence,
Welcomed with acclamation,
Had fired action.
But that was ages since: he was not then
What now I am,
Who have no longer
The opportunity then mine, then missed, —
Who still am dazed and troubled
Surmising others mine, others missed.

Passionate, never-wearied voice,
Tombed in thy brittle shell,
This human heart
Thou croonest age on age,
'Give and ask not,
Help and blame not,'
Heeded less than large and mottled cowry
The which at least some child may hold to ear
All smiles to listen.

Thou findest parables;
With fond imagination
Adorning truth
For the successive
Unpersuaded
Generations.

This boy, myself that was,
Musing visions by that woman raised,
Watched that land she came from, towned with ruins
Send mile-long files of laden camels out
With grain to hostile cities, —
Knew too the blue entrancing plain of waters
Teemed with fresh shoals, buoyed up indifferently,
Fisher — trader — pirate bark, —
Even the straight thought whispered at his ear,

'Thy lips might join with hers as with some cousin's,
Here, now, at noon,
Hugging her bereavéd sadness close,
And still, to-night, with equal satisfaction,
Thy mother's blind contentment with her son.'

While half-seduced, half-chafed, his mind was shaken
As with conflicting gusts a choppy sea,
His eyes, still greedy of their visions,
Fastened a swarthy town enisled in wheat,
And to the ebon threshold of each house,
Conjured forth the man that each was planned for:
Great creatures smiling with his father's smile,
Muscular, wealthy and self-satisfied,
Wearing loud-coloured raiment, earrings, chains,
Armlet and buckle, all of clanking gold.

His spirit drank from theirs great draughts of pride
And read their minds more clearly than his own;
All, with one counsel like a chorus, dinned
His soul that then was mine,
With truths well-proved in action.

'Love is chaos,
For order's sake
Whatever must be, should be,'

Roared those bulls of Bashan.
Then their proud chant argued,
'How should this woman know
Her little lad again,
Who either now is bones
Under the fertile field,
Or well nigh a grown man?
Say they should cross at market
Both slaves would pass on, not a start the wiser.
What is she then to him
Or he to her
After these years?
To drag a life that might have been but is not
With toil of mind and heart,
Through dreary year on year,
Neglecting for its sake the life that is,
 Spells folly and ingratitude to those
Who treat their slaves well.
Thy father's household and thyself should be

More to her now than those who may be dead,
The place she lives in dearer
Than any unattainable far land
Where she is more forgotten than old dreams.
Why make the day of evil worse
By dwelling on it after it has past?
Near things alone are real,
Now is the whole of time:
Places beyond the horizon are but pictures;
Memory cheats the eye with an illusion!

'Your thoughts are sound, bold builders,
I am my father's son.
Behold this home-shore, these our hills, this bay,
And this our slave! —
Up, work, look sharp about it!'
Bounding a foot and fast retiring from her,
I stoop for stones strewn thick about the sand,
Aim them, fling them,
And, as my idle arm resumes the knack,
Score a hit and laugh
To see her stumble hurt, behind the pine trunks.
'Unless you work, I throw again,
To it and steady at it.
Mark me, drab, we Camilli
Mean what we say.'
Stone after stone still flies,
But aimed to knock chips from the pine-boles now;
For she is busy gathering sticks, increasing
Her distance as she may. The noon is sultry,
Heated and clammy, I,
Towards the live waves turning, slip my tunic,
Then run in naked.
Cooled and soothed by swimming,
Both mind and heart from their late tumult tuned
To placid acquiescent health,
I float, suspended in the limpid water,
Passive, rhythmically governed;
So tranced worlds travel the dark shoreless ether.

'Where should this stream of pictures tend?'
No, Bottomley, you will not ask;

To you I am quite free to send
The unexpected, unexplained,
You will not take me thus to task.

So they be painted well, they live;
If ill, they yet may cling to fame
Associated with your name.
In which case you, and not I, give
That we are both contented with.

Thomas Sturge Moore

Idleness

O idleness, too fond of me,
Begone, I know and hate thee!
Nothing canst thou of pleasure see
In one that so doth rate thee;

For empty are both mind and heart
While thou with me dost linger;
More profit would to thee impart
A babe that sucks its finger.

I know thou hast a better way
To spend these hours thou squand'rest;
Some lad toils in the trough to-day
Who groans because thou wand'rest;

A bleating sheep he dowses now
Or wrestles with ram's terror;
Ah, 'mid the washing's hubbub, how
His sighs reproach thine error!

He knows and loves thee, Idleness;
For when his sheep are browsing,
His open eyes enchant and bless
A mind divinely drowsing;

No slave to sleep, he wills and sees
From hill-lawns the brown tillage;
Green winding lanes and clumps of trees,
Far town or nearer village,

The sea itself; the fishing feet
Where more, thine idle lovers,
Heark'ning to sea-mews find thee sweet
Like him who hears the plovers.

Begone; those haul their ropes at sea,
These plunge sheep in yon river:
Free, free from toil thy friends, and me
From Idleness deliver!

Thomas Sturge Moore

Renaissance

O happy soul, forget thy self!
This that has haunted all the past,
That conjured disappointments fast,
That never could let well alone;
That, climbing to achievement's throne,
Slipped on the last step; this that wove
Dissatisfaction's clinging net,
And ran through life like squandered pelf:--
This that till now has been thy self
Forget, O happy soul, forget.

If ever thou didst aught commence,--
Set'st forth in springtide woods to rove,--
Or, when the sun in July threw,
Didst plunge into calm bay of ocean
With fine felicity in motion,--
Or, having climbed some high hill's brow,
Thy toil behind thee like the night,
Stoodst in the chill dawn's air intense;--
Commence thus now, thus recommence:

Take to the future as to light.
Not as a bather on the shore
Strips of his clothes, glad soul, strip thou:
He throws them off, but folds them now;
Although he for the billows yearns,
To weight them down with stones he turns;
To mark the spot he scans the shore;
Of his return he thinks before.
Do thou forget

All that, until this joy franchised thee,
Tainted thee, stained thee, or disguised thee;
For gladness, henceforth without let,
Be thou a body, naked, fair;
And be thy kingdom all the air
Which the noon fills with light;
And be thine actions every one,

Like to a dawn or set of sun,
Robed in an ample glory's peace;
Since thou hast tasted this great glee
Whose virtue prophesies in thee
That wrong is wholly doomed, is doomed and bound to cease.

Thomas Sturge Moore

Rowers Chant

Row till the land dip 'neath
The sea from view.
Row till a land peep up,
A home for you.

Row till the mast sing songs
Welcome and sweet.
Row till the waves, out-stripped,
Give up dead beat.

Row till the sea-nymphs rise
To ask you why
Rowing you tarry not
To hear them sigh.

Row till the stars grow bright
Like certain eyes.
Row till the noon be high
As hopes you prize.

Row till you harbour in
All longing's port.
Row till you find all things
For which you sought.

Thomas Sturge Moore

Silence Sings

SO faint, no ear is sure it hears,
So faint and far;
So vast that very near appears
My voice, both here and in each star
Unmeasured leagues do bridge between;
Like that which on a face is seen
Where secrets are;
Sweeping, like veils of lofty balm,
Tresses unbound
O'er desert sand, o'er ocean calm,
I am wherever is not sound;
And, goddess of the truthful face,
My beauty doth instill its grace
That joy abound.

Thomas Sturge Moore

The Dying Swan

O SILVER-THROATED Swan
Struck, struck! A golden dart
Clean through thy breast has gone
Home to thy heart.
Thrill, thrill, O silver throat!
O silver trumpet, pour
Love for defiance back
On him who smote!
And brim, brim o'er
With love; and ruby-dye thy track
Down thy last living reach
Of river, sail the golden light—
Enter the sun's heart—even teach
O wondrous-gifted Pain, teach Thou
The God of love, let him learn how

Thomas Sturge Moore

The Rower's Chant

ROW till the land dip 'neath
The sea from view.
Row till a land peep up,
A home for you.

Row till the mast sing songs
Welcome and sweet,
Row till the waves, outstripped,
Give up, dead beat.

Row till the sea-nymphs rise
To ask you why
Rowing you tarry not
To hear them sigh.

Row till the stars grow bright
Like certain eyes.
Row till the noon be high
As hopes you prize.

Row till you harbour in
All longing's port.
Row till you find all things
For which you sought.

Thomas Sturge Moore

To Memory

O deeper than the noontide seems when blue,
Conceived as of yet finer woof than air,
Where, as clouds form, folk cherished, moments rare,
Fitfully gleam and pass . . . romance all true,
Yet never real enough, thou wild deceit,
Drug us till we, no longer what we are,
Love as we loved ! . . . Reluming star by star
Night falls and tears with thy far glances meet.

Thou dream of dreams, which most we can retrieve
And least forget, for thee dramatic truth
Drapes in fresh silks the tragedy of youth.
Yet as they act, our eyes, once blind, perceive
Much those performers are too fond to note
Till phantom sobs catch in a shrivelled throat.

Thomas Sturge Moore